

The Centrality of the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:12-34

PRAY

Introduction:

How many of you have been scammed at some point. **Everyone hates a scam; or a fake; or faulty product.** I was speaking to some friends the other day how it seems that a lot of products are designed to work right up till the **warranty runs out.** What about when you buy the latest and greatest product and you get in home then **it does not work.** What about the product that overpromise and they **never seem to work like you see on TV.** You have placed on this faith in the product or the deal it lets you down and does not deliver. Today we are going to take a look at the Corinthian church to see what kind of false hopes they had in the Gospel. No one likes to be scammed and the worst is when you don't realize it. The Corinthian church was in this type of situations.

Main idea of the text: They were placing their faith in an incomplete Gospel absent of the resurrection and Paul goes to great length to show them the centrality of the resurrection and how it effects, the past, present and future.

My Hope: That was unpack the glories of the resurrection we will have our faith strengthened to live life's that are self-sacrificing for the sake of the gospel and I hope that if you are not a believer that you will see for the first time the great accomplishments of Christ and place your hope in Him.

Main idea of the Message: Hope in the resurrection of Christ and his sure victory is central to the gospel and effects our past, present and future life.

Transition: There can be little question that for Paul Christ's resurrection is central to everything so lets take a look.

READ THE SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 15:12-34

1. Hope in the Resurrection of Christ!

15:12-19

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Vs. 12, 13 & 16

As we take a look at verse 12 we need to note that Paul is picking up the argument he was making in the previous verses, that it is common understanding that Christ was raised. He states "If Christ is **proclaimed**, as raised" Meaning that if you proclaim Christ you are proclaiming that he rose. Otherwise it's not the same Christ and not the same Gospel. This was established in the previous verses by emphasizing in verse 3-8 that Christ resurrection is displayed throughout the entirety of the Scriptures and the risen Christ was seen after his resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is a

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Key tenant of the Gospel. In fact it's not the Gospel or good news, unless he rose. Paul is rightly assuming that in preaching Christ, you preach that he rose. He is trying to find the common ground for him and the Corinthians to agree on to provide a more persuasive argument for his teaching on the resurrection of the dead.

We see in the second portion of verse 12 that some are saying that dead men don't rise or there is no resurrection of the dead. What was their faith in if they did not believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ? Well the Corinthians, as we have learned, were lovers of knowledge, and philosophy and desired to climb the social ladder to the upper crust of society. They may not have liked the idea of a bodily resurrection. Perhaps they saw Jesus as many do today as just another way. He was just a good teacher or a great example, or maybe more broadly applied the representation of the overcoming human spirit. They had not rejected the resurrection they just wanted to reinterpret the resurrection to fit their context; their personal desires and felt needs.

Paul says, for a moment let's allow your position to be correct. He wants to show them first the conclusions of their beliefs. Paul points out in verse 13 the obvious that if there is no resurrection of the dead then Christ did not rise. **If dead men don't rise then Christ did not rise because he was a man and experienced a human life and a human death.**

Transition: If it is true that Christ has not been raised then Paul leads us through 5 consequences, the first being that the Gospel itself is Empty and our witness is false

Consequence #1: The Gospel is Empty and our witness is false **15: 14-15**

¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

This is not the act of preaching but the **content** of their preaching that is empty meaning that it holds no power and there is no substance to it. The resurrection of Christ is the proof that he was more than just a man. The resurrection is the proof that God was active in Him. **If there was no resurrection then the Gospel is a sham, a fake, its empty.** If the truth of the gospel is empty then your faith in the gospel is a empty

Not only is the content empty but If Christ was not raised then the apostles were liars. One might say they were honest men just giving what they thought was a **good message or good advice**. But we must remember that the gospel that we believe and the gospel these men preached is not just good advice on how to live. **That was part of the background to the Corinthians problem.** They were selfishly seeking to advance above others in this life whether that was socially or spiritually. This is not just a good way to live. **The Gospel is news of what Christ has done.** If they got it wrong its not that they just messed up some good advice but there testimony of Christ was false.

Consequence #2: Your faith is worthless and vain **15:14, 17**

¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile

If Christ as not been raised your faith is empty and useless. Because it is empty of its content, it is

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not going to do anything good for you. Paul was coming at this hard showing them that if they did not believe in the bodily resurrection then their faith was empty and did not profit them anything, or at least anything unique that they could not find elsewhere.

Transitions: if our faith is worthless and vain then the gospel is useless to save us and we are still in our sin

Consequence #3: You are still in your Sin

15:17

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

As Paul explains the consequences he is showing how they are **like a set of dominoes one after the other with increasing significance. If Christ did not rise then his death accomplished nothing and we are still in our sins.** If we are still in our sins then we are still covered in guilt and condemnation. The wrath of God is still against us.

We have to get very clear here that the death of Christ, the Son of God, is the basis of our forgiveness and justification before God. Romans 5:8-9 says, "*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*" So it is the death – the blood – of Christ that that pays the debt we owe to God and frees us from our sins – justifies us, gives us a right standing with God.

But... Paul says in verse 17, "If Christ has not been raised . . . you are still in your sins." Christ rose because his **sacrifice for sin was satisfying to God the Father.** In other words, If Christ didn't rise from the dead; the death of Christ did not rescue anyone from sin. Christ death without a resurrection would be a condemned Christ not a justified Christ.

Transition: If Christ death did not rescue anyone from their sins that leads us to our next consequence...

Consequence #4: Those who have fallen asleep have perished

15:18

¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

The word perish here is more than just a physical death. If Christ did not rise then we face more than just a physical death we face the wrath of God. Without the resurrection we don't just die we face the judgment of God.

