

I CORINTHIANS
Chapter 15:12-19

INTRODUCTION:

In - **verses 12-16** the Holy Spirit develops for us and vigorously defends one of the great fundamental truths of a Christian's testimony. As we have already noticed, there were some in the Corinthian church who were raising questions as to the bodily resurrection of the saints.

VERSE 12:

There were those in Paul's day that questioned the believer's resurrection from the dead. Notice **verse 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?"**

If Christ be preached that He rose from the dead in the manner described in - **verses 1-4**, and by the eye-witnesses listed - **verses 5-8**, how could any of the members of the church at Corinth say that there was no such thing as the resurrection from the dead!

Verse 13:

It was not that they denied the resurrection of Christ for Paul had stated in -**verses 1-3**, that they had heard, believed, and received the Gospel which is the message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. What they had a problem with was the believer's bodily resurrection.

To put it simply they believed that dead men do not rise again. But in - **verse 13** Paul declared if there be no resurrection then Jesus was not raised from the dead. Notice - **"But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen."** Paul was saying that the resurrection of Christ showed the guarantee of the believer's resurrection. Once establishing the fact of the believer's resurrection, Paul begins to establish the importance of Christ's resurrection.

VERSE 14-15:

In - **verse 14-15** Paul talks about the preaching of the resurrected Christ and the preachers of a resurrected Christ. He tells us that if Jesus is not raised from the dead then both are false. If Christ be not raised then the message is destroyed.

Paul says in **verse 14** - **"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain."** The word **"preaching"** - speaks of the proclaiming of the gospel message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The Gospel is to be the heart and soul of preaching.

In some cases - **"preaching"** is nothing more than someone standing up and yelling. Preaching is more than yelling. It is a matter of telling. It is telling about a Saviour who died for our sins and rose again from the dead. Paul tells us in **verse 14** that if Christ is not risen - **"then our preaching is in "vain."** The word - **"vain"** means void, empty of content, as a shell without a kernel. If Jesus is not a resurrected Christ, then as a preacher I have lost the content of my preaching. I have nothing to preach about. My message has been destroyed and made void. The death, burial, and resurrection are the heart and soul of my preaching. If Christ is not raised from the dead, then I am left without a message.

Also notice that if Christ be not raised then the messenger is deceiving. Every doctrine in the New Testament rests on the foundational doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. Even His sufferings, death, and

burial were empty and without purpose if He was not raised or resurrected from the dead. Therefore, their faith in Christ as their Saviour was but an empty faith with no purpose.

Without the resurrection of Christ, instead of the Gospel being "good news" or "glad tidings", it is nothing more than a mockery, and the lie of all lies. Man would be nothing more than the dog that when he dies, he dies all over and ceases to exist at death. There would be no hope of anything better beyond this present life.

The two great truths that Scripture teaches are 1) that He was delivered up to death because of our sins, and 2) that He was raised again as a declaration of God the Father's satisfaction with the work that His Son accomplished. Thus, as the risen One He ever lives - ***"to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."***

Jesus not only came from the grave spiritually, but also came with a material body. The greatest evidence was given to the Christians of the earliest days that the Lord Jesus had actually settled the sin question and that redemption was complete. He not only came from the tomb, but He came forth in the very body that had gone into the grave though it was changed.

Nevertheless, His was a real human body, and we know that it bore prints of the nails in the palms of His hands. There was still the mark where the Roman spear had pierced His side, and if I read my Bible correctly, I believe the raised body of the Lord Jesus will bear those marks for all eternity. Because of this it will differ from the bodies of all the saints - ***John 20:24-29.***

I do not think that those who have been martyred for Christ's sake will bear any evidence of suffering on their bodies. There will be no scar, neither spot nor blemish, nor any such thing. Our bodies will be absolutely perfect when raised and glorified.

I believe the body of our Lord Jesus will bear those scars that speak of His sufferings because these will be the visible evidence for all to consider throughout the ages to come. That the very same Jesus who died for our sins upon the cross has been raised in the power and is now seated at His Father's right hand.

A song writer put this truth into a song:

"I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
As redeemed by His side I shall stand,
I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
By the print of the nails in His hand."

VERSE 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 God did not raise Christ from the dead, Paul and every preacher of the Gospel of Christ – ***"are found"*** – meaning to be proved a false witnesses. Paul does not hold back pursuing the subject of Christ's resurrection. He meets it head-on, laying his reputation as a minister of the Gospel and in fact his entire ministry and eternal destiny on the line.

