

# Christ's Resurrection and The Believer

*1 Corinthians*

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1 Corinthians chapter 15 is where we are tonight. We are looking tonight at verses 12 through 19. Let's read that together, 1 Corinthians 15 beginning with verse 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? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 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. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.<sup>1</sup>

Let's ask the Lord's help tonight as we study his Word.

*Father in heaven, we do just that right now. We ask for your help. Lord, there is much that I desire to share, much that you have brought to my mind as I have studied this and looked at this, but I confess that I am powerless to do that in a way that is beneficial to anyone unless you help me by your Spirit. And so I ask you for that. Lord, we also know that we can't receive from your Word as we listen to it preached, as we study it, unless you teach us. Just as men are powerless to bring truth to us in themselves, we are powerless to learn truth if just left to ourselves. Anything we have ever learned, truly learned, Lord, you taught us. So we ask you now to use this time of proclamation of your Word to instruct us, to correct us, to encourage us, to strengthen us, to equip us. I pray for anyone in this room who doesn't belong to you. I ask, Lord, that perhaps even before this night is over they would belong to you. They would turn in faith to Christ. We love you. We thank you that we do and we ask all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Death is an enemy. I don't know if you think about it that way. If you ever think of death as an enemy, but that is how the Bible describes it. In fact, it is the last enemy that

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

will be conquered. When you look at chapter 15 verse 26 notice it says, “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”<sup>2</sup>

Probably shouldn't use the word “conquer.” There is a sense in which it has been conquered, but in terms of its complete removal, in terms of it being destroyed, it is the last enemy to go.

It is a dreadful enemy. Anyone who isn't aware of that, anyone who doesn't feel that is someone who either hasn't lived very long or they are the kind of person who just turns their mind away from things they don't want to think about.

Anyone who has ever stood at the graveside of a loved one, you know the pain of death. You know it is the kind of enemy the Bible describes it to be. It takes things away from us, doesn't it?

I was thinking today. My father passed away at 54 years of age, had a heart attack. That was in 1997. So I had the privilege to know my father and have a relationship with him for 34 years. But I haven't seen him in 14 years. I haven't had a conversation with him in 14 years. I haven't heard his voice in 14 years. I haven't seen his face. I haven't known his presence. That is what death does.

And if you live your life long enough on this earth you see the passage of time and with the years passing by you watch your youthfulness go away and you come face to face with the fact that everything in this world, in this fallen world as it is right now, it is all temporary. It is all transient. None of it lasts.

The psalmist wrote in Psalm 90 verse 10. “The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.”<sup>3</sup>

That is life since the fall.

That is why every human being, if just left with what they possess by nature, if all we have is who we are and what we have from birth, if that is all that has happened in our life, natural things, the right thing, the perceptive thing is to be afraid of death. When someone doesn't know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and they say they are not afraid to die, they are just confessing to being a fool. If you don't have Christ, then you ought to fear death.

Hebrews 2:14 says this.

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he [Christ] himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:26.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 90:10.

the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.<sup>4</sup>

The whole human race described there in this life long slavery of being afraid to die and that is not an unreasonable fear. If you don't have Christ it is the most reasonable fear, because if you die without Jesus it is going to represent the end of everything for you. It represents the end of everything. It is the end of life as you know it that includes certain freedoms, right? When you have freedom today, even if you are lost, there are certain natural freedoms that you know. You got up this morning. You went places. You did things. You had conversations. You had breakfast or lunch or dinner or whatever it is you have done. But what are you going to be able to do after you die?

The end of life means the end of relationships as I have already described. The end of life means the end of the joys and the enjoyments that you have known in this existence. The Bible says that God in his common grace even among lost people he gives them things that they enjoy.

