

## What If There Is No Resurrection?

1 Corinthians, Vol. 33

HBC 5/3/20

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

We begin by going back to something Jesus taught.

John 5:28–29: *“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which **all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth**; those who did the good deeds **to a resurrection of life**, those who committed the evil deeds **to a resurrection of judgment**.”*

Corinth was a cesspool of bad theology. It included a hodgepodge of ideas about life after death. To the people who needed to have their understanding of the resurrection of Jesus and their own future resurrection tweaked to match what is **according to the Scriptures**, Paul wrote this spectacular chapter.

The credibility of Jesus would be ruined if He did not rise from the dead.

Matthew 16:21 (= Mark 8:31 = Luke 9:22): *From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, **and be raised up on the third day**.*

Matthew 17:22-23 (= Mark 9:30-32 = Luke 9:44-45): *And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He **will be raised on the third day**.”*

Matthew 20:18-19: *“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, **and on the third day He will be raised up**.”*

Matthew 26:32: *“But **after I have been raised**, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”*

John 2:18–22: *The Jews then said to Him, “What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So **when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken**.*

In 1 Corinthians 15, we already saw the list of the people Jesus appeared to after His resurrection. In our text today, Paul advances the reasoning further:

***If there is no resurrection:***

I. **You Are Foolish** (12-14)

1 Corinthians 15:12-13: *Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;*

Being religious is absurd if everything ends in the grave.

1 Corinthians 15:14: . . . *and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.*

**Vain** means **empty**, void of truth or void of power.

***If there is no resurrection:***

II. **You Are Deceitful** (15)

1 Corinthians 15:15: *Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.*

**found to be false witnesses** means we are exposed as liars, caught in the act.

***If there is no resurrection:***

III. **You Are Doomed** (16-17)

1 Corinthians 15:16-17: *For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*

**worthless** is a different word than **vain** in verse 14. It's something void of useful results, something which is totally unproductive.

**you are still in your sins**. As we saw back in verse 3, this is a matter **of first importance**. Christ's death means nothing if not coupled with His resurrection.

***If there is no resurrection:***

IV. **You Are Pitiful** (18-19)

1 Corinthians 15:18-19: *Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*

Nothing about Christianity is more profound in the human daily experience than how it changes a person's view of death.

For a Christian, death is called ***sleep***

For a Christian, death ***has no sting*** 1 Corinthians 15:55

For a Christian, death ***is gain*** Philippians 1:21

For a Christian, to die is ***to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord*** 2 Corinthians 5:8.

For a Christian, to die is to ***always be with the Lord***. 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

That's why Paul wrote, ***I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.*** Philippians 1:23.

1 Corinthians 15:18-19: *Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*

Any brand of faith that relates only to this life is ***not*** Christianity.

***most to be pitied*** means that people who claim to be Christians but don't believe in resurrection are to be pitied more than anyone else, because they are fools, they are deceitful and they are doomed.

But ***what if there IS resurrection from the grave?*** Jesus was not talking about mystical wishes when He said this:

John 5:28–29: *Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*

Philippians 2:9–11: *For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The question is **not** whether Jesus *is* Lord. **He is**. The question is **not** whether you will confess that He is Lord. **You will**. The question is whether you will do it now, in this life, and be saved, or whether you will wait until you stand before Him in judgment, and are forced to acknowledge that you are justly headed to the lake of fire.

Jesus told us what kind of people are He blesses. Among them:

Matthew 5:6: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

How do you know if you hunger and thirst and thirst for the right things? Ask yourself some questions, in the spirit of 2 Corinthians 13:5, of examining yourself to see if you are in the faith.

Are you satisfied with yourself?

Do you hate the sin in you, in the manner Paul describes? “Wretched man that I am!”

Does anything external satisfy you? Do you long after things, believing they will make you complete?

Do you have a steady appetite for the word of God?

Are the things of God sweet to you? Do you yearn for fellowship with other believers, and do you love to serve side by side with them?

How do you do when you ask yourself things like that?