

## Christ Has Been Raised 1 Corinthians 15:12-28

### Intro

In our day there some strains of so-called Christianity that deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ - do so to embrace a kind of, enlightened Christianity - freed from the shackles of supernatural - a reasonable faith tradition for a modern world. Eject all those uncomfortable bits about miracles

BBC survey from last year - 25% of people who describe themselves as Christians in Great Britain do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Can you do that and still have Christianity?

**Marylin Sewell:** The religion you cite in your book is generally the fundamentalist faith of various kinds. I'm a liberal Christian, and I don't take the stories from the scripture literally. I don't believe in the doctrine of atonement (that Jesus died for our sins, for example). Do you make and [sic] distinction between fundamentalist faith and liberal religion?

**Christopher Hitchens:** I would say that if you don't believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ and Messiah, and that he rose again from the dead and by his sacrifice our sins are forgiven, you're really not in any meaningful sense a Christian.

The nature of the Gospel - the good news of Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead collapses without resurrection. That's what Paul was seeking to confront in our text. Prepare to be addressed by God from his Word on this Easter morning

### READ TEXT

This Easter - our text gives us a fresh view of the reality and significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ - most don't deny - but practical resurrection agnostics - day to day grind it lands lightly - but I believe God intends to grow us this morning - give us fresh faith and certainty

There is beauty in this world but terrible suffering and sorrow - all creation groaning - the Resurrection of Christ pierces the darkness and guarantees hope - glory is coming

### **Rejoice - we have a rock-solid foundation for faith and certainty for our hope this morning**

The Resurrection matters big time because it is the: the foundation of our faith, the certainty of our hope.

#### **I. The Foundation of Our Faith**

- A. v. 12 Clearly Paul is seeking to confront some people in the Corinthian church who have apparently been teaching others that there is no bodily resurrection for Christians when they die
  - 1. Gnostic teaching that the human body was corrupted and inferior and should be escaped - no little thing - Whatever their reasons they are in danger of tearing down the whole structure of Christianity
- B. V. 13 Paul makes his argument backwards starting with their belief that people will not be raised from the dead - "if you say that people will not be raised from the dead you deny the reality of Christ being raised from the dead" - that is, if people can't be raised from the dead than the man Christ Jesus cannot have been either
- C. The truth of Christ's resurrection which precedes the Christian's future resurrection all hangs together.
  - 1. v. 14 - without the reality of resurrection the preaching of the gospel which is built on the foundation of Christ's resurrection is vain - it's pointless exercise

2. Subsequently all who have put faith in the risen Christ of Calvary - well...their faith is empty and useless, garbage

**Illustration:** Core, essential - not a beautiful diversity of Christian traditions - like different car models - I drive a Honda - you drive a Yugo - both cars running the same way - NOPE - we ain't talking about the same thing if you take away physical, bodily resurrection

- D. v. 15 - if Paul and the other called and commissioned Apostles and preachers of the gospel aren't telling the truth about the resurrection - they are - this is awful - misrepresenting God (may this preacher never do so with trembling).

1. The disciples of Jesus - earliest preachers of the Gospel had seen the risen Christ personally

**[19] On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." [20] When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. (John 20:19-20)**

**[3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)**

2. Eyewitness of the resurrected Christ - 100s of people saw him
3. Paul says if this isn't true - than me and every other gospel preacher is a shameful liar - and because so many early Christians were martyred for the proclamation of the resurrection - they died on the pretext of a lie

**Illustration:** "Resurrection was a complex April Fool's Day Joke That Got Disciples Tortured and Killed"

- E. V. 16 - returns to the argument of v. 13 - if dead people aren't raised than the Christ who died can't have been raised

**To deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny the resurrection of the one who makes any and all resurrections possible. (Gordon Fee, *NICNT: 1 Corinthians*, p. 741)**

1. If so v. 17 - we are in big trouble - dire consequence - YOU ARE STILL IN YOUR SINS! And the penalty for our sin and sins? Death.
  - a) If Christ hasn't been raised than he has not overcome death - his sacrificial death that was intended to rescue us from sin and judgment is a joke because his death was not vindicated - he's a liar - his bones are moldering wherever his lying disciples hid him. Then this isn't true

**For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)**

- (1) Futile faith - meaningless - grab your ball and your glove and head home - If what I'm saying isn't true you should stand up and walk out and never darken the doorway of a church again

- F. v. 19 If Christ hasn't been raised we are pitiable people - this whole thing is pointless - all we have left are some religious principles to perhaps provide a sense of moral compass - make us feel better about our short lives here on earth where we live 70 years or so and then die

**Illustration:** Atheistic communist Karl Marx - religion is the opium of the masses - drug - cover over the existential pain of existence - thin veneer of comfort - pleasant illusion

**...If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." (1 Corinthians 15:32b)**

- a) YOLO
2. Without the reality of the bodily resurrection of Jesus this whole thing collapses under the terrible weight of a pointless religion

G. V. 20 - BUT! BUT! IN FACT...CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD

1. For all who have trusted Christ in his life, substitutionary death, RESURRECTION - your faith is not futile - IT IS INFINITELY FRUITFUL!
  - a) Sure and solid foundation for our faith - WE AREN'T IN OUR SINS!

