

1 Corinthians 15:29-34 — How Does The Resurrection Change The Way I Live?

April 4, 2021

Jesus has risen! Welcome to CrossWinds on Easter Sunday. If you are joining us online because you can't be here in person, it is great to have you!

Today is a special day for the church because it is a day set aside to celebrate Jesus rising from the dead. It is a day when we celebrate that Jesus' grave is empty. Jesus conquered death. What make Jesus' conquering death such a big deal is that Jesus didn't just conquer death for himself but he conquered death for you and me! The fact that Jesus is alive changes everything. It is what sets the Christian faith apart from all other faiths.

When we go to the final resting place of those who founded various world religions, we find their bodies in tombs. For example, when it comes to Islam, Mohammed's body is buried in Medina. You can't go to Jesus' grave and find Jesus' body. Jesus' grave is empty. Jesus conquering death set Jesus apart from every other religious leader. Jesus is God. Jesus did something only God can do. He conquered death.

Every Resurrection Sunday is traditionally set aside for not just celebrating Jesus' conquering of death but it is a time when we open our Bibles and study Jesus' resurrection. We see what Jesus' resurrection means for you and me. The most famous chapter and the most extensive chapter in the Bible on Jesus' resurrection is 1 Corinthians 15. It covers the resurrection of Jesus from every angle.

This past week, as I was thinking about what to teach for this Sunday, I turned to 1 Corinthians 15. Over the years, I have preached through almost all of that chapter. There is a small portion of 1 Corinthians 15 that most pastors avoid talking about on Easter. In fact, they avoid talking about it almost any time because it is so challenging because it is hard to understand. It is 1 Corinthians 15:29-34. In order to study something fresh for Easter, that is where we are going this morning. While some of those verses are hard to understand, the message of that portion of 1 Corinthians 15 is super important. In these verses Paul tells us how the resurrection changes our everyday lives. So, we have some difficult verses, but they are very practical verses. Let's read them together.

Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? Why are we in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. 1 Corinthians 15:29–34 (ESV)

This is obviously a rather obscure passage tucked in the middle of what is Paul's extensive review of the resurrection in this chapter. Before we look at these verses, it is worth taking a few minutes to go back to the beginning of 1 Corinthians 15 so we can see the flow of Paul's thoughts and understand what led up to these perplexing verses. Remember that verses only have meaning in context. If we are going to understand these verses, we need to understand their context.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 — The evidence of the resurrection is irrefutable.

Jesus changes lives.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:1–2 (ESV)

In the first two verses of this chapter, Paul said we must remember the gospel message that was preached to us, the gospel message that we believed, and the gospel message upon which we stand. God used the hearing of the gospel message to transform our lives. The first evidence that the resurrection actually happened is the evidence of our own transformed lives when we trusted in Jesus to forgive our sin. If Jesus was still in the grave, how do we account for the supernatural change that took place in our lives when we trusted in Jesus if Jesus is not alive? When we trusted in Jesus, remember that sudden and overwhelming sense of forgiveness? Do you remember that change in the orientation of your life, how you went from no interest in the things of God to sudden interest in the things of God? Do you remember how you went from living for yourself to living for God's glory and honor? Where did these changes come from in our lives if we were not supernaturally born again? If Jesus was still dead and in the grave, why were we supernaturally made into new people when we trusted in him?

The first evidence that Jesus rose from the dead is found by looking in the mirror. Look at the sudden and inexplicable supernatural changes that happened in your life when you trusted in Jesus.

The Word of God predicted Jesus' resurrection.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,... 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (ESV)

The second irrefutable piece of evidence that Jesus rose from the dead is the Word of God. Both the Old and New Testaments speak with amazing prophetic detail about the resurrection of Jesus Christ hundreds of years before it happened. Jesus' death and resurrection were not new things in God's plan but were always the centerpiece of God's plan for us and for the universe.

