

OUR HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION

(1 Cor 15:1-20)

A. “The statistics on death are quite impressive: one out of one people die” (George Bernard Shaw: Irish playwright).

1. So in light of the certainty of death - why don't people take dying more seriously?
2. Why do people give most of their attention & effort to things that won't matter on the day of their death?
3. For the Christian, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead gives us the greatest single hope as we foresee the reality of our own death.
4. But hope, to be valid, must be a true hope; if hope is based on wishful thinking it's a waste of time – genuine hope must be based on truth.

5. Paul explained that Christians have a true hope based solidly in the resurrection of our Lord.

B. There are several examples in the Bible of people being resuscitated from death, some before decay, some afterward.

1. The prophet Elijah prayed & God raised a young boy from death (1 Kings 17:17-24).
2. Similarly, Elisha raised the son of a Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:32-37).
3. A dead man's body was thrown into Elisha's tomb & resurrected when the body touched Elisha's bones (2 Kings 13:21).
4. Jesus raised his good friend Lazarus (Jn 11:43-44), & also a widow's son (Luke 7:14-15).
5. Peter raised the widow Tabitha (Luke 9:40).

[But the resurrection of Jesus stands out as the most important event of all time & history.

We can back up that statement by remembering what Jesus told Martha the sister of Lazarus, “*I am the resurrection & the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives & believes in Me shall never die.*” (John 11:25-26).

It is extremely important we understand why the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the basis of our hope.

In the text of our lesson, Paul explained why Jesus’ resurrection is a matter of importance to us.]

I. WHY JESUS’ RESURRECTION IS A MATTER OF IMPORTANCE

A. Because It Is True (15:1-11).

It’s not a religious myth that coincides with springtime (i.e. Easter). **It’s not** true for some people & untrue for others.

It’s like gravity; you don’t have to believe in gravity for it to be true. *The resurrection of Jesus is verifiably true no matter what someone may say about it.*

1. Evidence Of Prophetic Scriptures (15:4).

Acts 2:25-28 – For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, & my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For **You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.** 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of joy in Your presence.’ (Psa 16:8-11).

(Psa 22:22-24 – Heb 2:12; Isa 53:10-12; Jonah – Matt 12:38-41). Jesus prophesied concerning it (Matt 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19; 27:63; John 2:19).

2. Evidence Of Eyewitness Testimony (15:5-8).

- a. These reliable witnesses had nothing to gain & everything to lose by relating this fact.
- b. No one, at the time, refuted the fact that over 500 people saw Jesus after His resurrection.

3. Evidence Of Lives Changed (15:9-11).

- a. It is foolish to think Paul & the apostles would have suffered to propagate a hoax.
- b. But it is insane to think the Corinthians would change their way of life for a lie (1 Cor 6:9-11).

[Secondly, Jesus' resurrection is a matter of importance...]

B. Because Without It Faith Is Worthless (15:12-19).

We don't believe in the gospel of Christ because we are looking for something to believe in, & that "story" is as good anything else to believe.

We believe the gospel because it contains verifiable facts that serve as the basis of our faith in God & His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

We may have started out believing that God is the Creator & that He gave His Son to die for our sins.

HOWEVER, the resurrection of Jesus gave a reason & a purpose to our faith in God.

The false teachers in Corinth were not rejecting the resurrection of Christ per se; they were teaching there is no future resurrection.

But Paul said, if you don't believe in a future resurrection then even the resurrection of **Christ** has no meaning, & so there is no basis for faith in anything, much less the gospel of Christ.

IF CHRIST DID NOT RISE FROM THE DEAD THEN NEITHER WILL ANYONE ELSE. To say there is no future resurrection implies 4 things:

1. Preaching The Gospel Has No Worth (14a, 15).

a. Because it was preached & written by unreliable men, who even implicated the OT prophets as being untrustworthy.

b. Job's friends pitied him didn't they? But do we pity Job? No, because his suffering was not all for nothing.

2. **Believing** The Gospel Has No Worth (14b, 17).

a. Because we believed the gospel had the power to take away the sins it identified in us.

c. If we truly stand on the Word of God there will be times when we feel a little like Job. But we're not the object of pity unless there is no resurrection from the dead.

3. **Hope** In Life After Death Has No Worth (15:18).

a. Because the gospel promised eternal life to those who died in spiritual fellowship with Christ.

[Paul said in verse 20, "*But now Christ is risen from the dead, & has become the firstfruits (cf. Exo 23:19) of those who have fallen asleep.*"]

Now let's consider the results of Jesus resurrection from the dead.]

4. **Serving** Christ Has No Worth (15:19).

a. Because we have believed the gospel, worked for the Lord's cause, & suffered some persecution – all for nothing.

II. THE RESULTS OF JESUS' RESURRECTION

A. We Can Be Cleared Of The Guilt Of Our Sins.

Rom 4:24-25 – It [righteousness] shall be imputed to us who believe in **Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead**, 25 who was delivered for our offenses, & was **raised for our justification**. (8:32-34)

1. By raising Jesus from the dead, God demonstrated His acceptance of Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins, & the means by which we can be made righteous in God's sight.

B. We Can Have God's Life-giving Power.

Eph 1:18-20 – that you may know...the exceeding greatness of **His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power** 20 **which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead** & seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

That's the power to grant life, spiritual life, to a mortal man or woman.

Rom 8:11-13 – But if **the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead** dwells in you, **He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.** 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

When are we first given God life-giving power?

Col 2:12-13 – **buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.** 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses & the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,**

(God's power for the Christian's life: [Eph 3:20](#); [6:10-11](#); [Phil 2:12-13](#); [4:13](#))

1. The power of God that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that raised us from spiritual death to give us a new spiritual life.

C. We Can Have A Living Hope.

1 Pet 1:3-4, 21 – Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,** 4 to an inheritance incorruptible & undefiled & that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,... 21 who through Him [[Jesus Christ](#)] [[we](#)] believe in **God, who raised Him from the dead** & gave Him glory, so that your faith & hope are in God.

1. We may have a lot of hopes, but there is only one "living hope".

D. We Can Serve Christ As Lord.

Rom 14:8-9 – For if we live, we live to the Lord; & if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. **9 For to this end Christ died & rose & lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead & the living.**

2 Cor 5:15 – He died for all, that **those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them & rose again.**

1. So the resurrection of Jesus Christ placed a new responsibility upon man: *to serve Him as the only true Lord that He is.*

CLOSING

A. In the TV show “Let’s Make a Deal”, the contestants have to choose between a prize that is visible & one that is concealed.

1. The visible prize is usually a very nice item.
2. {The unseen prize sometimes turns out to be an impractical gag gift, like 10,000 boxes of toothpicks.}
3. But sometimes the unseen prize turns out to be of far greater value than the visible prize.

{OVER}

B. We face a similar but far more serious choice:

1. We can choose to live for the things we can see & miss the unseen eternal prize,
2. Or we can release our grip on this world & lay hold of the eternal reward, eternal life – just behind the veil of time (Heb 6:19). *There is no gag gift behind that curtain.*
 - a. The eternal prize behind the curtain far outweighs in value any temporary prize you may pursue in this life.

AND, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the surest evidence that the living hope of a resurrection to life in Heaven is true, for God’s children!