

We gather this morning on an Easter Sunday to remember, celebrate and retell the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And it is good for us to set aside time at least once a year where we all come together and celebrate and recognize that Jesus came back to life.

This morning we're gonna talk a little bit about the resurrection. Our text this morning is 1 Corinthians chapter 15. We are only gonna be in the first 26 verses and I'm not gonna cover everything in these verses cause we're not going through the book. I'm just trying to focus on the resurrection of Christ.

This Easter series we have been talking about the difference that the resurrection makes. We have just spent a little bit of time unpacking this idea that the resurrection is not just something that happened in the past that you know is or isn't good but it is something that matters for us today. For those who are believers in Jesus and who are followers of Jesus who accept the death and resurrection of Christ there is power available to them. This morning I want you to see that it empowers our faith.

I. The resurrection of Christ is a true (historical fact) (v. 1-11).

Our faith is founded on the belief that Christ actually came back to life.

Want you to look at verse one, **"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,"**

It begins by reminding the Corinthian Church of the gospel

We need to be reminded of the gospel, not just once a year,

But every single day, because we forget.

And we do not just receive the gospel, we stand in it.

Verse 2, **"and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain."**

We are saved by it, and we hold fast to it.

It is not just for New Christians, it is for all of us.

Over and over.

The gospel is not just the foundation of our faith.

The resurrection of Jesus is everything.

It is not the foundation of a house, but the walls and roof and adornment.

Verse three, **"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,"**

The most important part of the Bible is the belief that Jesus died for us.

Jesus Christ died on the cross not as a martyr.

Jesus Christ died on the cross, not as an example

Jesus Christ died on the cross not just as a case of bad luck a story of injustice.

Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, dealing with our sins, taking our sins upon himself.

Verse 4, **"that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,"**

He did not just die, but was buried in the ground.

Often, the creeds will mention that Jesus was buried.

And the Scriptures talk about His burial.

And the reason that we do that is, we're trying to say Jesus's death was not a fake out.

If you watch or read stories, there's always fake-out deaths where you think this character's dead and gone forever but then they come back.

And my rule is, I never believe somebody's fully dead until I see the body in the ground.

That doesn't always work, but that works pretty good for most things.

OK if I don't see the body and especially if I don't see the body going into the ground and they bury it up and then we move on then I'm then I'm gonna think OK I don't think they're coming back now.

It's a part of our faith is that we believe Jesus was in the ground, dead
But He came back to life

We had verse 5, **"and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles."**

This is not just telling us what Jesus did after His resurrection
This is giving us witnesses.
Paul is not saying we believe this is something that we hope in a
philosophical idea that we have

He is saying that Peter saw Jesus alive
The 12 saw Jesus alive
They were 500 men and more women who saw Jesus alive.
Some are dead, but many are alive right now.
He is saying to go ask them.
You can go visit Jerusalem and walk the streets.
Ask, "Do you know somebody who saw Jesus?"

The resurrection of Christ is not a fairy story or myth.
It is not a rumor.
It is not a hope.
It is something that happened and was witnessed by hundreds.

There is also in verse eight, **"Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me."**

Paul wasn't quite the right age to see Jesus.
Somehow, in the circumstances of his life,
he wasn't around in Jerusalem when these things happened
And yet Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus.
Paul is not recounting his conversion story.
He is saying that he too is a witness, though a late one, to the resurrection.
He joins his voice with the great cloud of witnesses.

Here's part of the reality as well, Jesus Christ has appeared to you.
Now He may not have appeared to you the way that He appeared to Peter
to the women who got to see him in the tomb
He may not appear to you in the way that He did to Thomas who got to
touch Him and to feel Him to see the wounds in His body

He may not appear to you in the way that He did to Paul up in the heavens and hearing the voice of Jesus and into His ears.

But Jesus Christ does appear to you in His body
, which is the church of Christ.

Who proclaim and who preach is the same exact thing that Paul preached that his disciples preach and that Jesus preached over 2000 years ago

We proclaim the resurrection of Jesus

We proclaim it not as a hope not an idea that is a philosophical thing, but as a fact

The central question of Easter is, "Do you believe Christ rose from the dead?"

Maybe you are not a believer, or you don't know what to do with Christ. Maybe you grew up in church, but you walked away from him as you've gotten older.

Maybe you never knew anything about Jesus through the faith and you're just coming to check things out

Maybe there are parts of Christianity you want to evaluate and think through.

But our entire faith rests on the resurrection.