In the Old Testament, we see the death and resurrection of Jesus prophetically pictured by type. For example, in Jonah 2 we find Jonah was thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish. There he was in the heart of the ocean as good as dead in the belly of a great fish for three days before God commanded the fish to vomit him up, and he figuratively came back to life after three days. This was a type of resurrection on the third day. We also have the death and resurrection of Jesus spoken about by direct prophecy in the Old Testament. For example, in Isaiah 53, we find detailed prophet descriptions of Jesus' death and his resurrection. Isaiah 53 tells us Jesus would be crucified between two thieves. It tells us he would be buried in the tomb of a rich man. It tells us the reason Jesus would be crucified was for our sin. As Isaiah says, it is by his wounds --- the wounds of Jesus --- that we are healed. Isaiah 53 ends by telling us Jesus would conquer death and divide his victory with the strong --- Jesus would conquer death and share the spoils of his victory with you and me.

The death and resurrection of Jesus was not just prophetically spoken about in the Old Testament, but we also find it prophetically spoken about in the New Testament on the lips of Jesus. Jesus gave his apostles abundant details about his death in Jerusalem at the hands of the religious leaders and that he would rise from the grave on the third day. If you studied the Gospel of Mark with us as a church, you know there were three times in that Gospel when Jesus gave his followers abundant and specific details of his death and resurrection in Jerusalem before they happened.

So far we have two strong pillars of irrefutable evidence that the resurrection is true. We have the evidence of our own changed lives that proves the resurrection is true. There is no other explanation for what happened in our lives other than God supernaturally making us into new people. Second, we have numerous times in both the Old and New Testament that the details of Jesus' death and resurrection were prophetically given long before any of it took place.

The eyewitnesses confirmed Jesus' resurrection.

...and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 1 Corinthians 15:5–6 (ESV)

In these verses, Paul gave a sample of the eyewitnesses who met Jesus after he rose from the dead. We have important people, like Peter and the apostles, and we have numerous people, like more than 500 at one time meeting the resurrected Jesus. That is a lot of people. There were many, many more other than those Paul listed.

Paul told us he gave us this list for a reason. He said these people were all still alive. "If you doubt Jesus' resurrection, reach out to them on social media.

Schedule a visit. Buy them a latte and hear their story. Interview them so you can hear the truth of the resurrection firsthand for yourself." Many of us wonder if anyone took Paul up on his offer. Did anyone schedule visits with eyewitnesses of the resurrection to hear the firsthand truth? I can tell you one person who did. His name was Luke. He wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts in our Bible. In the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, Luke said he investigated these things and wrote an orderly account of what he learned.

The apostle Peter also said everything he wrote about Jesus is based on a firsthand, eyewitness account of the resurrected Jesus.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 2 Peter 1:16 (ESV)

In a criminal trial, most juries will convict based on the testimony of two eyewitnesses. Sometimes they convict on the basis of a single person's testimony. A lawyer is ecstatic if he or she has three eyewitnesses. The chance of conviction at that point rises to 99 percent. When it comes to eyewitnesses of a risen Jesus, we have far more than three. How many people met the risen Jesus? I don't know but I know at one time it was more than 500 people. There were hundreds of other people beside them that also met and talked with the risen Jesus, all at different places, different times, and under different circumstances. That is a lot of eyewitness accounts!

I did a quick scan of my New Testament, and I noticed four different times the apostles met with the resurrected Jesus, and there are probably more times than are recorded in the Bible. The first time they met with Jesus, talked with Jesus, touched Jesus, and ate with Jesus, they probably had to pinch

themselves, thinking it was a dream. What about the second, third, and fourth time? The resurrected Jesus was not a dream. He was just as real as the person sitting next to them.

The last witness of the risen Jesus was the apostle Paul.

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. 1 Corinthians 15:8–11 (ESV)

Paul was someone who began life persecuting Christians. He dragged them to jail. He assisted in the murder of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Paul was committed to eradicating Christians from the face of the earth. Then everything changed. The resurrected Jesus appeared to Paul on the Damascus road. Paul quickly realized he was dead wrong in what he thought about Jesus. Jesus was not dead but very much alive. He had conquered death. Paul went from persecuting Christians to risking his life to tell people about the Jesus he formerly tried to destroy. Paul gave the rest of his life to telling people about Jesus and exhorting them to be saved by trusting in Jesus. Since he was so outspoken for Jesus, he suffered beatings, whippings, floggings, and stoning. Paul faced multiple assassination attempts on his life because he was so outspoken about Jesus. That is evidence of a resurrected Jesus. What would change Paul's life so decisively and dramatically other than a firsthand meeting with the resurrected Jesus?

