



+ **YOU**

Spring 2024
It's All About Jesus

Sermon Title: Alive Because of Christ

To be used with Session 5: The Resurrection of Jesus

The Point: Jesus rose again to give us victory over death.

Scripture: I Corinthians 15:1-8,12-22

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study “The Resurrection of Jesus,” this sermon considers the words of Paul as He encouraged the believers in Corinth to stand firm on the truth of the resurrection. Through the resurrection, Jesus did what no other person could ever do. He defeated death, and in doing so, He gives us hope that we will one day defeat death as well! This life is not the end, but just a glimpse of the eternity that is now ours to look forward to. We will spend forever with God. Paul listed the witnesses who can attest to this truth, including himself, proving that the resurrection is not just a story, but a true, factual, historic event.

Introduction: Who wants to live forever? As it turns out, a lot of people! Recently, billionaire Peter Thiel joined with thousands of others in signing up to be cryogenically frozen when they die. This process involves taking the deceased human body and storing it at hundreds of degrees below zero, in the hopes that someday the science will exist that will allow those bodies to be re-animated, or brought back to life. As of now, no such science exists, and many think it is unlikely to ever exist.¹ Yet we all seek to avoid death. We want to live as long and as well as possible. Yet the reality is that we will all die. But we do not have to die without hope! Christ has defeated death, and in Him we will each have an eternal life with Him in His presence.

1. The resurrection was an historical event (1 Cor. 15:1-8).

Paul started this passage with a desire to “make clear” the truth of the resurrection, and by extension the gospel. The believers at Corinth had fallen prey to false teaching that there was no resurrection of the dead. Paul was quick to point out that faith in Christ without the resurrection is not only theologically inaccurate, but also utterly hopeless! The central moment of Christianity, indeed all of human history, is the moment that Jesus walked out of the grave, fully alive after being fully dead. On the cross, Jesus died a human death and was buried in a human grave. After that, He did what no human could ever do and rose from the dead. Many saw the resurrected Jesus. There was no doubt that the resurrection was real.

If the resurrection was not true, it simply doesn’t make sense that so many would put their reputations, in fact their very lives, on the line for a lie. Paul passed this on “as most important” to their faith. When we believe in Jesus, we must believe in the truth of the

¹ <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-cryonics-companies-selling-the-dream-of-life-after-death-2023-12>

resurrection and that He is alive and active in our lives today through the Holy Spirit. These witnesses had seen Jesus alive after the crucifixion and stood as the very first witnesses of the Gospel fulfilled.

2. Our faith rests on the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

Starting in verse 12, Paul made the connection that a faith in Christ, without belief in the resurrection, is “in vain” and “worthless.” This completely destroys the idea that one can accept Jesus as a wise teacher with some good ideas, but not a resurrected king. If Christ was not resurrected, then how is He different than anyone else? He would be, then, just a man who was sentenced to death and died. Where is the hope? Where is the eternal reward?

Paul continued to say that, without the resurrection, our faith is rather pointless. We would live a life unto Christ and then die. And that would be the end of things. If our hope in Christ is for this life only, then Paul said that “we should be pitied more than anyone”. The believers were persecuted from every side. Paul left a life of comfort and authority for one of abuse and imprisonment. Where is the hope in that? Jesus promised us that in this world we would have suffering, but to take heart and be courageous, for He has overcome the world (John 16:33). This life is not the end, but we look to an eternal, unperishable life where we are resurrected with Christ and spend eternity in His presence.

3. Christ’s resurrection assures our resurrection (1Cor. 15:20-22).

“Just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ will be made alive.” Paul reminded the believers at Corinth that we all suffer from Adam’s sin. Adam’s failure to believe God and his willingness to act in disobedience against Him has poisoned all of us with sin. We are born sinful and can only find redemption for our sin in Christ. Paul brought out the contrast between Adam, who was sinful and brought death, and Christ, who was perfectly without sin and brought us life. Paul referred to Jesus as “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” This references the fact that Christ was the first to defy death, but because of Him, we will follow after Him in eternal life.

This is also a reference to the Jewish Feast of First Fruits. Among the feasts listed in Leviticus 23:4-22, this feast comes quickly after the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover and before Pentecost. Through His death, Jesus fulfilled the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover, and through His resurrection, He fulfilled the Feast of First Fruits. Through the coming of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost was fulfilled. We have a deep, abiding hope in the resurrection. This life is not all there is. A glorious future awaits all who believe and trust in Christ.

Conclusion: Several years ago, I was blessed to visit Israel, and in doing so was able to walk in the very places in Jerusalem where Jesus and His disciples walked. It is amazing that places such as the garden of Gethsemane and the steps to the temple are still visible and remain much as they were two thousand years ago. Yet there is one place that is not definitive: the tomb of Jesus. There are competing claims as to where it is, and no one can determine with complete certainty in which place His body was laid. That doesn’t matter, though, because Jesus is no longer there, and

He was not there for very long. We worship a King who is risen, who has defeated death, and in doing so, has given us a living hope that we will indeed follow Him into eternal life.

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