This is what you must wrestle with and face.

Oftentimes, people will challenge me or meet somebody and they'll ask me if I really believe some of the stuff in Christianity.

Do you really believe those miracle stuff?

Do you really believe that in such a oppressive God that tells people what to do and how they can and can't behave with their bodies ?

In my answer is almost all the same.

I actually believe something crazier.

I believe that God came down, was born to a virgin, took on human flesh, was crucified on the cross, buried in the ground, and the third day truly rose again from the dead.

That's the craziest thing that I believe.

How about we wrestle with that before we worry about some other stuff?

2. If the resurrection is not true, Christianity is meaningless v. 12-19).

I wanna go ahead and skipped verse 14, **"And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain."**

It's become more and more fashionable to see Christianity as just a kind of belief.

As if it's a buffet that you can come, and you can take what you do when you do not want.

Be like Thomas Jefferson and cut our parts of the Bible you don't like.

You can pick and choose the beliefs you want to hold.

Truth is relative and we can believe whatever we want as long as it helps.

If I don't want to believe Jesus was raised, then I don't have to.

I can just keep the other stuff I like.

But if the gospel is not true, then all of this preaching and proclaiming, and all of our faith, is like a placebo.

If Christ is not raised, we are like people dying from cancer, who think that instead of going and getting treatment will just eat more salad and put dirt in our coffee.

So when people come or unbelievers come to me and they're kind of encouraging they mean well when I get it, they're trying to be kind.

But when they say things like, I can't really believe in all that stuff but it's so nice that you do so helpful so glad there are people in the world that are loving.

It's actually not.

Because if it's not true, we're just deceiving people.

We're keeping them from enjoyable things for no good reason.

This is where some people who are anti-Christianity are actually right.

They're right in the sense that they they're unwilling to say well that's nice people believe in that but they just oppose it and just want us to stop and just want us to go away and just wanna persecute us.

Brianna and I watched a show recently about a woman who had cancer. Chemo and all the medical stuff scared her, so she tried to treat her cancer with yoga, juicing, weird alternative medicine, and positive thoughts. It seemed to work and she became a huge influencer. And wrote blogs and books telling other people to follow her path. Thousands of cancer patients followed her medical advice. But her cancer didn't go away. It got worse and she died.

But imagine if we looked at that story and we just said you know what who cares people can just do what they want. It doesn't really matter if something can really save you or not what's important is that everybody just does what they feel is right.

No, we would all look and we would acknowledge this is horrible. Look what has happened here. That people have died because they have been misled and told there is salvation when there is not. The problem isn't that she didn't listen to doctors. The problem isn't seeking different medical alternatives. The problem is promising life and salvation. Promising that this is the way to life. They were promised deliverance, and instead were given over to death.

If Jesus is not raised from the dead. If Jesus Christ did not walk out of the tomb after being crucified, Then Christians are just like that woman and even worse. And everything that the Christian faith offers is not nice and sweet and wonderful instead, it should be faced with hatred. Because it doesn't solve the problem of death.

It just makes us waste of time before we die.

Our faith rests on the resurrection, and if the resurrection is not true then we are to be pitied.

Verse 15, **"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."**

If Jesus didn't really come back from the dead,
all the apostles are liars and should not be trusted.

It doesn't just mean their testimony about Jesus.

It means this entire book.

Because all of the scriptures are fulfilled and point of Jesus.

We believe that everything written in here, from the very beginning when God said, let there be light, to the very end.

It is all centered on Jesus Christ on his life, death and resurrection and ascension.

Don't read this book because you think it has some nice poetry in it and then it makes you feel good or it has some good lessons in the proverbs for practical living.

If Christ is not raised, this book is a waste of paper.

Verse 16, **"For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins."**

If Jesus is not raised from the dead, our faith is futile.

There is no purpose in it and it is meaningless.

It does not offer anything to the world and does not offer anything to us.

Recently, there's been a bigger move, where people are attracted to the culture of Christianity.

The values of Christianity

Or some of the politics of Christianity.

And so they wanna latch onto some of those things because it sounds good, but they don't want the Jesus of Christianity.

They want to do some Christian things, but they don't want to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead.
Paul says, that is a waste of time.
Don't do that.

Listen, I don't care if you like Christian stuff.
I don't care if you like a lot of Christian values.
Or if you think Christians are nice.
I care about do you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead because that is our faith.
You can get some other stuff wrong, you cannot get that wrong.
And if we get that wrong, then everything falls apart.