I ran across one statement in a book that I found interesting. I was not able to verify it but it thought it would be interesting to share. The writers said that

of the 39 ancient sources of history we possess from the time of Jesus, 22 of them either discuss or at least reference Jesus and the empty tomb. Of those 22 sources, 11 are not Christian. I wasn't able to verify this, but the point the writer was making is clear. The resurrection of Jesus is not a fictional piece of history. It is an abundantly witnessed, frequently wrote about fact of history that is referenced in both Christian and non-Christian material from the ancient world. It is an irrefutable fact that Jesus is alive.

In the first eleven verses of this chapter, Paul gave us three pieces of irrefutable evidence proving that Jesus rose from the dead: The evidence of our own supernaturally changed lives, the evidence of abundant prophecy in both the Old and New Testaments about the resurrection, and the evidence of hundreds and hundreds of eyewitnesses that met with the resurrected Jesus, talked with the resurrected Jesus, touched the resurrected Jesus, and even ate with the resurrected Jesus.

In spite of the abundant evidence of Jesus' resurrection that Paul gave us, some people in Corinth, and some people in our world, still don't believe Jesus rose. In the next verses of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul explained the ramifications for the Christian faith, and for our lives, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, if Jesus was still in the grave.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 — What are the logical conclusions of the resurrection being false?

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 1 Corinthians 15:12 (ESV)

With all the evidence for the resurrection, how can some people insist there is no resurrection? If the resurrection didn't take place, that is not a small

change in our faith. It is devastating for the Christian faith and for our lives if Jesus did not come out of the grave.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, our bodies will not rise from the dead.

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 1 Corinthians 15:13 (ESV)

If we just die and go out of existence, if evolution is true and we are simply part of a continual recycling of the species, Christ did not rise and we will not rise. If we came from nothing and when we die we will return to nothing, that doesn't just mean we do not rise from the dead but it also means Jesus did not rise from the dead. We will rise from the dead because Jesus rose from the dead. Our resurrection and Jesus' resurrection are connected together. Since Jesus rose, we will rise.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, our preaching is useless.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain... 1 Corinthians 15:14 (ESV)

If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, there is no good news to proclaim. There is no forgiveness of our sins to tell people about. If Jesus didn't conquer the power of death there is no hope in this life. There is no reason to gather as a church. You shouldn't be here this morning. You should be anywhere else other than here. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, I have nothing to preach about on Sunday. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, there is no forgiveness for our sin. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, there is no hope for the next life after death in this life. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, this life is as good as things get, the Bible is based on a lie, and church is a waste of time.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, our faith is in vain.

...and your faith is in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:14 (ESV)

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile... 1 Corinthians 15:17 (ESV)

Paul repeated this point in verse 14 and verse 17. If there is no resurrection of Jesus, then it isn't just that church is a waste of time but the entire Christian faith is a waste of time. Those of us who take Sunday and Wednesday to attend worship and youth group are wasting our time pursuing a lie, if Jesus did not rise. If Jesus did not rise, when we pray to Jesus, we are praying to thin air. When we study the Bible and obey the Bible we are wasting our time in a book that is based off the greatest lie in the history of the world, the resurrection of Jesus. If Jesus did not rise, it doesn't just destroy a part of the Christian faith, it destroys all of the Christian faith.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, the apostles were liars.

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. 1 Corinthians 15:15 (ESV)

The apostles who claimed to have met the risen Jesus were complete liars, if Jesus didn't rise. They were misrepresenting God if they claimed they met a Jesus that rose from the dead if he was actually still in the grave. History would need to reclassify the apostles from men of exemplary character and courage to the worst of men. They would need to be reclassified as liars and deceivers.

