

Pastor Robert Rutta

The Resurrection of Christ

I Corinthians 15:1-11

The doctrine of the resurrection is the foundation doctrine of the New Testament.
The resurrection is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament.

On the cross Jesus cried, "It is finished," and the Father said "Amen" by resurrecting the Son from the dead.

If Jesus did not rise from the grave, we are of all men most miserable, for we are yet in our sin; we are lost; eternally lost; I Cor. 15 :16-19.

15:1-2 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 by which also ye are saved.

He was reminding them of the gospel.

He reminded them that

- (1) he had preached it to them.
- (2) They had received it.
- (3) They had stood therein to this point, and
- (4) through it they were saved.

15:3-4 I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received.

He makes clear the source of his message. He had received it from the Lord.

Gal 1:12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The very essence of the gospel was **how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.**

The gospel is simply:

- (1) Christ's death,
- (2) His burial,
- (3) and most importantly, His resurrection.

What is of further significance is that these profound truths were foretold in the Old Testament Scripture. Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 along with other references all pointed to the payment that Christ would make.

15:5-8 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Paul began to list eyewitnesses to Christ's resurrection:

Cephas (i.e., Simon Peter), the *twelve*, over "five hundred brethren" at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present" (though some had by then died), "James, then of all the apostles."

Finally, Paul himself had witnessed Him on the road to Damascus.

Though he referred to the **twelve**, he was clearly speaking in a generic way of Jesus' immediate disciples though only eleven were left following Judas' suicide.

He refers to himself being **born out of due time**.

He is saying that he did not have the privilege to sit at Jesus' feet as had the other apostles did.

Rather, because he didn't get saved during Jesus' earthly ministry.

He met Jesus on the road to Damascus later. He had to meet Jesus the hard way.

15:9-10 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Paul considered himself to be the "least of the apostles"—not fit to be called an apostle because he had "persecuted the church of God."

We see his true humility.

Paul was probably the greatest of the apostles, his view of himself was the opposite.

Because of his past he counted himself as unworthy of what he had received.

He continued, "but by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was *bestowed* upon me was not in vain."

Paul was not about to allow the grace which God had so richly bestowed upon him to be wasted by not serving Him.

Therefore, he said, "I laboured more abundantly than they all."

Because he never had the privilege of sitting at Jesus' feet and because he had persecuted the church of God, Paul determined to work harder in the ministry than any other of the apostles.

That he likely did.

Notwithstanding, he fully realized it was not him, "but the grace of God was with him."

It was only by God's grace he was able to accomplish that which he did.

In v11 he returns to the original point that he had used in starting his explanation:

15:11 Therefore whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

His point was simple.

Both he as well as the other apostles had preached the same gospel and they in Corinth had so believed it.

The foundation of their salvation and faith had been the resurrection of

Jesus Christ.

Paul now confronts the problem directly.

15:12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Even though the Corinthians had been given the same message from Paul and the other apostles, nothing had changed, there were some in the Corinthian church who were now questioning the truth of a bodily resurrection.

15:13-15 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

If there is no resurrection, that creates some problems:

"If there be no resurrection of the dead:"

(1) then Christ is not risen

- (2) their preaching was in vain
- (3) the faith of the Corinthians was in vain
- (4) and they were therefore false witnesses.

This all would be true because they had ‘testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.’”

He confronts the doubters with the logical conclusions of their position.
He continues with further conclusions that logically follow this position:

15:16-18. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

- (5) Christ did not rise.
- (6) Your faith is in vain.
- (7) They still were in their sins.
- (8) Those believers who had died had perished.

Those who deny the fundamentals of the faith create a terrible scenario.
In this case, the truth in question is the resurrection.
But the same conclusions could be reached for the denial of most any foundational truth.

It is always amazing to see people who once seemed to believe the truth, following after other ways.
Even a message as simple as the Gospel can become confused as man tries to change it.
Too many Christians just don’t think about what they are doing.
There are doctrines and truths that are clearly taught in the Scriptures that they are willing to ignore or set aside.

What people did in Paul’s day, they do in ours.
I’m not just talking about salvation.
There are a lot of important doctrines that Christians are willing to compromise on – when they shouldn’t.
One thing to remember, since you have heard the truth taught and preached you are more accountable than others who haven’t had the opportunity to hear.
It is sad to see a person go to a liberal church, but it is 100 times worse to see someone who has been taught in a Bible preaching church go in that direction.
They are trampling on the truths that they have been taught.

15:19 Paul therefore arrives at the culmination of their unbelief. **If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.**

If all we have is this life and there is no resurrection, then we are living an utterly miserable life.
Their view was that we are no better than an animal.
When you hear a liberal preacher make a public statement that Jesus didn’t really rise from the dead, they are taking away the very message of the Gospel. They are miserable creatures.

Now Paul makes a firm statement:

15:20 **But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**
The blessed truth is, Jesus Christ did arise from the dead.

Christ is risen. It is reality.