

Easter 2017

"The Importance of the Resurrection"

1 Corinthians 15

**Introduction:** Today we gather together to celebrate the GREATEST event in the history of the world and that would be the RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ. I was thinking this week about all the attempts by Satan to cast doubt upon this PRECIOUS DOCTRINE. His attempts started the very day in which Jesus came out of the grave.

- ✓ The guards told the story that Jesus disciples came and stole away His body.
- ✓ The theory has been told that He never really died but He passed out on the cross and woke up in the tomb.
- ✓ Then there is the "TWIN BROTHER" theory which says that it was not Jesus who was seen but His twin brother.

Today I want to step you into something which we studied in 1 Corinthians about a year ago on Sunday nights. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul uses the entire chapter to teach the Corinthians about the Doctrine of the Resurrection. This alone shows how important the resurrection is.

In 1 Corinthians in **15:1-11** Paul points out the evidences of the resurrection.

1. Paul's life was changed.
2. The lives of the believers were changed.
3. The Scriptures testified of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
4. The eyewitness accounts.

This information and this argument in these first 11 verses are vitally important for the teaching which Paul will deliver in the verses that follow. He did not want to leave any room for the believers at Corinth to change their mind on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So with the solid "infallible" proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ Paul will now move on to explain what Christianity would be like without any resurrection.

Before we step into the argument which Paul makes I want to touch on a few things I believe we need to understand. There have been many attacks upon Christianity by Satan. But there are certain doctrines which he seems to give special attention to.

**Doctrine of the Virgin Birth.** - Is this attack it is Satan's desire to discredit Scripture and to make Jesus an "ordinary sinful man" which would disqualify Him as the Sinless Sacrifice.

**Doctrine of Creation** - This doctrine has been attacked possibly more than any other. The goal of Satan attacking this doctrine is to get people to doubt the Bible from the start. He also uses this attack to cause people to interpret the Bible in a "figurative" way. In other words, many teach that the 6 days of Creation are not LITERAL 24 hour days. I have heard many people say that the Creation account cannot be taken literally because it is impossible that EVERYTHING could be created in just 6 days. Then he has brought in the teaching of evolution along with the teaching of the Gap Theory and all of this has caused much confusion concerning creation.

**Doctrine of the Resurrection** - This doctrine has been attacked by Satan to again discredit the Bible and to steal away the hope which the Bible promises. If Jesus was not resurrected and if there is no resurrection of the dead then that erases all hope for the believer.

This is exactly what Paul is going to point out in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. If the hope of the resurrection is taken away how would it impact Christianity?

### **I. What if there is no resurrection?**

**1. If there is no resurrection of the dead then Jesus Christ is not raised.**

#### **Notice 1 Corinthians 15:12**

Here Paul looks back to the evidences which he had just presented. He asks them how they could deny the resurrection of the dead when they see all the evidence that Jesus rose from the grave. Now let us remember that the problem in the church was NOT that they did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus but the problem was SOME had been convinced there was no resurrection for the dead in general. The church at Corinth was divided on the doctrine of the resurrection.

There was a teaching which had infiltrated the church at Corinth which had come from the Greek philosophers that said "matter was evil and spirit was good". This was known as DUALISM and the bottom line was that the Greeks believed the body was evil and so when death came they were freed from a "PRISON". So the Corinthians came to believe that when they died they would basically float around in heaven for all eternity in spirit form.

They believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ but not the resurrection of man.

### **Notice 1 Corinthians 15:13**

Here is the very first and FOUNDATIONAL problem if there is no resurrection of the dead. The problem is this, if there is no resurrection of the dead then that means that Jesus Christ never rose from the dead. Let me explain to you the thinking of those who had been deceived.

They saw the resurrection of Jesus as something that was only for Him because He was God in the flesh. But they were not considering some very important facts and that was He was not only God but He was also fully man. He had a human body just as they did and just as we do.

It was in His body that He actually died and was buried. So if the resurrection of the dead is a false teaching then that means that Jesus was never raised out of the grave. You see He was a man and He died so if there is no resurrection of dead men then Jesus is still in the grave. Let me word this another way so that you can understand what Paul is saying here: if human bodies cannot survive death then there is no way that Jesus survived the grave!

Now Paul will go on and explain what the consequences would be if Jesus did not rise from the dead. The second impact upon Christianity would be:

**2. The preaching of the Apostles would be vain.**

### **Notice 1 Corinthians 15:14a**

Here Paul tells them that if Jesus is not raised from the dead then his preaching is all vain. The word "vain" means "empty". Now let me take you into this thought for a moment to help you to see what it is that Paul is saying here.