So there it is hanging over the human race from the dawn of time since the fall, this reality known as death and it is a great enemy. And there is nothing that man can do on his own to fix that problem. Every man is subject to death. As you have heard it said, there are two things that you can be sure of in this world, taxes and death. Everyone is going to meet with them. Death is at work in every one of us, even now, right? As soon as you are born you begin to die. The older you get, the more you become aware of the fact that death is at work in your body. Death is at work in every part of us through indwelling sin. You talk about spiritual death. It has affected the whole person of any individual, the way we think, the way we feel about things, physically. Everything you can imagine, death is having its effect. And it all came into existence through sin and on the other side of death, because it is the effect of sin, on the other side of death is judgment. And apart from Christ we already know what the judgment will be because of the law of God. Every man stands condemned. He deserves to die. And he deserves the second death. He deserves everlasting death because of sin.

This is why 1 Corinthians 15:56—we will get to this later in this chapter—says, “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”<sup>5</sup>

Why is death dreadful and fearful beyond the fact that it means the end of everything we have known in this life? Well, because beyond this life there is God. Beyond this life there is judgment. And the law of God informs us as to what the judgment will be.

So the question comes: How could this enemy ever be conquered? How could the sting of death be removed? How could the fear of death be turned into peace? How can this enemy be conquered?

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<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 2:15-16.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:56.

Strangely the answer is: through death. Death could only be conquered through death and through the death of one man.

I want you to keep your Bible marker here and turn to the book of Hebrews chapter two and look at what it says in verse 14. We read it a moment ago, but I want you to see it. Hebrews chapter two look at verse 14 and this tells us how this enemy death has been conquered. Hebrews 2:14.

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood...”<sup>6</sup>

Now he is talking about the children of God, right? We who have been redeemed, because we are flesh and blood, “...he [Christ] himself likewise partook of the same things.”<sup>7</sup> That is, he took to himself a human nature. God took to himself a true human nature. God dwelt in flesh and blood. He became a man. Why did he do that? “...that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”<sup>8</sup>

He came to this earth, virgin born, took to himself a human nature, the God man, why? To die in our stead, in our place, for our sins to destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver us from the judgment that we deserve for our sins. And, thus, death no longer is something for us to be afraid of as the children of God, but rather, we can know peace even when facing death. Christ has conquered it for us. Through death, death is destroyed.

We could say it another way. Jesus Christ tasted death so that all those who trust in him will never have to taste death. We die physically, but we never will have to, as believers, we will never have to taste what death is without Jesus, without God, without forgiveness, without redemption. We will never have to taste what death really is because he tasted death for us.

Hebrews chapter two, just look over to the left there, verse nine and look at what it says.

“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”<sup>9</sup>

And the everyone spoken of here are all those who are gathered at the family of God, for all the children of God he tasted death.

In John 8:51 Jesus said this.

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<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 2:14.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Hebrews 2:14-15.

<sup>9</sup> Hebrews 2:9

“Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word,”<sup>10</sup> there is the qualification. That is why I said that he tasted death for the children of God, because listen to how it is qualified in John 8:51.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”<sup>11</sup>

How do you never see death? How do you never taste death? You must trust in the one who tasted death for anyone who will trust in him.

John 8:52.

“The Jews said to him, ‘Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’”<sup>12</sup>

You see, they understood exactly what Jesus was saying, but they misunderstood what he meant. He wasn’t saying that if you follow him, you will never go through this process that we call death. What he means is you will never know death in the way you would know it apart from salvation. You will never taste death as you would taste it apart from redemption. In fact, there is a sense in which it is true to say you don’t die at all, because immediately you move from a state of spiritual life on this earth, though we still abide in these unredeemed bodies, we know what it is to have spiritual life right now and death for us means passing from a life of spiritual life on this earth into the immediate presence of God, again, an existence of life, not death so that, in reality, believers never even die.

John 11:26, Jesus speaking:

“And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”<sup>13</sup>

Of course he asks the sister of Lazarus there, “Do you believe this?”<sup>14</sup>

The question is for us, too. Do you believe this?

But John chapter six verse 50.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John 8:51.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> John 8:52.

<sup>13</sup> John 11:26.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> John 6:50-51.

Jesus will die so that we don't die. Jesus died so that we wouldn't taste death. This is how the enemy death was conquered.

But now what does this mean in all of its fullness when we say that believers don't have a future that includes death? What is the fullness of that which we receive through the death of Christ.