Because if Jesus was not raised from the dead, then we are still stuck in sin, and there is no hope.
If Jesus is not raised from the dead, then there is no hope for us to escape the brokenness and the stain and the death that sin brings.
We cannot escape the death of our souls,
We cannot escape the death of our bodies.

Verse 18, **"Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished."**

Seeing if Jesus has not been raised from the dead, then those that we love are just gone.

OK, there is no heaven if Jesus is not raised from the dead.

If Jesus has not raised from the dead, then all those people that you love that are gone before us are just dust and bones they perished.

They aren't coming back and we aren't going to see them again.

If Christ is not raised, there is no hope for us.

Our deaths will come and we will perish, and it will all be meaningless.
Because the only hope for life after death is through the resurrection of Jesus, who defeated death.

Verse 19 really is kind of the key section. **"If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied."**

If Christianity is only helpful now and not after death, then it is dumb.

And everyone should feel bad for Christians.

People should not look at us and smile or be encouraged.

They shouldn't think it's great we are doing good things.

They should just look at us and they should feel bad for us.

Because if Jesus is not raised, that he is just a mediocre option amongst the world that gives you millions to help you get through the day.

I don't know how much more clear I can be that Christianity rests on the resurrection of Jesus.

So what I need you to hear this morning if you're somebody that's on the fence and you don't really know what to think about Christianity

What you need to figure out and what you need to wrestle with is the resurrection of Jesus.

This is where you need to start.

It is what you need to get it figured out.

Because I don't care at any of the other conclusions you come to if you're going to reject Jesus.

I don't care what you think about Christian sexual ethics, if you're going to deny the resurrection of Jesus.

I don't care what you're gonna say about creation,

whether it was seven days or millions of years and how God did it if God was a part of that at all if you're going to deny the resurrection of Jesus.

So if you're on the fence, if you're debating, if you're not sure what to do about Christianity, than spend your time focusing on the resurrection because this is the most important part of our faith.

And if you're somebody who call yourself a Christian,

You need to spend your time on the resurrection.

Because I meet Christians who act as if it's just optional.
If you deny the resurrection of Jesus, your faith is a waste of time.
I am not really a harsh preacher.
I'm not somebody who likes to get up here and just pound down the pulpit and yell and tell everybody how they're wrong.
That isn't my style and I don't think that's along with the scriptures, do.
But the scripture in this place reminds us, commands us, and tells us you must believe in the resurrection of Jesus.
It is not optional.
It is foundational.

So if you're here, and if you say you're a follower of Jesus, but you deny to Jesus died on the cross for our sins and you don't really think that he was actually a miraculously raised from the dead, than what I want you to know is that your faith is futile.

And the option you have, you can choose to come to Jesus and you can choose to put your faith in him and believe it really is true and find out what true faith is.

Or you can stop pretending and don't call yourself a Christian anymore cause you don't believe in Christ.

I would rather you just be honest about what your faith really is than deceive yourself and deceive others.

3. Because the resurrection of Christ is true, we can be (resurrected) (v. 20-26).

What we need to see here is that the resurrection of Jesus is a foretaste of our resurrection.

It is an expectation of what we can expect to experience.

See this in verse 20, **"But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."**

Jesus has been raised from the dead.

This is what we gather together on an Easter Sunday to celebrate and to remember.

We rejoice and remind and retail ourselves the story that Jesus Christ was truly raised from the dead.

And because Jesus was raised from the dead, we can to.

There is hope and there is resurrection available to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

It uses the word first fruit because it's the first thing that you bring in from the harvest.

When you go out to your fruit tree and you grab an apple off of the tree and you take a bite and it taste good and it's perfect.

It's the first fruit it's the first thing that you've had a taste of and the good news is that there's all the rest of the harvest that is waiting.

Jesus was the first fruits of resurrection,

And because He was resurrected from the dead.

All those who trusted him and who love him and put their faith in Jesus, they will be resurrected and raised from the dead, just like Jesus was

Verse 21, **"For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead."**

This is a reminder that Jesus is a second Adam.

Sin and death entered our world because Adam and Eve disobeyed and rejected God and rebelled against him.

And so, because of Adam, death has come to all men.

But Jesus is a better Adam.

And as death came from the first one so resurrection now can come.

There is resurrection and new life available to all of us

Verse 22, **"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."**

Listen, every single human being dies.

There are no exceptions.

The question is not if we will die.

The only question is when.

But Jesus can make us alive again.

There is life in faith and power in Jesus.