When we look at the apostles' life stories, we don't find men who lie, we find men who were all willing to die brutal deaths swearing Jesus was alive and they personally met him after his resurrection.

James the brother of Jesus was stoned to death claiming Jesus was alive. Peter, Andrew, Philip, Simon, Bartholomew, and James the son of Alphaeus were all crucified claiming Jesus was alive. Matthew and James the son of Zebedee were put to death by the sword claiming Jesus was alive. Thaddaeus was killed by arrows as he claimed Jesus was alive. Thomas died from a spear while claiming Jesus was alive. Only the apostle John died a natural death. That was because they failed to kill him after they attempted to boil him in oil in a human-size Frydaddy.

These men would all be fools if they were willing to be tortured to death for what they knew was a lie. Groups of people will not die for what they know to be a lie. Groups of people will only die for what they are confident is true.

Remember the apostles didn't start out convinced that Jesus rose from the dead. They started out doubting the resurrection, not believing the resurrection. When the women came back from the empty tomb on the morning of the resurrection, the apostles thought the women were out of their minds. It was only after the apostles checked things out for themselves and the resurrected Jesus appeared to them that they were forced to believe that Jesus is alive.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we are still in our sin.

**And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.
1 Corinthians 15:17 (ESV)**

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we have no victory over sin. There are two aspects to Christ's resurrection victory over sin. First, Jesus' death and resurrection for our sin took care of the eternal consequences of our sin. If we

have trusted in Jesus, we will not have to pay the eternal consequences of our sin in the lake of fire because Jesus paid the price of our sin for us.

There is a second aspect to Christ's victory over sin. Jesus' death and resurrection didn't just pay the eternal penalty of sin, but he conquered the power that sin has over us in our lives today. Jesus' resurrection power is alive in us now, and Jesus is the one who gives us victory over sin today. Jesus is the one who gives us freedom from sin's grip in our lives.

If Jesus is still in the grave, none of that is ours today. The eternal consequences of our sin are not paid and the current power of sin in our life is not broken, if Jesus did not rise from the dead.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 1 Corinthians 15:18 (ESV)

If Jesus is still in the grave, all the dead who died placing their hope in Jesus for forgiveness and for eternal life have been lost. Instead of experiencing forgiveness and the presence of God, they are damned forever.

When they were told of Christ, it was like pushing a drowning victim a life boat, only to have them get in the boat and find the boat was sinking because it had a hole in the bottom. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, all the hope they placed in Jesus was a false hope that did not save their lives.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, Christians are the most pitiable of all people.

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 1 Corinthians 15:19 (ESV)

If Jesus didn't rise, Christians are spending all of their time worshipping a Jesus that doesn't exist. They are devoting themselves to a faith that is based on a lie. They are wasting their money on a church that is pointless. Christians are a tragic bunch of fools. The millions who died placing their hope for forgiveness in Jesus and are living for joy of his presence beyond the grave were dead wrong.

The argument Paul made are that, first of all, Jesus rose from the dead. The evidence of Jesus' resurrection is irrefutable. The second point Paul made is that if the resurrection is not true, it isn't just a small oversight in the Christian faith, it destroys all of the Christian faith. Everything in our faith is based on the fact that Jesus is alive.

Now Paul turned the tables.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28 — What are the logical conclusions of the resurrection being true?

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV)

In the following eight verses, Paul described the results of the resurrection being true. In the interest of time, I am not going to read those verses. I am simply going to summarize them for you. I want you to notice that everything Paul pointed out pertains to the incredible victory that Jesus has won for us and over all fallen power in the universe because of his resurrection.

Jesus guarantees our resurrection when he returns.

Jesus will destroy every rule, power, and authority (demonic powers) opposed to God.

Jesus will establish his authority over everything and everyone.

Jesus will destroy death.

All things will come under the reign and rule of Jesus. The only thing not under Jesus will be God the Father.