The words - ***"false witness"*** speak of the bearer of an untrue message. In other words, if Christ is not raised from the dead, the preacher that tells you that God raised Jesus from the dead is telling you something God did not do. He is being deceptive and dishonest. He is being a - ***"false witness,"*** a liar, cheat, crook, and deceiver.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead on the morning of the third day then Peter, Paul, James, John, and all the apostles were a hoax. Every preacher throughout the ages has been nothing but false witnesses. What they have declared, written, and proclaimed is false.

Paul says in *1 Corinthians 1:23* - **"We preach Christ crucified"**, and that should be true of every one of us. But, that was not all that he preached. He preached Christ raised from the dead and Christ exalted to God's right hand for he says - **"Yea, and we are found false witness 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."**

VERSE 16:

Paul once again reminds them of the importance of the believer's resurrection: **"For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised."** If there is not the bodily resurrection of the believer's body the implication is devastating. It would mean that not only our declaration of the resurrected Christ is false, but even worse; our dependence on the resurrected Christ is fruitless.

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised." What if Christ be not raised? **"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."** If our Lord Jesus Christ did not come forth triumphant from that tomb then we have no gospel to preach to lost men. If the body of Jesus is still in the tomb, then you and I are absolutely hopeless, there is no salvation for us. The fact that He rose from the dead is the proof that the offering-up of Himself upon the cross satisfied the claims of divine righteousness. This sacrifice met every requirement of infinite holiness. God, Himself, raised Him from the dead as proof of His satisfaction in His Son's work. Now Christ sets at the right hand of the Father as a mediator between God and man. This was the message the apostle preached.

VERSE 17:

"Vain" - is different here from the word used in **verse 14**. Here, vain is much stronger and means void of truth, profitless, a lie. Therefore, if Christ is not raised from the dead, their (and our) faith is but a lie and they (and we) are yet in our sins. All are hopelessly and eternally lost if Christ is not resurrected. We are nothing more than we were formerly - **Ephesians 2:2-3, 12**

Everyone who has made a profession of faith has placed their eternal destiny on the truth of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is upon these truths that we depend on for salvation. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, then what we are trusting in and depending on is - **"vain"**, useless, and fruitless.

Since 1958 I have depended on nothing but the finished work of Jesus to save me, a finished work that includes His resurrection from the dead. Through these many years I have joined William Bradbury in saying:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus name.
On Christ the solid Rock, I stand—
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

If Jesus is not risen from the dead, then my faith has been in vain. I am lost and on my way to hell. Each one of you that is trusting in Christ is lost and on your way to hell. Our faith has been in vain. It doesn't matter what we did when we claimed to have been saved, whatever we felt or experienced, it has all been a lie. Our faith has been a joke. All I have had is a false sense of security as there is no forgiveness of our sins.

If Jesus is not a risen and living Saviour, I am still under the penalty and power of sin. My sins have never been forgiven, they have never been cleansed, and they have never been washed away. I am still

condemned before God. I am still separated from God. I am a sinner and all my sins have never been atoned for and I am guilty before God.

The only way that I know that my sins are gone is because He made Himself responsible for them, He died for them. Now He sits enthroned at God's right hand, and there are no sins on Him there.

Jesus Christ having borne sin's judgment on the cross descended to the grave and lay there for three days and three nights. During that interval no one in all the world knew whether His work was satisfactory, no one knew whether He had really settled the sin question. **"We thought,"** said the troubled disciples, **"that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," - Luke 24:21.** They had no way of knowing whether it was true or not until when the first day of the week came, He rose in triumph from the grave, and broke the bands of death asunder. There are no sins upon the risen Christ for He has left them all behind in His open grave and has ascended to God's right hand without them.

"If Christ be not raised they were still in their sins." Although Christ died for sins, He also arose in order that men might be made righteous, and might be justified – **Romans 4:25.** A crucified, non-resurrected Christ cannot deliver men from the penalty, power, and one day the very presence of sin.

VERSE 18: - "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

If the resurrection of Christ is not true, then all of our loved ones that believed and put their faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ died and went to hell. Their faith was vain; their sins were not forgiven, and each one of them died, deceived and eternally damned to an eternal hell.

If Christ has not been raised from the dead then we have been depending on that which cannot save us and has been responsible for many going to hell and perishing. There is no redeemed life unless there is a risen life!

VERSE 19: - "If in this life only we have hope in, we are of all men most miserable."

The word - **"miserable"** means "to have mercy on, to be pitied." If Jesus is not risen from the dead, then we are to be pitied. The life we have devoted to the Lord's work has been foolish. If Jesus is not alive, you and I are to be pitied to come to church week after week, hear a false message, believe in that message, work and serve for a cause that is nothing more than a joke. How foolish my ministry has been, and the years I have wasted seeking to do a work for the Lord – **"if Christ be not raised"**.