Sin doesn't just cause death down the road, it causes death in our souls.

But Jesus can come, and He can make us alive. He can breathe into our souls and give us new life.

Verse 23, **"But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ."**

We might ask when is this resurrection gonna come?

The first resurrection was Jesus on Easter.

Sunday was the first fruit and the proof and our hope.

We celebrate, we remember, we remind ourselves that Jesus is risen from the grave because it means that we can be risen from the grave.

And when Jesus returns, resurrection comes through those who belong to Jesus.

Who can experience this resurrection?

Those who belong to Jesus

Every night I ask my sons the same question, "what is our only hope in life and death?"

And they respond, "That we are not our own, but belong to God."

The only thing that can save you from death and the only thing that will bring resurrection is belonging to Jesus.

Belonging to Jesus it is not signing to piece of paper or walking down the aisle, belonging to Jesus is not something that we can do.

It is something that God does for us.

And something that Jesus did, he came down to earth. He was born of the Virgin Mary and he went to the cross to die for our sins to purchase us.

And He came back from the grave and He defeated death, and he offers the salvation.

He offers this life to any who would be His.

Any sheep who would hear his voice and his voice call him Shepherd

My question for you is do you belong to Jesus?

If you put your faith in your hope, and your trust in Jesus in Jesus alone?

Do you believe that you need Jesus that you cannot just go along to your own or to yourself?

Do you understand and acknowledge that you have a real and deep significant problem and the problem is sin

The problem is you're broken. Did you carry guilt and shame and wrong and you can't fix yourself and nothing in this world can fix you.

You need to acknowledge your sin.

You need to acknowledge Jesus and ask for forgiveness.

And what you will find when you do that as the Jesus has already forgiven you, He died on the cross in order to pay the price for your sins.

He died on the cross to demonstrate His love for you.

To demonstrate that if you would just come and admit that you need him, He would do whatever it takes to save you.

Believe and acknowledge that you need him,
and then come to Him and ask.

How do you get to belong to Jesus?

Stop trying to belong to yourself.

There's not a monetary fee that you have to pay, Jesus already paid it.

You can come to him like a man on the cross who just said hey Jesus, can I get to be with you in paradise?

Because he had the humility to ask and understand that he had nothing to offer Jesus

If you will come to him and faith, and if you trust, and you believe that he is our savior that he really died and he really did come back from the grave and eternal life is yours.

Then true faith, faith that is not just empowered, but your own belief, your own mental fortitude, your own spiritual stamina, but faith that is empowered by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If you have that kind of faith, then you belong to Jesus, and if you belong to Jesus one day, there is resurrection.

Verse 24, **"Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power."**

It tells us the end of the story.

Listen, none of us know what the end of our stories are gonna be here on earth

But I can tell you at the end of the story on earth is it is Jesus will return.

It is the Jesus will come, and he will bring the kingdom of God.

And every other kingdom, and every other flag, every other ruler king will pass away, and only the kingdom of God will remain, and only those who belong to God will remain.

In Jesus in the next verse 25, **"For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."**

He will destroy all enemies, sin and sickness and death and pain every wicked ruler, every tyrant who abuses their power, every manipulator and abuser all enemies will finally come and be crushed under the feet of Jesus.

Verse 26 is the last one, **"The last enemy to be destroyed is death."**

The last enemy to be is death.

It's the very last one and what a day that will be.

Death will be swallowed up in victory.

Now we stand sometimes we sing, and we say your death. Where is your grave? Where is your victory?

But we know the stink of death we have felt it.

We see the victory of the grave as we drive by it.

We see our Graves and we know where we are going.

We say it now in hope we say it now in faith.

We say it now in desperation that one day death will be no more because we know it will be defeated, but it'll be the last one.

Easter reminds us the hope that death will be defeated.
Death is not a friend, death is the enemy.
And one day it will be no more.

And the joy of Easter is that Jesus has already beaten death and he'll do it again.

And when Jesus does it again, no more will we die

A resurrection of Jesus is just the first fruits of the life that is to come.

So, we should desire to belong to Jesus.

Are the empty tomb, Jesus defeated death and He will do it again once more.

But this only comes to those who belong to Jesus.

Do you belong to Jesus?

The resurrection of Christ is a true historical fact.

If it is not, then our faith is meaningless.

But if you accept it, then you have received eternal life.

Beloved, Christ has been raised from the dead.

He has defeated the grave.

He is risen.

And all those who put their faith in Him, will be risen too.