Well, what we have been learning, if you have been with us, look back at 1 Corinthians 15. What we have been learning in verses one through 11 is that you cannot preach the gospel in all of its fullness unless you preach the resurrection of Jesus. The good news of Jesus is not just that he died for sinners on a cross, but that he was three days later raised from the dead and that this fact has been attested to by eye witnesses, that it is not pie in the sky. It is not some kind of spiritual philosophy. It is not a fairy tale that has spiritual meaning. No, it is a historical fact. Jesus died. That is a historical fact 2000 years ago. And three days after he was raised from the dead bodily. That is an historical fact, so that we preach a message that is based in history. In fact, it is required to have been accomplished in history or it is not true.

The gospel is not just that Jesus died, but that he is also alive. We preach a risen Christ. And the promise is for us, for believers, is that we not only share in the benefits that were secured by his death, but we also share in the blessings secured by his resurrection. We have not only as believers... It is not only true to say we are identified with him in his death, that we are also identified with him in his resurrection. We died with Jesus. We have also been raised together with Christ. And just as Christ was raised from the dead bodily, so it is true to say that we not only have spiritual life through the death and resurrection of Christ, but our future is one of physical life in the presence of God forever.

Just as Jesus was raised from the dead bodily, so we, children of God, will be raised from the dead bodily. We have already been raised spiritually, our future is one of physical resurrection. We will live forever, body and soul, beyond the life that we know right now on this earth. That is God's promise. That is our future.

2 Timothy 2:10 says, Paul writing:

Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will [future tense] also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.<sup>16</sup>

Now here is the question. Do we really believe that? Do we really believe that we have a future that includes a, not only our spiritual salvation, but our physical redemption, that we will live forever, beloved, in paradise, body and soul with the Lord and with all those who belong to the Lord, that, if indeed, my father was a believer—and from all his

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<sup>16</sup> 2 Timothy 2:10-13.

testimony and evidences he was—and I belong to Christ, that the future I have one day will be not only forever in the presence of Jesus, but forever also with my father in the presence of Jesus and our relationship will be renewed and we will have conversations again and share meals together again and we will know the physical presence of one another, that we will live before the Lord, body and soul? Do we really believe that?

Look at verse 12 and notice that Paul is facing a problem in the Corinthian Church. He has just reminded them of the gospel. This is what he did, right, chapter 15 verse one?

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you.”<sup>17</sup>

So he goes through the gospel again. What do you do when people are having spiritual trouble? You take them back to the gospel. We live out of the gospel. Almost every problem we face can be fixed if we will go back to the gospel. And he takes them back to the gospel and he reminds them, verses one through 11, that it includes resurrection. And the reason why he is reminding them of this is because there is a particular problem in their church. And here is the problem.

Verse 12.

“Now if Christ is proclaimed...”<sup>18</sup>

And the “if” there, the expected answer is “and he is proclaimed this way.” This is the gospel.

“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?”<sup>19</sup>

What is going on in Corinth? There were some in the Church who believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead. They had to believe that, or they weren't Christians. They would not say they disbelieved the gospel. They believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead. They knew it to be a part of gospel preaching, but somehow they had come to the conclusion that though Jesus had been raised from the dead bodily, it was not true to think that his followers would be raised from the dead bodily.

“True enough,” they would say, “Jesus was raised from the dead, but it doesn't follow that there is going to be a resurrection for all of us. No, there is no resurrection of the dead in general.”

This is what they were teaching. This is what they believed.

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<sup>17</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:1.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:12.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Now why would anyone ever say such a thing? How would these people ever come to the idea that Jesus was raised from the dead, but we won't be raised from the dead? How could that happen?

Well, probably the most likely reason they thought this was the influence of Greek philosophy. From all we know about Greek philosophy it was notoriously dualistic. The idea that that which is spiritual is good or immaterial is good, that which is physical is somehow evil, there were these elaborate theories in Greek philosophy about how creation came into existence and it always was viewed as some kind of lesser form and so the physical state was not really that important.

