

## Risen 1 Corinthians 15

The Bible says that somewhere around 2000 years ago a man named Jesus Christ died and then came back to life. Is it true? And if so, why does it matter? According to 1 Corinthians 15, it is both true and the most important truth in all of human history.

Christians lament the fact that Christ has been removed from Christmas, but He is even more absent from Easter, which is the most important celebration that we have. Maybe it's because the word "Easter" in English conveys nothing of the significance/meaning of this holiday.

What is the significance of this holiday we call, "Easter"? RESURRECTION  
The resurrection and why it matters:

Outside of the gospels, the most important chapter on resurrection is found in 1 Corinthians 15.  
Read 1 Cor 15:3-4

### **Historicity. Paul begins by focusing on the historicity of the event.**

- Sequence of historical events
  - Jesus died. How do we know?
  - He was buried – really died
  - Raised. Didn't just faint. Died, came back to life in a resurrected, incorruptible, glorified body.
  - Resurrection?!
    - Jews accepted the concept theologically
    - Paul writing to Greeks who rejected the idea outright. Much more rationalistic culture like our own
    - Paul in Athens – preaching god named "Resurrection"?
    - Never seen resurrection, therefore it couldn't happen
    - Why would you want resurrection? Body corrupt, weak, failing, evil; dualism – body bad, soul good
- Validates the historical reliability of these recorded events. This really happened, and here is how we know. 1 Cor 15:3-8
  - It was predicted in Old Testament, 100s of years prior, and by Jesus Himself.
    - Isaiah 53
    - Luke 9:22; 24:25-27
  - He appeared to followers; individuals and large groups of people.
    - Many of whom were still alive when Paul wrote
    - "witnesses" could have refuted his claims, but they didn't
  - Others, however, did deny the resurrection. Last week we celebrated Palm Sunday – Jewish leadership did not want people to believe in Jesus, so they came up with the first story to explain away the resurrection
- Theories to deny the resurrection
  - 1) Disciples conspired to steal the body – Mt 28:11-15

- Soldiers all fell asleep and disciples stole the body
- Slipped through Roman guard
  - 16 well-trained, professional soldiers
  - at night guard in shifts; 4 awake, 12 sleeping around them
  - = death sentence for Roman guards
- silently rolled away stone
  - noisy production to move the stone
- stole body, made up a lie; died for lie.
  - Disciples: fearful to courageous; willing to suffer and die
  - All willing to die for a lie?

*"I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible."*— **Charles Colson**

- 2) Jewish leaders stole the body. Why? Resurrected Jesus made their lives miserable. They wanted Him dead in ground.
  - 3) Disciples went to the wrong tomb
    - Stereotypes often have some basis in reality, right?
    - Men don't ask directions. Disciples could have gone to the wrong tomb. Women would have corrected them! They had already been there.
    - Jewish leaders would have given them directions
    - Small area (impossible to lose track of the site of the tomb)
  - 4) All the witnesses were delusional; shared hallucination?
    - Jewish leaders would have produced the body
  - 5) Jesus woke up and removed the stone Himself – beaten and crucified
- All agree: There was no body in the tomb.
    - Why not? What is most reasonable explanation? because He had risen.
  - Establishing the validity of the resurrection solidified my faith in college
    - Most reasonable explanation for gospel accounts is that it really happened
    - More evidence, validation; explore for yourself
  - Historicity is critical, but so is the relevance. So what Jesus rose from the dead? What difference does that make in my life and in yours? Paul spends the remainder of the chapter focusing on the relevance of the resurrection

#### **What difference does the resurrection make, if any?**

*Marcus Borg, New Testament scholar at Oregon State, a leader of the Jesus Seminar (quoted by Randy Alcorn, p. 111) "As a child, I took it for granted that Easter meant that Jesus literally rose from the dead. I now see Easter very differently. For me, it is irrelevant whether or not the tomb was empty. Whether Easter involved something remarkable happening to the physical body of Jesus is irrelevant."*

*Poet John Updike correctly reasoned... "Make no mistake: if He rose at all it was as His body; if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the molecules reknit, the amino acids rekindle, the Church will fall...." (quoted by Randy Alcorn, p. 111)*

#### **1. Your debt became transferable – 1 Cor 15:16-17**

- Stated negatively: no resurrection, no payment for sins.

