

1 Corinthians 15:12–20

¹² Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.

¹⁶ For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

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

¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

The Importance of the Resurrection ***1 Corinthians 15:12-20***

INTRO:

Why is our Lord's resurrection so vital? I know the Lord Jesus rose from the dead on the first resurrection Sunday morning two thousand years ago, but why is that so important? What difference does it make to me? Paul answers this question in a very pointed way in our text for this morning. The first eleven verses of this text describe the Gospel and lay down irrefutable evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In our text, (**verses 12-20**), the Apostle outlined several reasons why Christ's Resurrection is important.

I. THE RESURRECTION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE . . . (v. 12-19)

II. BECAUSE HE LIVES (v. 20)

I. THE RESURRECTION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE . . . (v. 12-19)

A. The resurrection is important because without it life would be meaningless and empty.

vs.12-16 "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen."

1. Although there is overwhelming evidence for the resurrection of Christ, there still was a problem in the Corinthian Church. Some were really taken with Platonism. Like the Scriptures, Plato taught that mankind has an immortal soul. However, unlike the Bible, Plato believed that the goal of death was to free the soul from the body which only imprisoned it. There could be no resurrection of the body in Plato's thought. When people tried to marry Plato and the Bible, they came up with this assertion that there is no resurrection of the dead. Paul stated this reality in **verses 12 and 13**.

“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.”

2. This kind of thinking causes a real problem. To help the Corinthians see the problem, Paul adopts their premise for the sake of the argument and then proceeds to draw out its logical conclusions. The first result is found in **verse 14**.

“And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.”

A gospel without the resurrection is no gospel at all. Jesus rose from the dead as a guarantee that the Father accepted the offering of the Son.

Romans 1:1-4 ***“Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”***

Our hope is also tied to the resurrection.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 ***“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.”***

It is the fact that one day we shall all rise together with Him is the hope to which we look forward. A faith that has not the resurrection is a faith that is empty and worthless.

3. If, indeed, Jesus did not rise from the dead the preaching that Paul did at such a major sacrifice to himself mattered nothing. Our Gospel is a historic Gospel. It is predicated upon events that happened. Jesus did come. He did die for our sins. He did rise from the dead. If there is no cross, no grave, and no resurrection, there is no substance to what we believe and what we preach.

4. More than this, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, our whole life is meaningless. The premise of the book of **Ecclesiastes** is that without God, ***“emptiness of emptiness, all is emptiness!”*** Solomon tried everything conceivable

to fill his emptiness. He tried sex, possessions, work, and alcohol. You name it, he tried it. Still, apart from God, he found no hope, no purpose, and no fulfillment in life.

5. Even more devastating, Paul wrote us in (v.15), he and all the other apostles are found false witnesses of God.

“Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.”

In short, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then Paul and the other Apostles were peddling a lie. Further it could be charged God Himself was lying.

6. Not only were the Apostle liars, if Christ did not rise, God Himself lied the Scriptures which foretold it are also a lie. This is serious. If God can lie, if God can be mistaken, then nothing is secure!

7. So, the resurrection is important because without it life is meaningless and reality is up for grabs!

B. The resurrection is important because without it we are lost (vs.17-18). Paul made this point for both the living and the dead.

“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.”

1. (v.17) If Christ be not raised, the blessing that was secured by our faith does not exist. There is no forgiveness for sin. We still are under the judgment of a Holy God who hates sin and has promised to unleash His wrath against it. Think of Nadab and Abihu. Think of Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember the Cities of Canaan. Think about Achan. We are in the same position they were in, if indeed Christ is not risen.

2. (v.18) now let's do more than think about ourselves. Think about your loved ones who have died in Christ. If Christ be not risen, they have perished. They are in hell! There is no hope. There is no escape from Divine Judgment. The wrath of God that abides upon sinners will fall on our heads. We will be tormented forever, because of our sin.

3. The resurrection is important because without it our lives are meaningless. And resurrection is important because without it we are lost!

C. Finally, The Resurrection is important because without it we have only a misguided hope in this present world.

v.19 *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”*

1. This verse speaks eloquently to twentieth first century Christianity. We live in a society which is swept up in existentialism. This existential philosophy invades the church much like Platonism did in the early church. The eternal frequently is sacrificed on the altar of the present. We are more interested in the present benefits of walking with Jesus than the blessing that will come in the future. “Don’t tell me about pie-in- the- sky- by-and-by.”

2. While there are tremendous blessings in the present as we walk with the Lord, these blessings are nothing when compared with that which shall be ours with the Lord. Paul says that if all there is, is what we have in this life walking with Jesus; we are of all men most to be pitied. Believing a lie makes us pitiable. Do you remember the future reserved for us?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*

So, why is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus so important? It is because without it life has no meaning, without it we are lost, and without it we only have a misguided hope in this world. About now we should be ready to get the gun out and end our miserable worthless existence, except **v.20!**

II. BECAUSE HE LIVES (v. 20)

Here is the reality, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ.

v.20 *“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”*

We don’t need to cope with any of these possibilities because the fact is He rose. But Paul doesn’t stop there in this verse. More than Christ rising, we too shall rise!

A. BECAUSE HE LIVES . . . Life Has Meaning and Purpose!

1. Our faith is built upon a firm Historical foundation. He did come into this world. He did die for our sins. He did rise again the third day!

2. Our lives are not empty, futile, useless, and worthless. They are filled with a fellowship with the living God! He walks with us and talks with us. The goal of our lives is to please Him!

B. *BECAUSE HE LIVES . . . We Are Not Lost, But Saved.*

1. ***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1).*** We no longer have to fear God’s wrath. It all fell upon our Savior at Calvary, and we know His sacrifice for our sin was accepted because He rose from the dead.

2. Not only that, but we know that someday we will see our loved ones who died in Christ again. Someday, the great homecoming day of **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** will happen. I’m going to see my daddy then. I will see Kaylyn, my sister-in-law, then. I will see Don Kowbel again then. Most of all, that day I will see my Savior face to face. O what a day that will be.

C. Because He lives we have hope in this life and in that which is to come!

1. In this world our hope is not to be pitied, it is to be envied. We know that whatever we do, no matter how insignificant it may look to others around us, counts for God! We can glorify Him in doing even the mundane things in life, and He is pleased with us.

2. We do have a home with Him in which **Romans 8:18** will be true.
“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

I don’t know what this glory shall be. But when it is measured against our present sufferings our sorrow and pain will be like dust on the balance scale!

Do you know this risen Savior? If you do not you can know Him today!

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow

Because He lives, all fear is gone.

Because I know He holds the future.

And life is worth the living, just because He lives!

Hymn #213 ***Because He Lives***