In fact, the body was viewed like, almost like a prison for the soul and for them the idea of paradise would be release from the body. To raise the body from the dead, what would that do? How good would that be? Why would we want that?

So they didn't believe that eternal bliss required a physical nature. Paradise, sure enough. Some kind of blessing, some kind of heaven, sure enough. But the need for a body? No, we don't need that. This is what some in Corinth thought and it was because, in general Greek philosophy had not respect for the idea of a physical resurrection.

In fact, in Acts chapter 17—we won't turn there, but you can look at it in your own time—when Paul was at the Areopagus and he is preaching there the gospel of Christ they are listening well and good until he gets to the point of resurrection. And we are told that the Athenians listened to all kinds of philosophies all the time. And when Paul got to the part about resurrection from the dead, the Bible says they sneered at him, some of them did, mocked him.

From the standpoint of Greek philosophy it was silly to think of a physical resurrection. Well, we already know, don't we, the Corinthian Church has been influenced by their culture. They are in love with rhetoric. They are in love with philosophy. They want to be viewed as wise. They want to be viewed as acceptable by their culture and, no doubt, the culture is pressing in upon this congregation. They are being influenced by philosophy in some cases more than the gospel. And so some of them have come to the conclusion that there is no reason why we ought to believe that we will be raised from the dead physically.

That is one way they would have gotten into this position, but we also don't want to ignore the fact that even in Jewish circles there were some who scoffed at the idea of a resurrection.

Matthew 22:23 says, "The same day Sadducees came to him [To Jesus—and hen the Bible says], who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question."<sup>20</sup>

You remember the idea of a wife who had several husbands who died and then whose wife will she be in the resurrection? And they were asking him this question trying to

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew 22:23.



trick him or trying to make him look foolish because they don't believe in a resurrection. You can read about that in Matthew chapter 22.

Paul used this to his advantage in Acts chapter 23 when he is on trial. Verse six says:

Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial." And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.<sup>21</sup>

So you had this anti-supernatural sect in Jewish life and they didn't believe in resurrection and you had Greek philosophy and they didn't believe in resurrection. So whether these people in Corinth were being influenced from the Jewish side or the pagan side doesn't matter. Some of them came to the conclusion there is no resurrection of the dead.

And Paul is saying in these verses that is a major problem. You cannot have the gospel, not only unless you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, but unless you believe that we will be raised from the dead. Both are necessary to have the gospel.

But here is what I want you to think about tonight. Are we really much different from the Corinthians? I doubt that anyone here tonight would formally say you don't believe in resurrection. In fact, I feel safe in saying everyone here tonight believes what the Bible teaches that we will all be raised from the dead one day bodily, physically, I think we believe that. But let me ask you this. Practically speaking, are we sometimes unbelievers in a resurrection? That is, are we guilty of thinking about the eternal state in some ethereal way. You know, we just sort of think about floating around in the presence of God and we don't stop to realize that we are going to live forever where there is a new heavens and a new earth and we are going to live on a new earth bodily. I mean, we are going to have a physical nature, not the same kind of body that we have right now. It will be fit for that state, but it will be just as much a body as what we have now. It will be just as much real matter as what we have now. It is going to be in a human form just like what we have now.

Honestly, I mean, be truthful about yourself when you think about your future with the Lord. Do you think about it in a bodily way? Do you think about it in a physical way? Because if we don't think about it that way, then practically we are not real believers in the resurrection, are we? We don't understand the importance of it, the reality of it.

So that is our first point tonight in verse 12. We see the problem. The problem is they are thinking about resurrection in a way that is contrary to the gospel and we need to be sure that we are not thinking about resurrection in a way that is contrary to the gospel.

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<sup>21</sup> Acts 23:6-8.

So, our second thought tonight is this. What perspective must we have? If we don't fall prey to the same problem, what perspective must we have?

A couple of thoughts. First of all, resurrection is necessary to full humanity. When God created man he could have made us any way he wanted. The angels, for example, don't have bodies. They are spirits. And God could have made man that way. But, instead, from the dust of the earth he formed a body for man and then he breathed into man the breath of life. Man was created to be body and soul, to live as a body and soul unit.

