

I BELIEVE THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1 Corinthians 15: 12- 19, 42- 58; text 17- 19

June 27, 2021

I. Some Who Do Not Believe This or Live as If They Don't

A. We Christians believe and have the hope that our bodies will be raised to eternal life, but not all share that hope with us.

1. One reason Paul wrote these words was that there were people in the Corinthian church who doubted that the dead would rise.
 - a. Perhaps they were influenced by some philosophies in the surrounding culture.
 - b. Corinth was a city-state in Greece.
 - c. Many Greeks believed that when a person died, their soul or spirit was freed from the prison of their bodies.
2. Some today hold that disembodied spirits of those who died haunt the earth and live in animals, trees, and even rocks.
3. Others believe in reincarnation, that the spirits of all things are recycled into new creatures.
4. Secularists today and some who still say they are Christians believe that death is the end, and that when they die they cease to exist forever.

B. There are also those who live as if they don't believe the resurrection of the dead.

1. The rich fool in Jesus parable was a picture of those who live as if this life is all there is, caring only about how to save their wealth, so they can live comfortably the rest of their lives.
2. Others who are poor and suffering try to check-out of life through drugs, alcohol, pleasure, or even by committing suicide.
3. Maybe some of you listening today been duped by your prosperity or your despair, or even by Satan himself, to forget the important Biblical teaching of the resurrection.
4. Yet the truth is all of us forget sometimes.
5. This morning God's Word challenges all of us, lest any of us are so deluded and robbed of our hope.

Questions:

- 1) Who are some people I know who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead? What do they believe?
- 2) Who are some people I know who do not live like they believe they will be resurrected to new life, and who live as if this life is all there is? Who are some people I know who are so filled with despair that they fail to appreciate that this life is preparation for the new life they will have after they are resurrected?
- 3) When have I lived as if this life was the only life I will have? Why did I do so?

II. The Consequences of Not Believing This

1 Corinthians 15:16 (NIV) For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

A. If it's impossible or undesirable for dead bodies to be raised then Christ's body was not raised either.

1. If the victorious exalted state of our lives is to be rid of our bodies, then Christ who took on flesh to save us, would certainly not have kept his own body after he died.
2. If the path of salvation is to remain disembodied spirits, Christ would never lead us down the resurrection path.
3. He'd have stayed in the grave.

B. This has ramifications for the entire gospel message.

1 Corinthians 15:14 (NIV) And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

1. All Christian preaching stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. And, as v. 15 says, if the resurrection is not true then the disciples, including Paul, who claimed to have seen Christ were either deceived or liars.

1 Corinthians 15:15 (NIV) More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

3. If so, then all the good that has come to humankind because of their witness and because of the Christian faith is based on a lie.

C. If Jesus did not arise he could not have atoned for our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:17 (NIV) And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

1. The promise and hope of our baptism is that we died and arose again with Christ—in other words, our sins stayed buried in the grave and we arose as new people belonging to him.
2. Without that we remain in our sins.
3. A dead Christ may be a martyr who inspires us, but we can't trust a dead Christ to save us!

D. If Christ is not raised and there is no resurrection of the dead, we all are fighting an unwinnable battle against sin in our lives and in the world.

Romans 7:19 (NIV) For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.

1. As hard as we try not to, we all still sin.
2. And if we can't eliminate sin within, how can eliminate it in the world?
3. We are like rats running around on a rat wheel, and might as well give up!
4. Only if our dead bodies are raised can we know the promise of living on a new earth where sin and death are no more.

E. Unless we are resurrected in Christ death is the end.

1 Corinthians 15:18 (NIV) Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

1. **Unless we are resurrected in Christ, we will never see our loved who have died again, and all we have left are our memories of them.**
 - a. **We humans were created body and soul.**
 - b. **A body without a soul is lifeless.**
 - c. **A soul without a body is incomplete, and not fully us.**
 - d. **So, even if we would be some spirit floating around somewhere we'd cease to exist as the human being we once were.**
2. **If this life is all there is, those who suffer today suffer without any hope.**
 - a. **Christians who suffer from disease look forward to a life without suffering.**
 - b. **Christians who are persecuted and discriminated against long for a time when justice will prevail.**
 - c. **Christians who have lost their jobs, wealth, and families for the sake of the gospel, trust that God will reward them.**
 - d. **If there is no resurrection and Christ was not raised, the Christians suffered for nothing.-**

1 Corinthians 15:19 (NIV) If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

Questions:

- 1) **How does it comfort me to know that Christ, God's own Son, was resurrected and received a glorified human body after he died for our sins?**
- 2) **Why does the truth of the Christian faith rest on the truth of Christ's resurrection from the dead?**
- 3) **How does Christ's resurrection assure me that Christ completely paid for all my sins?**
- 4) **How does my belief that I will be resurrected to live in a new world where there is no sin inspire me to fight sin in my life and in the world today?**
- 5) **Who are some deceased loved ones that I really miss? How does believing the resurrection comfort me as I think about them?**
- 6) **Who are some brothers and sisters in Christ I know who have suffered and lost much in the world? Even if they knew they would suffer until they died, why did they keep trusting in Jesus? How does believing that I will be raised from the dead give me hope in my suffering?**

III. The Blessings of Believing This

A. As those who confess, "I believe the resurrection of the dead," we know that Christ has been raised and in him so shall we.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (NIV) But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1. **As those who are alive in Christ, we know that our spirits will never die.**
2. **We trust that when we die our spirits will separate from our dead bodies and go to be with him until he returns to this earth.**
3. **And when he returns, we believe that God's Spirit will raise our bodies from the dead.**

1 Thessalonians 4:14-16 (NIV) We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

B. We also believe that the body we will receive on that will be new and different.

1. **And that's what Paul speaks of in verse 42- 54.**
2. **Especially if you are struggling with the realities of a broken body or mind here on earth, read these verses over and over again.**

1 Corinthians 15:54 (NIV) When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

C. As those who strive to do what our Lord calls us to do, we who believe the resurrection, know that our struggle has meaning.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV) Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1. **We struggle against sin in all its forms: cruelty, injustice, poverty, exploitation, and immorality, and struggle to accomplish all that God has called us to do.**
2. **We do so, knowing full well that instead of saving this world, our imperfect lives add to its misery and to our own.**
3. **Yet we also know that Christ by his death and resurrection has already saved this world and us.**
4. **And we know that his death and resurrection makes holy and new the imperfect works we offer him.**
5. **And we believe that someday, when we in our new bodies stand before him holding out our meager good works, he will say to us, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' [Matthew 24: 21 (NIV)]**

Because we have arisen with Christ and will arise when he returns, we can say, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ [1 Corinthians 15: 55- 57 (NIV)]

Questions:

- 1) **The Bible says very little about what happens to us who die before Jesus returns, except to say that we will go to be with Jesus. Why do I think that this is so? Why is this enough? Some who have died and returned to life have fabulous descriptions of heaven. Have I spoken with any such person or read books by them? What was my reaction and why?**
- 2) **As one who believes I will be raised from the dead, what am I ultimately looking forward to, and why is this so comforting to me? What are some things about my new body that I can't wait to experience? Why is this truth so comforting to brothers and sisters who are suffering?**
- 3) **How does it inspire me to know that God will reward my good works? Yet, why is this reward still a result of his grace and not of what I deserve?**