The statements we often make would be lies. Statements like: Heaven will be worth it all, our loved ones are better off; we will see our loved ones in heaven.

Statements the apostle Paul made would all be lies if Christ be not risen. **II Corinthians 5:8; II Timothy 1:12; II Timothy 2:10; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.**

There is not only this life in which we have been foolish, but our - **"hope,"** the life we have looked forward to, contemplated and anticipated, has been nothing more than a dream, wishful thinking, a lie, if Jesus was not raised from the dead.

Revelation 21:1-7 - A heavenly home without sin, death, sickness, heartache, sorrow, and tears has been nothing more than a myth, and we have been a fool to believe such a thing exists for us in the future if Jesus is not risen from dead.

Thanks be unto God, we as God's children can rejoice and shout for joy, "He's alive!" Our faith is not in vain; He's alive! Our sins are forgiven; He is risen! My loved ones have not perished; He is alive! It all has not been in vain. Jesus is risen from the dead! We might wonder 'what if', but thank God we do not

have to live in misery for He arose again from the dead! My preaching is not in vain. Our labor for the Lord is not foolish and fruitless.

Jesus did come forth out of the grave! God's demand for sin's payment was paid for by Jesus and approved by God; and the resurrection proves our faith is not in vain, our message of grace is not a lie, and those who have died in the faith have not died in vain.

I CORINTHIANS 15:12-19

Work Sheet

1. What question was being raised in the church at Corinth that Paul spent the chapter dealing with?
2. Why is the resurrection of Christ so very important? What would be the results IF he had not risen?
3. To put it simply they believed that _____ men _____ rise again.
4. What did Paul say that guaranteed the believer's resurrection?
5. Define the word – **“preaching”**.
6. What does **“vain”** mean?
7. If Christ be not raised then the _____ is deceiving.
8. Without the resurrection of Christ instead of the Gospel being “_____” or “_____” it is nothing more than a _____, and the _____ of all _____.
9. The two great truths that Scripture teaches are 1) that He was delivered up to death because of our _____, and 2) that He was raised again as a declaration of God the Father's _____ with the work that _____ accomplished.
10. If Christ be NOT risen can anyone be saved? Explain your answer.
11. How will the body of Christ in His resurrected body be different than ours when we get to heaven? Explain your answer.
12. If God did not raise Christ from the dead, Paul and every preacher of the Gospel of Christ – **“_____”** – meaning to be proved a false witness.
13. Define - **“false witness”**.
14. If Jesus did not rise from the dead on the morning of the third day then Peter, Paul, James, John, and all the apostles were a _____.
15. In **I Corinthians 1:23**, what did Paul say he preached?
16. What if Christ be not raised? Explain your answer and all the ramifications.
17. In **verse 17**, the word **“vain”** has a much stronger meaning. Therefore, if Christ is not raised from the dead, their (and our) faith is but a _____ and they (and we) are yet in our _____.
18. Everyone who has made a profession of faith has placed their _____ on the truth of the _____, _____, and _____ of _____.
19. If Jesus was not raised from the _____, then what we are trusting in and depending on is - **“_____”**, _____, and _____.
20. If Jesus is not a risen and living Saviour, we are still under the _____ and _____ of sin. Our sins have never been _____, they have never been _____, and they have never _____.

been _____ away. I am still _____ before God. I am still _____ from God. I am a _____ and all my _____ have never been atoned for and I am _____ before God.

21. How do we know that God was satisfied with the sacrifice Jesus Christ made on the cross for our sins?
22. A crucified, non-resurrected Christ _____ deliver men from the penalty, power, and one day the very presence of sin.
23. What does the word - "**miserable**" mean? Why would we be miserable?
24. A heavenly home without sin, death, sickness, heartache, sorrow, and tears has been nothing more than a _____, and we have been a fool to believe that a place called heaven even exists for us in the future if _____.
25. Thanks be unto God, we as God's children can _____ and shout for joy, "____'s _____!" Our faith _____ in vain. Our sins are _____; He is _____! My loved ones have not _____; He is alive! It all _____ been in vain. Jesus is risen from the _____! We do not have to live in _____ for He _____ again from the dead! My preaching is not in _____. Our _____ for the Lord is not _____ and _____.
26. Jesus _____ come forth out of the grave! God's _____ for _____'s payment was paid for by Jesus and _____ by God and the resurrection _____ our faith is not in _____, our message of grace is not a _____, and those who have died in the faith _____ died in vain.