Man basically has two parts, physical and spiritual. And that is how man was meant to be so that the promise of everlasting life as humans, for God to grant everlasting life to us as people, as humans, must include the future of living with a body. Even the Old Testament indicates faith in this.

In the book of Job, for example, chapter 19 verse 25 Job says this.

For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.  
And after my skin has been thus destroyed,  
yet in my flesh I shall see God,  
whom I shall see for myself,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
My heart faints within me!<sup>22</sup>

He says, "In my flesh, in my body I will see the Lord."

You remember after our Lord was raised from the dead and he appears to his disciples, he was very careful to let them know he was not just a spirit, wasn't he? He was very careful to let them know that he had a real body.

Luke 24:36.

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"

But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."<sup>23</sup>

This is Jesus raised from the dead. What does he have? He has flesh and he has bones.

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<sup>22</sup> Job 19:25-27.

<sup>23</sup> Luke 24:36-39.

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.<sup>24</sup>

He was no spirit. He has got a body. He has got a mouth. He is able to take the fish in his hand. He is able to put it in. He is able to chew it up. He is able to swallow it. He has a physical nature.

Mark 14:22.

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”<sup>25</sup>

He said, “I am going to eat and drink with you again. It is going to be in the future. It is going to be when the future comes, but I am going to eat and drink with you again.”

That is our future, dear people. All sin removed, but also a physical nature fit for eternity.

So resurrection is necessary for full humanity because God created man to be a body and a soul and he purposed to redeem us in such a way that what he originally meant for us to be we will be for the rest of eternity and he originally meant for us to be body and soul.

But there is another aspect to this. Not only is resurrection necessary for full humanity, resurrection is also necessary for the gospel to be true.

Look at verse 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?”<sup>26</sup>

And now he begins to work this out logically.

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Luke 24:40-43.

<sup>25</sup> Mark 14:22-25.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:12.

<sup>27</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:13-14.

And we are going to move on from there to see the rest of what he says.

Now, on the surface this might at first glance seem to be some kind of circular reasoning. You say there is no resurrection of the dead, but if there is no resurrection then that means Christ has not been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, then the gospel is not true.

Well, isn't it possible to think that Jesus was raised from the dead and we aren't? How would it follow that if I say, "We are not going to be raised from the dead," that means Jesus wasn't raised from the dead and therefore it destroys the gospel?

Couldn't it be true that he was raised, but we won't be raised? Well, don't miss this. This is so important.

Do you know what Paul is stressing in this section? And if you miss this, you will miss the whole section. What he is saying is this. Christ's death and his resurrection was truly human. There is nothing that Jesus went through, both in death and in resurrection that is not truly, fully human so that if you say it is not possible for humans—it is not God's will, it is not God's purpose, therefore it is not possible—for humans to be raised from the dead, then you have just destroyed the resurrection of Jesus because there was nothing about his death, burial and resurrection that was anything other than human. He really died as a man. He was really buried among dead men.

By the way, that is what he is talking about here when he says, "Resurrection of the dead." It is literally from among dead ones. In fact, you will notice this is why he uses words like this, verse 13, "Not even Christ has been raised."<sup>28</sup>

You see, he is including Christ in this group. You have dead ones, dead men. And if there is no way to raise dead men, then not even the man Jesus was raised, because everything that Jesus suffered in death, burial, was human. And, thus, the only way for him to be raised from the dead was the resurrection of a man. God had to raise a man from the dead. He really died as a man. He was really buried among dead men. He was really raised from among dead men. He was really alive in a resurrected body.

If you say that is not possible, if you say that does not happen, then you have just destroyed the resurrection of Jesus, which means you have lost touch with the gospel.

Christ took to himself everything that our humanity means except sin. Sinless.

Even sin, however, he experienced in the sense of a sin substitute, in the sense of suffering. He was as pure on the cross as the new driven snow. He didn't become a sinner on the cross, but he suffered our sin penalty on the cross and in every other way he lived as a man among men.