Since Jesus did rise from the dead --- and that is an irrefutable fact, since the consequences of the resurrection being false are so serious that it would destroy the Christian faith entirely, since the consequences of the resurrection being true are so dramatic that it brings about our resurrection, destroys the power of death, and conquers all fallen powers in the universe --- how does this change the way we live every day?

That is the answer that verses 29-34 give us this morning. In these verses, Paul gave us three practical ways Jesus' resurrection changes our everyday lives. The resurrection motivates people to be saved by Christ. It motivates us to give our lives in service to Christ. It motivates us to live a sanctified and holy life.

1 Corinthians 15:29-34 — How does the resurrection change the way I live?

The resurrection motivates people to be saved by Jesus so they can experience a reunion with their loved ones because of Jesus.

Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? 1 Corinthians 15:29 (ESV)

This is obviously a tough verse. The Mormons developed the practice of baptizing dead relatives from this verse. I think they started ancestry.com so they could find more dead relatives to baptize all because of this verse.

What it means to baptize people on behalf of the dead has been debated for the last 2,000 years. There is somewhere between 40 and 400 different views on what this means. Since this verse is discussed and debated because of a practice we don't understand, it is often overlooked. Without getting tangled in the weeds, let's see what we can learn from this verse about the resurrection and how it changes our everyday lives.

Let's look at this verse one key word at a time. Paul said, "If there is no resurrection, why are people being baptized on behalf of the dead?"

Let's start with baptize. Baptism is always associated with salvation. The constant refrain in the New Testament is people believed and were baptized. There were no altar calls. There were not response cards to fill out. There was no raising of hands. The way you indicated that you believed in Jesus is you asked to be baptized into the name of Jesus.

Why was baptism the way you went public with your faith? Baptize means to dip or immerse something in water. Paul told us in Romans 6 that when someone is baptized, going under the water pictures they are buried with Christ through their faith in him. Coming out of the water pictures they are born again and raised to new life through their faith in Jesus.

Baptism and salvation are synonymous. Public baptism is a way to picture saving faith. It is a way to publicly express on the outside a change in someone's life that took place on the inside.

When this verse talks about baptism, it is talking about salvation. We have people that are being saved on behalf of the dead. That is a little clearer but it is still not clear. That brings us to our second key word.

It is the word “behalf.” It is the Greek preposition *hyper*. That is a very common preposition in Greek. It is also a very flexible preposition. It can mean on behalf of. It can also mean because of. I am not a Greek scholar. Some people who are Greek scholars have pointed out that this word could be translated as “because of,” not just “on behalf of.” That would mean the verse says people were being saved because of the dead. People were being saved because of Christians who died before them trusting in the resurrection.

If that is a good way to translate this, what Paul was saying was because we know there is a resurrection, and because there is life after death, we have people coming to faith in Jesus and trusting in Jesus, because the resurrection promises them that one day they will be resurrected with their deceased loved ones and spend eternity with their loved ones. This makes good sense.

We see this when a husband and wife have an especially close relationship. The wife is a Christian and the husband isn't. The wife gets sick and dies. The husband comes to Christ because of the promise of the resurrection. He wants to spend eternity with the wife he loves in resurrection bodies rather than to spend eternity in the lake of fire apart from her. This makes good sense.

Whenever I have the privilege of preaching the gospel at the funeral of someone who is a Christian, I always tell those at the funeral that right now their loved one is with Jesus. The Bible describes that as better by far. The suffering

they faced in this life was as tough as their life will every be. Right now, they are in the presence of God, which the Bible describes as a place of pure joy. The second thing I tell those at the funeral is if their loved one could speak to them, they would beg you to trust in Jesus so you can spend eternity with them, not apart from them. Be saved not just for the sake of yourself but for the sake of your family. Be saved so you can have the joy of a family reunion around the throne of Christ. Don't be the family member that is missing for eternity because you died apart from Christ.

This thought was very real to me as this week as I visited Tami Gravert. She is our beloved former secretary who is dying of cancer. She has weeks to live. Soon there will be a hole in the family because she will be with Jesus. The good news is that when she is with Jesus, she can look forward to a reunion when one day all of her children will be with her around the throne of Jesus because they also have trusted in Christ. Her death is a time when she can look forward to a great family reunion in the future. She will not be apart from her family forever.