- 15:3 – Jesus died for sins, not His own. A substitute payment
- Not raised? Payment declined. Resurrection proves that payment was adequate

## 2. Your death became temporary

- You will die. Hope that doesn't surprise you.
  - Statistics on death are impressive: one out of one.
- Result: fear
  - According to Nat'l Inst of Mental Health in 2012
  - 68% of people surveyed reported a strong fear of death (necrophobia)
  - 74% glossophobia = fear of public speaking = 74%
    - People fear getting up here more than dying? Really? Trust me, it's not that bad up here!
  - I think the stat on fear of death is underreported.
    - I've never talked to anyone who was excited about the idea of death! People avoid thinking about it, talking about it.
    - Younger you are, easier to avoid thinking about it. But when forced, it is a frightening thing.
    - *Famous American writer Jack Kerouac (Keróack) "I am young now and can look upon my body and soul with pride. But it will be mangled soon, and later it will begin to disintegrate, and then I shall die, and die conclusively. How can we face such a fact, and not live in fear?"*
  - No resurrection, then death should be feared!
- Death could not hold Jesus, and it won't hold you either – 1 Cor 15:20-22
  - Romans 6:5; Hebrews 2:14-15

## 3. Your future became hopeful – you as you were intended to be, perfected

### A. Resurrection body – 1 Cor. 15:42-43

- Die physically, go to the presence of the Lord – 2 Cor 5:8
- Wait for Jesus to return to give us resurrection body; not the old reformed, but new type/quality of body
  - Lazarus not resurrected but resuscitated; only ONE resurrected so far, but the body we receive will be like Jesus
- Phil. 3:20-21
  - Real (flesh, bones, food) and recognizable
  - Imperishable; "incorruptible"; immortal; STRONG, powerful
  - Glorious – Transfiguration; Rev. 1:12-15; Mt. 13:43; Dan. 12:3; Ex. 34:29-30

### B. Resurrection mind – 1 Cor. 13:12

- Friend believes mind not affected by fall. Then all would believe!
- Do you know smart people who don't believe? This town is full of them.

### C. Resurrection emotions

- Others, not yourself; feelings don't correspond to reality
- All feelings will be appropriate to reality

### D. Resurrection will

- Ever struggled to do what you know is right; what you want to do? We all live in Romans 7.
- Imagine knowing the good thing to do, wanting to do it, and always following through. No internal tension.
  - Kierkegaard: *Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing*

- How is this possible?
  - Nature changed; no longer divided – 1 Cor 15:51-57
  - No flesh; world order under Christ's control; Nature changed
  - Not so much that you have to choose right, but that you always want to and you are always able.

**E. Resurrection relationships** – harmony; no fear; enjoy, not use one another

**F. Resurrection opportunities**

- We will not be chubby babies floating on clouds
- Satisfying labor; perfect relationships; perfect environment

#### **4. Your days became meaningful – 1 Cor 15:32**

- Paul says, “Why not party?”
- Malcolm Forbes: “He who dies with the most toys wins”
- If this is all we get, live it up
- This is not all. This is only a shadow. The best is yet to come. Live for it, and help others get there.

#### **Application**

The resurrection is true. The resurrection matters.

Sir Robert Anderson (Assistant Commissioner, London Metropolitan Police; 1841-1918):

“Apart from [the resurrection], the incarnation and the ministry would lose all their significance. The crucifixion would be but a martyrdom, and the cross a symbol of the victory of death over life. By the Resurrection the Crucified One was ‘declared to be the Son of God with power,’ the great truth on which the Christian's faith is founded, and to which his hope is anchored.”