**For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)**

2. Here then is a foundation for our faith - the true and certain fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ - our faith not a wish and a prayer - further - establishes the certainty of our hope

**II. The Certainty of Our Hope (20-28)**

A. We have put our faith in the risen Christ we joyously declare:

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)**

B. A living hope - a vibrant hope of the certainty of what God will accomplish through the risen Christ of Calvary

1. v. 21-22 - Christ is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep - first fruits metaphor - guarantee of a full harvest - he's the pioneer of resurrection life who is taking all of his people with him into resurrection
  - a) His substitutionary death for sin was unique - his resurrection is not - it is ours in him - union - gospel parallel
    - (1) In Adam all die - we are born of Adam and in sin facing the death penalty because of the Fall - born in Adam - born in sin
    - (2) In Christ all made alive - all who have savingly placed their faith in Christ are united to him in his life, death, resurrection - his resurrection reaches back into this moment to give life to our souls - foretaste of the resurrection Christ will share with us
2. v. 23 - He's coming to bring us into the fullness of the eternal life we have received now in our being born again - he's coming again - and he's bringing with him all who have died in Christ - Hebrews 11:40 - for even those who have died and are with Christ are waiting for the fulfillment
3. v. 24 - He's bringing the kingdom of God in its fullness to earth - not disembodied floating about having a somewhat pleasant time- new heavens and new earth - redeemed and renewed where the King is glory will reign
4. v. 25-26 The King - the Lord Christ will establish his reign and will destroy every enemy - all opposition annihilated - finally even death itself is destroyed

**He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4)**

5. v. 27-28 We will see God in his glory - the beautiful order of our Trinitarian God perceived - GOD WILL BE ALL IN ALL
  - a) In a WORLD of love and glory - God in our midst

**Christ's resurrection has set in motion a chain of inexorable events that absolutely determines our present and our future. Christ is the firstfruits of those who are his, who will be raised at his coming. That ought both to reform the way we currently live and to reshape our worship into seasons of unbridled worship. (Gordon Fee, NICNT: 1 Corinthians, p. 760)**

6. Well said - UNBRIDLED WORSHIP - in fact always in season - not just this Easter morning but every day - that's why sing - loudly, joyfully - I'm tempted to just end here and invite the WT up hear and start singing - to join with you in unbridled worship of the Risen Christ and his glorious, gracious promises - we will in a few
  - a) Glory is coming, infinitely greater than anything we can dream of - WHAT GRACE!

## C. Application

1. Call to unbelievers - **"Immanuel Mantra" - I'm a complete idiot, my future's incredibly bright, anyone can get in on this**
2. Oh this hope is so needed in this world of sadness, struggle, suffering, brokenness
  - a) A word to the suffering - it has been said there is an expiration date to your suffering

**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)**

- (1) Grab hold of Christ - hold fast to him - hope in what is coming - he's coming to wipe away your tears and restore you to wholeness and eternal joy

- b) A word to those who mourn

**[13] But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. [14] For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)**

- (1) A better place - trite in comparison to the glory that is coming we will together behold Christ
- c) The nature of our mission
  - (1) We are living among people who are facing the judgment of God - the wages of their sin - we are called and we have the great privilege of sharing the words of life with those around us - The Bridge
- d) Frees us from desperate grasping and anxiety in this life - this life is just the precursor - the setup - liberates us to give everything we got to give, love, care, mercy, run or maybe limp across the finish line chest out and collapse into the hands of Christ and die and enter into our rest and be raised to life and joy forever!

## Close

**Rejoice - we have a rock-solid foundation for faith and certainty for our hope this morning**

Ellen - finished Narnia series - allegory for the new earth - happy, healthy, beauty and glory

**The things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before. (C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*)**

"I want Jesus to come back"

That's why the last verses of the Bible are "Maranatha" come Lord Jesus - he's bringing heaven with him and he's bringing us into his glory.

Say "Maranatha"

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