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<sup>28</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:13.

Why did he do that? In order to redeem us and to give us everything man lost in the fall when Adam sinned... and more. Everything we lost which includes a physical nature that is without death, Christ has reclaimed for us, he has redeemed for us through his own life and death and resurrection, but he has done even more than give it back to us. He has given us more than what Adam had in the garden because Adam was subject to a fall and after we have been saved and after we have been raised and we are present with God in the new heavens and the new earth, praise be to God we will never be subject to a fall again.

That is going to be an everlasting condition.

Adam was created without sin and placed in a sinless people, but he was subject to a fall. We are going to be without sin, placed in a sinless place, but we will never again be subject to a fall. Jesus claims for us more than Adam had or could ever give us.

So if resurrection is not possible for people, then Jesus has not been raised from the dead. And what follows from that is that the gospel is then destroyed.

Verse 13.

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 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.<sup>29</sup>

By the way, if you look down at verse 17 you notice it says, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.”<sup>30</sup> Do you see that?

And then in verse 14 it says, “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.”<sup>31</sup>

Different Greek word translated “vain” and “futile.” And here is the difference. He is saying in verse 14, “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain,”<sup>32</sup> in a sense of it is baseless. It is emptied of its content. It is empty in that sense. You have just... if Christ has not been raised from the dead, you have just emptied the gospel of its content because the gospel declare the resurrection of Jesus as necessary for our salvation. And not only is the gospel emptied of its content, but guess what else is emptied of its content? Your faith. You have got nothing now to believe, nothing for your faith to take hold of, nothing for your faith to rest on.

Something else happens theologically when you deny physical resurrection of people.

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<sup>29</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:13-15.

<sup>30</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:17.

<sup>31</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:14.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Verse 15, it also means that we are misrepresenting God, because the apostles were declaring that this was not a message that came from them, but a message that came from God. And the message they had been preaching, as verse 11 makes plain, verse 12 as well, is the message they have been preaching is the resurrection of Jesus, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. They say, “God sent us to tell you this.”

Wait a second. People aren't raised from the dead. That means Jesus wasn't raised from the dead. That means that what we have been preaching is baseless. What you have been believing is baseless and on top of that, we have been putting words in the mouth of God that he never gave us. We have been lying about what God said.

But this doesn't have just a theological impact, if you don't believe the physical resurrection. It also has a personal impact. We feel it on a personal level, verse 17.

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile,” different word there. This just means worthless. We can say it this way. “Then your believing has been foolish. You have been a fool.”

If there is no resurrection of people, that means Jesus hasn't been raised because he was fully human, died a real human death, experienced a real human burial and we are saying experienced a real human resurrection. If that is not possible, then guess what? Everything you have believed, you have been a fool.

Something else happens, verse 17, all your sins are still in their place. You have not been forgiven of a single thing, because the one who said he was dying for sinners in their place, the one who said he was dying for the sins of the world and would be the bread of life for everyone who would trust in him, also declared that three days after he died he would be raised again physically. If that is not true, he was a false prophet. He was a liar. Everything we have been declaring about him was a lie and all of these people who think their sins are forgiven, they are all deceived and, in reality, we are all still in our sins.

Something else has happened if that is true, verse 18. Then everybody who has died trusting that this is the truth has really perished.

“Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.”<sup>33</sup>

All those funeral services, all those grave sides, all those people suffering on a death bed that said, “I am going to be ok, because I know that I will awake in the presence of Jesus,” if this is true, they have never awoken in the presence of Jesus. They all perished.

In fact, here is what it means, verse 19. Do you want to sum it all up?

“If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people on the face of the earth.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:18.

You talk about playing the fool, you are considered the outcasts of the planet. You are ill spoken of, ill thought of, ill treated. Some people have been martyred and none of this really happened.

He doesn't stop there, does he? We are going to get to this next week. How does he begin verse 20?

“But in fact...” What? “Christ has been raised from the dead.”<sup>35</sup>

And guess what? He is the firstfruits or the first taste of those who have fallen asleep.