So when Paul talked about people being baptized on behalf of the dead, I believe he was saying people were being saved because of the dead. They were saved because they were looking forward to a resurrection with their loved ones. The resurrection does not just reunite us with God. It ultimately reunites us with one another.

This morning, if you are like most families at church on Easter, you have some out-of-town relatives with you. If you are like most families, you have a

divided house. I don't mean some of you are Iowa fans and others are Iowa State fans. I mean that some in your family have trusted in Jesus and others have little interest in Jesus. This means that in eternity, all those who have not trusted in Jesus will not be able to participate in a great family reunion. Understand the resurrection is real. The facts of the resurrection are irrefutable. Jesus rose from the dead. I spent the first half of this sermon showing you the facts that support the resurrection. If you love your family, if you love your parents and you want to be with your family members forever in joy around the throne of Jesus, the only way for that reunion to take place is by trusting in Jesus.

According to the Bible, the only other option for those who die without trusting in Jesus to forgive their sin is they will spend eternity with the devil and his fallen angels in the lake of fire receiving just recompense for their sin. In the lake of fire, there is no joyful family reunion. There is no laughter with those you love. If you are here this morning, and you are here because you came with family that wanted you to come but today you do not know Jesus, I ask you to trust in Jesus. Your family that loves you begs you to trust in Jesus, be forgiven of your sin, and made into a new creation. Your family and I beg you to become a Christian not just for your sake but for the sake of a reunion in eternity with those you love.

The resurrection motivates us to sacrifice our lives in service to Jesus.

Why are we in danger every hour? 1 Corinthians 15:30 (ESV)

Paul said, if there is no resurrection, why am I putting my life on the line? Why do I spent my life living in constant danger? Paul faced all kinds of adversity and torture because he claimed Jesus rose from the dead. Paul was beaten with

rods. He was whipped for Jesus. He was thrown in prison because he spoke about Jesus. He was often hungry. He was shipwrecked. He had multiple assassination attempts on his life because he proclaimed Jesus.

Paul simply asked the question, "Why would I put my life in jeopardy for Jesus if this life is all there is?" If there is no resurrection, why wear yourself out working long hours to tell people about Jesus? Why risk your life and experience torture to clearly speak to people about Jesus, if this life is all there is? There is no motivation to serve Jesus and to suffer for Jesus if we do not look forward to a resurrection like Jesus. Look how Paul described the way he dealt with all the pain he faced in life for serving Jesus and speaking about Jesus. He handled the pain by looking to the future and his reward at the resurrection.

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17–18 (ESV)

Here is Paul's point. "I serve the Lord and am willing to suffer for it because one day I will see Jesus. One day I will be rewarded by Jesus based on how I served Jesus and what I was willing to suffer for Jesus." Paul was committed to reaching people with Jesus, just like we are here at CrossWinds. The more people Paul was able to introduce to Jesus now, the more joy he would have being with them in the new heavens and earth later.

If there is no resurrection of the dead, there is no motivation to serve Jesus. There is no motivation to sacrifice time and energy for Jesus. If there is no resurrection there is no incentive to tell people about Jesus. If there is no resurrection, there is no incentive to face suffering for telling people about Jesus.

I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! 1 Corinthians 15:31 (ESV)

Paul said, "I am putting my life on the line for Jesus every day! Do you think I would be risking my life every day if there were no future resurrection? Do you think I would be willing to be put in jail if there was no resurrection?" Paul would eventually have his head chopped off by Nero because he proclaimed Jesus. He was saying, "Do you think I would be willing to have my head chopped off if there was no resurrection?"

What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? 1 Corinthians 15:32 (ESV)

Now Paul talked about fighting wild beasts at Ephesus. This is another difficult verse. It says Paul fought with wild beasts in Ephesus. We have no record of Paul fighting for his life against wild animals in Ephesus' gladiatorial arena. As a Christian, he may have literally risked his life fighting wild beasts. We don't know. He could also have meant this figuratively. In Acts 19, Paul had a wild mob in Ephesus that wanted to destroy him like wild beasts.

