

# WOUNDED

*Forgiveness needs more than a*



## **Wounded: Part 4**

Small Group Material

Leader Guide

## ***The Touch of Jesus***

March 27th, 2016

**Bottom Line:** *Just because something is hard to believe doesn't make it untrue. It only makes it hard to believe.*

**Study Verses:** *Isaiah 52:14-15, Colossians 3:11-17, John 21:25, Psalm 19:1-6, 1 Corinthians 1:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-19*

**Define The Win:** *Participants would recognize the impact that Jesus left on this world. They would be able to articulate how they've wrestled with faith and the claims of Jesus being resurrected. Group members would understand that everything we believe hinges on an empty tomb.*

### **Key Points**

- Faith is not a cop-out. Faith frames the way we view what is presented.
- The touch of Jesus shaped the value of human beings as being worthy of love.
- The life of Jesus has touched human history more profoundly than any other person or event in the history of the world.
- Everyone has faith. We all possess a frame of belief that influences our worldview.
- His impact is undeniable.
- The wounds of Jesus brought healing to your soul to empower you to bring hope, healing and love to those around you.

## ENCOUNTER

*“Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is the belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence.” Richard Dawkins*

- Read the quote from Richard Dawkins. Why is faith often viewed as a cop-out that requires no thinking?
- If you were having a conversation with someone like Richard Dawkins, how would you respond to this assertion?

**LEADER INSIGHT:** *People often equate faith in Christ with naivety. In their minds, faith is crutch or coping mechanism to deal with the world we face. Some believe that faith cannot coexist with reasoning and research. The story of Jesus is hard to believe which makes skepticism completely understandable. Just because something is hard to believe doesn't make it untrue. It only makes it hard to believe. When someone has made up in their minds that the resurrection of Christ couldn't have happened, it alters the way one receives and perceives information. They don't leave the door open for their mind to be changed. A dismissive approach halts any pursuit of exploring the issue any deeper. Since one already believes they know the outcome, what is the point in considering the possibility that their perspective isn't true? Many individuals would say they don't do religion or are not people of faith, but this is simply not true. Everyone has faith in something. We all possess a framework of belief that influences our worldview. Regardless of where one falls on the faith spectrum, they must do the work necessary to be able to articulate the reasons why they believe in a certain way.*

## FORMATION

- Read Isaiah 52:14-15 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-19. Why does everything we believe hinge on an empty tomb and Jesus rising from the dead?
- Read Psalm 19:1-6 and John 21:25. Take the issue of whether Jesus conquered death off the table for a moment. Where have you seen the touch of Jesus in this world and throughout history?
- Read 1 Corinthians 1:18. Why is it completely understandable to have doubts about the resurrection of Jesus? What should one do with their doubts?

- Read Colossians 3:11-17. What was the purpose for the life of Christ? Why did He come to heal our wounds? How did His touch bring value to every single person?

**LEADER INSIGHT:** *The life of Jesus has touched human history more profoundly than any other person or event in the history of the world. His impact is undeniable. Jesus isn't only a religious figure. He is a historical figure. Every time you write a date you are alluding to someone. There are markers all over this world pointing to the touch of Jesus. The ripples of His touch were first felt while the Jewish people were living under the control of the Roman Empire. His words and actions were unorthodox and caused people to take notice of this carpenter from Nazareth and His band of ragtag followers. Jesus flipped the script on the religious establishment. He brought value and dignity to the lowly and discarded. He spoke up for the marginalized. He preached a revolutionary message of love and grace. It was such a countercultural concept that He got in trouble with both the religious and political establishment. They wanted to snuff out this movement and they reasoned the only way to do so was to take the life of its leader, which they did. Jesus was nailed to cross and, before everyone's eyes, died. Everyone believed this would be the end of the story. Yet, it was only just the beginning. A resurrection is too much to believe. Unless there is proof, belief is hard to come by. Three days later, Jesus is seen among the people. He invites disciples like Thomas to touch Him and see that He is real. Thomas responds to the reality he is witnessing by saying "my Lord and my God." Claims of Him raising from the dead began to spread. The movement didn't die, but only got stronger. That same movement continues to this very day. When we look at the resurrection, our response can be like Thomas – unless there is proof, I will not believe. This is why we must look into the claims of Christ and the events surrounding His resurrection with an open mind. If Jesus lived and merely died, then we should give Him little concern. He would be just a footnote in history. But if He lived, died and rose again, then we must look closer at His life and the implications it should have on our lives. Everything we believe hinges on an empty tomb. Jesus rising from the dead is the only way we receive life.*

## **EXPRESSION**

*"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." C.S. Lewis*

- Read the quote from C.S. Lewis. How would you describe your faith journey and how you came to believe the claims of Jesus?
- How did you wrestle with the evidence?
- How has the resurrection of Christ changed and impacted you personally?

**LEADER INSIGHT:** *End your time together by sharing your faith journey stories. Help people articulate how they wrestled with believing in Jesus. If there are those in your community who have yet to put their faith in Christ, be gracious with them and walk with them through their questions. Point them towards the purpose of Jesus healing our wounds which is to love and forgive others.*