What he declares is this. What happened to Jesus is going to happen to you. What happened with Jesus does happen with you. He was raised physically. You will be raised physically.

A couple of final thoughts. All of this hinges on the fact that Christ's resurrection was a truly human resurrection. A man was raised from the dead. You can't claim something for Jesus that is not possible for you if he was truly like you. He was truly human as well as divine, which we are not, of course. But God really raised a man from the dead and there is the first taste of what God has purposed and planned and promised to do for men.

Second, all of this hinges on the fact that Christ came to fully represent those who he would redeem.

You see, this is why it is tied to the gospel. What you have got to understand though the gospel is this. Christ represented us when he came. We share in his lot. When he lived, he was living for us. He represented us so that...

Have you ever wondered where your righteousness came from that God gave you as a gift on the basis of faith in Jesus? If you have trusted in Christ, using the language of Romans 5:1, “Therefore having been [what?] justified by faith....”<sup>36</sup>

So we have been justified. What does it mean? Declared right before God.

Well, whose righteousness makes us right before God? The righteousness of Christ.

Where did that righteousness come from that has been put to your account? Can I say this to you? He accrued it as he was living his life. He lived as a man subject to God under the law and fully accomplished righteousness. All righteousness must be accomplished.

Remember it was said when John the Baptist didn't want to baptize him.

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<sup>34</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:19.

<sup>35</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:20. And

<sup>36</sup> Romans 5:1.

Now, this has to be done.

Christ is accomplishing righteousness. Who is he living for? He is living for his people. An when he died on the cross, who was he dying for? He was dying for his people. And when he was raised from the dead, whose fortunes were joined to him in that resurrection? Whose futures were joined to him as he was raised from the dead bodily? Yours and mine.

He lived for us. He died for us. He was raised for us so that what Jesus is, we are given in terms of the riches of sonship. This is what we have been given as a gift by faith in God's Son. And that includes physical resurrection. His life was ours. His death was ours. His righteousness is ours. And his resurrection is ours.

1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."<sup>37</sup>

We shall be like him.

Was he raised from the dead physically? What is the answer.

"We shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."<sup>38</sup>

Romans 8:29, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he [Jesus] might be the firstborn among many brothers,"<sup>39</sup> have first place among all of the brethren. And in his resurrection he is the firstfruits.

Colossians 3:4 says, "When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."<sup>40</sup>

Oh, it is not clear yet what we will be. We get a picture of it in Scripture. We don't know all the fullness of what that means, but we can be sure of this. When he is revealed, we will be revealed and when he appears we will be like him.

So I want to ask you. When you think about your future, do you think about a body? Do you think about the fact that you are reliving with other believers in the presence of God, body and soul, forever and ever and ever a body fit for eternity? If you ask what kind of body it is going to be... Anybody here have that thought in your mind? I wonder what it is going to be like.

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<sup>37</sup> 1 John 3:2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Romans 8:29.

<sup>40</sup> Colossians 3:4.



Well, you are a Corinthian just like the Corinthians. That is not a bad thing, by the way, in this case.

Look down at verse 35.

“But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’”<sup>41</sup>

And he is going to answer that and we will get to that some future Wednesday, Lord willing.

It would be ok with us, wouldn't it, if we get to see it physically before we get to see it here? Would that be ok with you?

Let's pray together.

*Father in heaven, thank you, Lord, for your Word. Thank you for the promises that we have in your Son. Thank you for everything that Jesus has accomplished for us, that Adam lost, but in your mercy and in your grace you have not only redeemed us, but you have given us even more than what Adam lost. Lord, let this be our hope. Grant us the eyes of faith that we would recognize that this life is transient. It is temporary. It is going to end, but we have a hope beyond the grave. Death is not something for us to fear, because our Savior has transformed it into peace for us. We thank you not only for the chief thing, that we will see our Savior face to face, but we also thank you because your Word gives us the grounds for doing so. We thank you for the great reunion day when we will see all of our loved ones in Christ and be able to spend eternity with them as well. We praise you for this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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<sup>41</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:35.