

1 Corinthians 15

Hey, good morning RCM. So good to have you with us today – even though we aren't able to meet in person, at least we can use this technology and still share a little bit. Just as a precaution, our family has been laying low because some of us were exposed to COVID. We tested negative, so unless some of us start developing symptoms, we will be back in person next Sunday 8/15.

This week, in our reading plan, we finished 1 Corinthians and worked through 2 Corinthians. And where I want us to turn for our time in the Word today, is 1 Corinthians 15. I'm in the CSB this week, as usual.

In this part of the letter, Paul is hammering home the importance of the resurrection. Because the resurrection changes everything for the Christian. If you have turned from your sin, and are trusting in Jesus, you have new life because of the resurrection. And it's the fact of the resurrection that separates Biblical Christianity from all other world religions.

There's a lot of religious systems that say things like:

- Don't lie too much
- Work hard at your job
- Treat your wife well. Treat your husband well
- Don't steal
- Try and be a good person

But get this – Christianity – real Biblical Christianity says you are dead in your sin, because you are a sinner. Even the best of you. And there's nothing you can do to save yourself. But God, through Jesus, offers you life. Because Jesus paid the ENTIRE penalty for your sin (past, present, future sins), and on the 3rd day defeated the enemy of death and sin that you and I are unable to defeat as God raised Jesus from the dead. And he offers LIFE to all who by grace alone, through faith alone, will believe in HIM!

What we have to see and believe down deep in our bones is that the RESURRECTION MATTERS, AND THE RESURRECTION CHANGES ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING!

You see, if we try and reduce Christianity to just a set of moral rules, then the resurrection, we can take it or leave it. But Biblical Christianity isn't just a set of moral rules – it's a relationship with the God of the universe, that is only possible because of the resurrections.

READ 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, "There is no resurrection of the dead"? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. ¹⁵ Moreover, we are found to

be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ—whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised.

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 worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. ¹⁹ If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

²⁰ But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep

So, if you remember from last week, this church was a kinds of jacked up. Apparetnly, there were some denying the resurrection. Maybe they were part of the Saduccees, or whatever, but they were questioning or even flat out denying the resurrection.

What I would say is a **critical error**. How can some of you say there's no resurrection? And this error is going to lead to a **crumbling foundation**.

Everything about Christianity hinges on what happened about 2,000 years ago in the middle east. Everything. Paul says that without the resurrection, you have a **worthless faith**. It's the foundation. It matters. Because Christianity isn't about some set of principles of morality, it's about a life that is lived to the glory of God, that is offered by Jesus alone. And all of Paul's preaching, and the church's faith is worthless apart from the resurrection.

Even more so, without it Paul would have been a liar, and every Christian preacher that followed would have been a liar. Without the resurrection, we should just live our best life now. Get as much temporary pleasure as we can. Fill our time with the greatest sources of earthly adventure as we can. Because this would be it.

In V19 – Paul says that without the resurrection, Christians should be **pitied more than anyone**. Like Mr. T's classic line – we are fools to be pitied if there's no resurrection.

ILLUSTRATION – Dan's men's group discussion

And here's the rub. If Christianity is just a simple set of moral instructions, then the resurrection really doesn't matter. But, the life of a Christian, is one of self-denial. One of humility. One of sacrificial and compassionate love for people (all as an overflow of the love we have for God). Real Biblical Christianity makes NO sense apart from the resurrection.

Paul himself counted all of his earthly accomplishments, all of his achievements, all of his "best life now" type of stuff as garbage compared to knowing Jesus as savior and Lord. A relationship only possible because of the resurrection. And right on the heels of 1C15:19 we see in V20 one of the most powerful words in the English language – BUT! But as it is Christi IS raised from the dead.

And the truth of the resurrection, for those that are in Christ, who have turned from their sin and are trusting in Jesus, this changes everything. Like absolutely everything.

- Your and my debt is paid
- Your and my hope is guaranteed
- The best is yet to come
- I can live for God's glory NOW
- Free to rest in relationship to God through Jesus
- I can suffer well
- I can hope in the midst of suffering
- I will live forever with God