

## House On The Rock Life Group Study outline 2023

### April: Revived by Fire

#### Outlines for the month

Week 1: The Altar at the cross: A new beginning with God ✓

Week 2: The Fire of Resurrection: Good news for all

Week 3: Joint session **SPECIAL JOINT LIFE GROUP SESSION ON THURSDAY 20 April, 8.00-9.15 PM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88138578992?pwd=bG5wT0tzRnFkWnpMZHpmN0txZmZDZz09>

#### Introduction

The altar was a key part of worship in the old testament. It had one purpose – to be the place where holy sacrifice was offered and accepted by God. Fire was a mark of God's acceptance – as we could see from the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel (1 Kgs 17). However it was also very important where the sacrifice was presented, hence there were strict rules in the old testament about which altars were acceptable to God, and where they should be located.

The altar signified a 'reset' moment – an opportunity to begin again with God. This is why we find altars at every key reset moment of the bible. There was an altar Genesis 3, when the lamb was sacrificed to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness. We see another altar in Genesis 8 after the great flood. We see the same with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the kings of Israel and so forth. Each time a Godly altar was built, it marked the beginning of a revival experience to be consummated by fire. This means that every revival by fire starts with an altar.

Our greatest reset moment was established in time 2000 years ago. There, at the altar of the cross, all of mankind was offered the chance of a fresh beginning with God. The cross reveals to us the character of God: His love for lost sinners and His perfect justice meet at the cross. If we want to grow in our love for God, which is the first and greatest commandment, then we must be growing to understand and appreciate of the cross, which shows us His great love. If we want to grow in godliness, we must grow in understanding the significance of the cross. If we want to experience revival fire, we must start at the cross.

#### Pilot text

***1 Pet 2:21b-25 ...Christ also suffered in your place, leaving you his example for you to follow. 22He never sinned and he never spoke deceitfully. 23When he was verbally abused, he did not return with an insult; when he suffered, he would not threaten retaliation. Jesus faithfully entrusted himself into the hands of God, who judges righteously. 24He himself carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we would***

*be dead to sin and live for righteousness. Our instant healing flowed from his wounding. 25You were like sheep that continually wandered away, but now you have returned to the true Shepherd of your lives—the kind Guardian who lovingly watches over your souls.*

**Supporting reading: Luke 23:26-49**

- What are some key reset opportunities arising from the cross, as seen from the pilot scriptures?
  - **Deliverance from the penalty of sin.** The holiness and justice of God demand that a penalty be paid for sin; Christ took that penalty on Himself on the cross. By mentioning Christ's body, Peter calls attention to the fact of His humanity. Since the human race sinned, a member of the race had to pay the just penalty God demands. But only one who was sinless Himself could pay such a penalty, since others would have to pay for their own sin. Jesus Christ, who alone among the human race committed no sin (1 Pet. 2:22; Isa. 53:9), is the only one capable of bearing the sins of the human race.
  - **Deliverance from the power of sin.** 24"He himself carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we would be dead to sin and live for righteousness. Our instant healing flowed from his wounding." Rather than straying like sheep, as we formerly lived, we now have been turned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. In other words, Christ's death delivers us from the ongoing power of sin. There are three facts about the power of sin which we must grasp from these verses:
    - The power of sin caused us to continually stray as sheep (2:25)
    - Deliverance from the power of sin required death and a new life (2:24)
    - The ongoing care of a shepherd is required for us to continue to walk in the newness of life (2:25)
  - For more reading on the subject, see [here](#) and [here](#) (provided by bible.org).
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
  1. Since Christians have been delivered from sin's penalty, is it ever right to feel guilt?
  2. How would you answer a non-Christian who asked, "Why can't God just forgive everyone apart from the cross?"
  3. Can a true Christian be continually defeated by sin? How would you help such a person?
  4. Does the power of sin grow weaker the longer we walk with Christ?

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#### Introduction

In the old testament, fire was evidence of God's acceptance of an offering presented at the altar. Under the new covenant, after Jesus offered Himself up on the cross as the final perfect sacrifice, an equivalent fire was needed to demonstrate God's acceptance. Paul in Romans 1:4, tells us that this fire of acceptance was shown in the form of the resurrection; in that Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (NJKV).

The good news is that it does not end there! In Hebrews 2:15, we see a glimpse of what Christ's resurrection means for us; that "By embracing death Jesus sets free those who live their entire lives in bondage to the tormenting dread of death." Because God sent the 'fire' of acceptance through Christ's resurrection, we also have access to the fire of revival by the Spirit of God. As we celebrate the resurrection season let us remember that is not only something that happened in the **past**, but it also gives power to our **present**, so that we have an assured **future** for eternity. As the songwriter says "The same power... lives in us!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InsifiZxVXU>

#### Pilot text

***Col 2:12-15 [TPT] 12For we've been buried with him into his death. Our "baptism into death" also means we were raised with him when we believed in God's resurrection power, the power that raised him from death's realm. 13This "realm of death" describes our former state, for we were held in sin's grasp. But now, we've been resurrected out of that "realm of death" never to return, for we are forever alive and forgiven of all our sins! 14He cancelled out every legal violation we had on our record and the old arrest warrant that stood to indict us. He erased it all—our sins, our stained soul—he deleted it all and they cannot be retrieved! Everything we once were in Adam has been placed onto his cross and nailed permanently there as a public display of cancellation.***

***15Then Jesus made a public spectacle of all the powers and principalities of darkness, stripping away from them every weapon and all their spiritual authority and power to accuse us. And by the power of the cross, Jesus led them around as prisoners in a procession of triumph. He was not their prisoner; they were his!***

- What does the resurrection mean for us?
  - **Because Jesus' resurrection is a fact of history, we can be confident in what we believe.** Oxford history Professor and author Thomas Arnold (1795-1842) wrote (cited in Josh McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict [Campus Crusade for Christ], 1:198): The evidence for our Lord's life and death and resurrection may be, and often has been, shown to be satisfactory; it is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad. Thousands and tens of thousands of persons have gone through it piece by piece, as carefully as every judge summing up on a most important cause. I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others but to satisfy myself. I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.
 

J. Gresham Machen (Christianity and Liberalism [Eerdmans], pp. 28-29) wrote, "The great weapon with which the disciples of Jesus set out to conquer the world was not a mere comprehension of eternal principles; it was an historical message, an account of something that had recently happened. It was the message, 'He is risen.'"
  - **Because Christ died and is risen, in Him we have the power to live in total victory.** Col. 2:15: "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." God took what looked like tragedy, the death of the sinless Lord of glory, and turned it into triumph. On the cross, Jesus accomplished perfect redemption for all of His people. When Paul speaks of God disarming the rulers and authorities, the picture is of a Roman general's triumphal parade. The conquered foes were stripped of their armour and paraded in shame through the streets in chains. When Christ willingly gave His life on the cross to pay for our sins, the power of the devil over us was broken conclusively. We can no longer be rightfully accused, because Christ has paid the debt of our sin. We can no longer be held captive through the fear of death, because Christ won the victory over death on the cross. His victory was confirmed when God raised Him from the dead.
    - For more reading on the subject, see [here](#) and [here](#) (provided by bible.org).
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
  1. Can a person believe that Jesus is risen and yet not be born again? What is the difference? Why does it matter?
  2. What was the difference between Judas' betrayal of Christ and Peter's denials of Christ? Why was Peter restored while Judas was lost?
  3. Some argue that the factual truth of the resurrection doesn't matter if it teaches us to be better people. Explain why this is incorrect (Tip: 1 Cor 15:12-19)