

"The Importance of the Resurrection"

1 Corinthians 15

Introduction: Today we gather together to celebrate the Resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. Every year at this time we talk about it, and we gather together to read the accounts from the Gospels as we did in our Scripture reading earlier. The celebration does not just take place here within our church, but it is celebrated across the globe by those who are the children of God.

But I wonder how many people who attend church could tell you why the resurrection of Jesus is so important to the Christian faith?

Today we are going to look at a message that will really help you to see why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important to our Christian faith.

In the 1990's a man by the name of Marcus Borg, a "Jesus Seminar leader", said this of Christ's resurrection: "As a child, I took it for granted that Easter meant that Jesus literally rose from the dead. I now see Easter very differently. For me, it is irrelevant whether or not the tomb was empty. Whether Easter involved something remarkable happening to the physical body of Jesus is irrelevant."

Borg's view of the resurrection would mirror the view of many people who sit in church pews this morning.

Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 why the resurrection is so important. If the hope of the resurrection is taken away how would it impact Christianity?

➤ **The Confusion in the Church.**

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 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.

How did this happen? They had no New Testament Bible.

Acts 2:42a

⁴² And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine...

2 Corinthians 11:13

¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

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 such as 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. 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 preaching of the Apostles would be vain, and our faith would be vain.**

Notice 1 Corinthians 15:14

The preaching of the Apostles and the faith of the believer cannot be separated. This is not speaking of saving faith. That will be addressed in verse 17. This is living faith that is being addressed here. Let me explain this so that you can understand. The Bible teaches us of the importance of living by faith after we are saved.

Romans 1:17

¹⁷For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Galatians 3:11

¹¹But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

To live by faith is the way of sanctification. We are saved by faith and then we are to live by faith in what the Bible says about us as believers in Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:2-4

² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

This Divine Power that allows us to overcome temptation is all based upon the Power that raised Jesus from the grave. **So, if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead then we have no Power.**

Romans 6:3-14

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

⁴ 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.

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

⁶ 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.

⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

⁹ Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

¹⁰ For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

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

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

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

So, the preaching of the Apostles would be vain or empty. They are calling us to do something that we have no power to do if there is no resurrection. Then the problem goes on.

If Jesus is still in the grave, then our faith is empty/vain/useless. Our faith is then in a dead man that has nothing to offer.

- **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

²² *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.*

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

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

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

²⁶ *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.

- **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

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

⁴ 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.

Romans 4:24, 25

²⁴ But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

²⁵ Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

➤ **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.

1 Thessalonian 4:16-17

¹⁶ 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:

¹⁷ 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.

➤ **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 someone who is dead."

If there is no resurrection, then we have no hope beyond this life.

Conclusion:

Notice 1 Corinthians 15:20

Jesus is alive and therefore our hope is alive.

Romans 8:10-11

¹⁰ *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

¹¹ *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*