Transition: and finally the last domino to fall

Consequence: #5: We are to be pitied above all people

15:19

¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

The life you have chosen to live which is based on the hope that there will one day be a resurrection is a pitiful, meaningless, foolish life. If Christ is not raised then we are **martyrs to an illusion.** Forfeiting any pleasure this brief life on earth offer.

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Transition to positive/application:

The Resurrection is a central and inseparable part of the Gospel so much so that if it is removed it in any way it is no longer good news. But for those of us who believe in the resurrection we can see all these negative consequence in the positive terms:

The Gospel is completely reliable and always true.

The Gospel is immeasurably valuable and meets our deepest need

The Gospel liberates us from the bondage of sin

The Gospel allows us to live forever the way Christ lives in the joy of the Father

The Gospel gives us life filled with purpose

Call to them: **Do you have hope today? Are you filled with uncertainty and purposelessness? Are you trapped by your sin and guilt? I hold out to you Christ.**

Church this is the gospel that defines you! You are free from your past sin, liberated to live a life filled with hope in a future resurrection.

Transition: We can understand now that the resurrection of Christ changes everything and as we look at the next few verses we are going to see the sure hope of the resurrection of those in Christ and the final Victory over death.

2. Hope in Christ's Victory over death!

1 Cor 15: 20-28

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Hope 20-23

In verse 20 we see that he was the first fruits of many that would rise from the dead. This is both an agricultural term and a religious term and both meanings are applied. **Religiously** *The firstfruits* point us to the first of the harvest, which was brought to the temple and offered to God to consecrate the whole harvest. **Agriculturally**, the crop was sampled to see if there was even a crop to harvest and how good it was. It was the evidence that there was going to be a future harvest. **Those who are in Christ by faith are part of this harvest.** Christ's resurrection is a guarantee of our resurrection.

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We also read that in **verse 21** that both were men, emphasizing the truth of the incarnation of the Son of God as a man. This must happen for him to save man.

Believers are united to Christ and will share in every benefit of his work. We read in verse 21 and 22 that apart from Christ, we are united to Adam and are affected by his disobedience. **We share in the death sentence brought about by his work.** When man sinned he passed into a new state, one **dominated by, and at the same time symbolized by death.** But if by faith we are “in Christ,” then we are affected by his obedience. **We will share in the victory by which he has defeated sin and death.**

In Verse 22 he is not just speaking of the future resurrected bodies but your abundant life you can have in Christ today.

At the second coming of Christ all believers in him will receive a resurrected body never again touched by weakness, illness, aging and death. Until that day those who did exist in heaven as spirits without there resurrected bodies

Christ's Victory 24-28

The end refers to the end of this age when the believer's salvation will be complete and we will be united to him.

Rule, authority and power should be understood as any entities that opposes God and oppressed his people.

Christ must reign and place all things under his feet even death. The victory over death will be complete when believers are finally resurrected from the dead. **The resurrection is proof that Christ has conquered every foe!**

Psalm 8:6

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,

Psalm 110:8

The Lord says to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

Paul used the verb “subjected” 6 times in these verses. Christ is equal to the Father in deity, meaning he is just as much God as the Father but through all scripture he operates or functions subordinate to him. Because of the work of Jesus the rule of God will be eternally established over everything. Just as Christ suffered and died for humanity in submission to the Father's will, at the

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end of the present age Christ will submit all things entrusted to Him to God the Father. Christ has supreme power and supreme authority but **he displays his humility** to present this to the father. This is contrast to what we have been learning about the Corinthians who use their understood spiritual greatness as a way to subject people under them. A pattern that should govern our lives as those who are part of the new humanity God is creating in Christ.

Transition: Just as this patter of subjection and humility governed Christ life it should govern our life's as we devote ourselves completely to his Gospel

3. Live today in Hope of the Resurrection

1 Cor. 15:29-34

²⁹ Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? ³⁰ Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹ I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! ³² What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." ³⁴ Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

This verse is debated about what is the Baptism of the dead. Whatever the practice is Paul does mention it but does not necessary approve, and definitely does not command it. Paul argues here that the baptism of perishing bodies is useless if the dead are not raised. **The whole idea of baptism is senseless if the died are not raised to life.**

It is also possible that they saw the sacraments as the magical way of securing this new existence, or a new level of spirituality.

Is this radical life worth it? Even with all the problems and issue the Corinthian church has had Paul is relentless in his advancement of the Gospel. **He is not sure of the Corinthians or just proud of them alone but is sure of the gospel and what it is doing in their life.**

If the resurrection and the gospel are not true then lets drink and be marry. He is warning them that not believing in the resurrection will effect how they live their lives and the culture they create as congregation. False or wrong doctrine will lead to sinful behaviors. The failure of the Corinthians to think rightly about the resurrection an the Gospel has lead the failure to live rightly which we have seen displayed so far in 1 Corinthians. This is not a lack of spiritual experience but a lack of real knowledge of God and what he has accomplished.

This should mend some of the Corinthians issues Paul has brought us so far. If this is not true then we are living like fools. If this is true then stop sinning.

Conclusion:

These gospel truths lead us to 3 major applications:

First, we do not have to define ourselves by the emptiness of this life but because of the resurrection we can be defined by the hope we have in Christ. Are you just trusting in what you believe to be just good advice or does this gospel define you.

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Response:

Second, we have hope that Christ has overcome our greatest enemy.

Response: you do not have to fear death.

Third, our confidence in the resurrection motivates us to a radical self-sacrificing love for others that glories of God and bring us joy

Response: sacrifice for the advance of the Gospel

Response: Point to Christ

I want to hold out Christ to you:

Christ perfect life, atoning death and victorious resurrection can be your to hope in today!

Christ conquered death so we no longer have to fear death

Christ lived a life radical devoted to the father glory even to the point of his death.

Will you share with me this morning in his victory?