While we don't know if this was literal or metaphorical, we do know the point Paul was making. If there is no resurrection, if this life is all there is, if people's eternities don't hang in the balance based on how they respond to Jesus, if there is no afterlife where we are rewarded by Jesus for heroically, courageously, and faithfully telling people about Jesus, then why risk your life?

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

This is a quote from Isaiah 22:13. Paul said that if there is no resurrection and we just die and go out of existence and the next generation pops up like corn

in the field and nothing matters about how we lived our lives when we are dead and gone, then we should make sure we get as much pleasure out of this life as possible. If there is no resurrection, then getting the maximum pleasure out of life, no matter how it hurts others, should be the goal of our lives. If there is no resurrection, we are no better than cattle. We eat, drink, and die.

Paul's point is that there is a resurrection. We are better than animals. We are eternal people. We will either spend eternity in the lake of fire or we will spend eternity in the presence of God if we are saved and forgiven by Jesus. This is why it matters what we do with our lives when it comes to being saved by Jesus and when it comes to serving Jesus.

This is why our culture is the way it is today. People have lost sight of the resurrection. They have lost sight of eternity. They think all there is to life is eating, drinking, pleasure, and dying. People think the purpose of life is to carry out their biological functions and to continue the human race. They think that when they die, they become plant food and end up as nothing. They do not believe in the resurrection. They deny the existence of an eternity either in heaven or hell. They deny the fact that we will all stand before the judge of all the earth and either be forgiven of sin by Jesus or accountable for our sin apart from Jesus. If there is no resurrection, then nothing is left in this life but sensual enjoyment. We should spend our time playing video games, enjoying sex, and eating food. Let us eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.

The resurrection motivates us to live holy lives for Jesus.

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 1 Corinthians 15:33 (ESV)

Company means association. Paul said we must be careful about those with whom we associate. Be especially careful about associating with people that do not believe in the resurrection. Their bad theology will lead to bad morality. If they don't believe right, they won't behave right. If people don't believe in the resurrection they will start living as if this world is all that matters. They will have no sense of eternal accountability for their choices. They will sink to the lowest level of morality. If you spend time with Christians like that, you will start to become like that.

Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. 1 Corinthians 15:34 (ESV)

Do not go on sinning. The reason people continue in sin is they have no knowledge of God. They have no sense of eternity. They have forgotten about the resurrection and that all people will either be judged by Jesus or if they have been forgiven by Jesus, they will be rewarded by Jesus based on how they lived. Those without a knowledge of God and a knowledge of eternity dive deep when it comes to sin. They will try to get away with anything because they think all there is to life is the pleasure of this world. The pleasure we should long for and live for is the day we will be resurrected and rewarded by Jesus based on how we lived.

Conclusion

Remember the resurrection is not fiction. It is fact. It is one of the most well attested facts of history. The evidence of the resurrection is irrefutable. Jesus' resurrection from the dead guarantees the fact that we will rise from the dead.

The reality of our resurrection is what motivates us to be saved, not just to be with Jesus but to have a joyful reunion with our Christian relatives who died before us. The reality of the resurrection motivates us to serve Jesus. Even if we must suffer for Jesus and experience loss in this life for serving Jesus, that is OK. We look forward to being rewarded by Jesus at the resurrection. The reality of the resurrection also motivates us to live a holy life for Jesus because one day all people will be judged by Jesus --- either in condemnation, if you have not trusted him, or with rewards from Jesus, if you are saved by him.

My friends, the truth is that as we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead, we also remember that we too will one day rise from the dead.

As I close, I want to speak to some of you. There are some here who came with family but you did not know Jesus before walking in this door. If that is you, I put to you that the facts supporting the resurrection of Jesus are irrefutable. Your family wants you to be with them at the great family reunion in heaven. Will you trust in the resurrected Jesus today so he is the savior that will reward you in eternity not the judge who will condemn you?



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