There are people who do not believe in the resurrection but they do believe that Jesus died for the sins of the world and that He was buried. Therefore they will tell you that we do not need the resurrection. His death was the payment for our sins. Then besides that we have the great teachings of Jesus that we can follow and we have the promises which He left to us. So basically they will say that the resurrection is not that important.

This very teaching is straight from Satan! Let me explain why I say this. If Jesus is still in the grave then there is NO POWER available for us to even lay hold on His promises. There is NO POWER for us to even begin to live in the instructions which He gave on the Sermon on the Mount. So all the teaching and the preaching of the Apostles about how we are to live our lives as believers would only be something that we could hope for but NEVER actually practice. Without the resurrection there is NO POWER available for us to live the Christian life.

#### **Romans 6:3-14**

<sup>3</sup> *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

<sup>4</sup> *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

<sup>5</sup> *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

<sup>6</sup> *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

<sup>7</sup> *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

<sup>8</sup> *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

<sup>9</sup> *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

<sup>10</sup> *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

<sup>11</sup> **Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

<sup>12</sup> *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

<sup>13</sup> *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, **as those that are alive from the dead**, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

<sup>14</sup> *For sin shall not have dominion over you:*

You see it is the very power that raised Jesus from the dead that lives in us to give us power over sin. If we take away the resurrection of Jesus Christ we have NO POWER to live what Paul and the other Apostles recorded concerning the Christian life. Now catch this: their teachings and the teachings of Jesus Christ would only condemn us because without the resurrection power within us we could never walk in the Word.

Let me show you number 3.

### **3. The faith of every believer would be vain.**

#### **Notice 1 Corinthians 15:14b**

If Jesus is still in the grave then our faith is empty/vain/useless. In other words if the Gospel is not true then we are wasting our time by coming here tonight and any other time that we gather here. Let me take this thought a little further. If the Gospel is not true then all of the people who lived their lives for the Gospel and all who gave their lives for the Gospel were no more than fools.

That means that Noah wasted 120 years of his life building the ark and preaching the Gospel of his day. It means that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were men who were deceived into believing a lie that there was a better hope. It means that Job had nothing more than a false hope when he stated the words of Job 19.

#### **Job 19:25-27**

*<sup>25</sup> For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*

*<sup>26</sup> And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:*

*<sup>27</sup> Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another;*

The list goes on and on but the point is if Jesus was not raised then all the Old Testament people who followed after the promises of God were deceived and their faith was vain and as we look to them for encouragement we too have a worthless faith. We are but a number in the line of many fools.

### **4. The teaching of the Apostles would be nothing more than lies.**

#### **Notice 1 Corinthians 15:15**

In Acts 1 we can see that one of the requirements to be an Apostle was they had to be an eyewitness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Acts 1:22-26**

<sup>22</sup> *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

<sup>23</sup> *And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.*

<sup>24</sup> *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,*

<sup>25</sup> *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.*

<sup>26</sup> *And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

Now since it was required by each of the Apostles that they had to have seen Jesus after the resurrection and if there was really no resurrection then that makes everyone of the men who said they were Apostles, liars. If they lied about the resurrection then how could we know that anything else they taught was the Truth?

You see if the Gospel is not True then we have believed a lie (we are fools) and everyone who has ever preached the Gospel is a liar. Really we could say that if the Gospel is a lie then all those who preach the Gospel are joined with Satan because he is the father of lies.

**5. We are dead in our sins!**

**Notice 1 Corinthians 15:16-17**

If Jesus is still in the grave then that means that He was not God.

**Romans 1:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;*

<sup>4</sup> *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

If Jesus is not God then His sacrifice was no different than another sinner dying on a cross. He had to be God in order to be the sinless Sacrifice which would take away the sins of the world. His resurrection was evidence that He was the God Man. If He did not rise from the dead He was not God and we are still in our sins. There would be no hope for us so we might as well eat, drink and be merry because we are going to perish.

**6. We will never see our loved ones again.**

**Notice 1 Corinthians 15:18**

If there is no resurrection of the dead then we have NO hope of ever seeing our loved ones who have died in Christ. That means the teaching of the rapture is nothing but a lie.

**1Thessalonian 4:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and **the dead in Christ shall rise first:***

<sup>17</sup> *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together **with them** in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

**7. We are miserable people.**

**Notice 1 Corinthians 15:19**

Let me reword this verse so that you can understand what Paul is saying, "If we have all our hope in Christ and if He did not rise from the grave then we are most miserable because we have wasted out time giving our lives to something that is dead."

**Conclusion:**

**Notice 1 Corinthians 15:20**

Jesus is alive and therefore our hope is alive.