

He's Alive!

1 Corinthians 15

Introduction

While we're going through the study on "Be Ready", it's appropriate that on Easter we step aside for one Sunday to revisit the core issue of Jesus' resurrection. It is, in fact, fundamental to the premise that we should be living *as we wait for His return*.

So today we're going to 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul makes a pretty bold, but true statement about where we'd be if Jesus hadn't really been raised from the dead.

Background Passage:

Paul is asking the right questions:

15:1-32 – ¹Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; ⁷then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; ⁸and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. ¹¹Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

¹²Now 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? ¹³**But if there is no resurrection of the dead**, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴**and if Christ has not been raised**, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. ¹⁵Moreover we are even found *to be* false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For **if the dead are not raised**, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷and **if Christ has not been raised**, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

²⁰**But now Christ has been raised from the dead**, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

²¹For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, ²⁴then *comes* the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all

rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be abolished is death. ²⁷For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. ²⁸And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

²⁹Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? **If the dead are not raised at all**, why then are they baptized for them? ³⁰**Why are we also in danger every hour?** ³¹I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. ³²**If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus**, what does it profit me? **If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.**

What is your answer to his questions?

Bible Study:

Verse 13 – If there's no life after death...

Then Christ isn't raised.

If Christ *is* raised, then there is life after death.

Verse 14 – if Christ has not been raised...

Our preaching is vain – Our works, efforts, ministry are pointless.

Our faith is vain – Our current beliefs, prayer, Bible reading, inspiration, hope, giving, anticipation of His return...

But if Christ *is* raised, then our ministry, works, faith, beliefs, prayer, Bible reading, hope have a purpose, reward, and wonderful outcome.

Verse 17-19 – if Christ has not been raised...

Our faith is worthless – There's nothing sadder than someone putting their faith, hope, and trust in someone who can't be trusted.

You are still in your sins – In fact, there's no such thing. All of that guilt and emptiness where just from your parents and their culture.

Those who are dead are done– That hope we talk about at funerals is just a salve to assuage the grieving.

We are of all men most pitied –

Why? _____

But if Christ *is* raised, then we can be forgiven from our sin and have hope for eternal life.

Verse 29 – If the dead are not raised at all...

Why would people be martyred?

Verse 29 – “Certainly the most difficult passage in the New Testament.” – Clarke”

“As *martyrdom* and *baptism* were thus so closely and intimately connected, βαπτίζεσθαι, *to be baptized*, was used to express *being put to a violent death* by the hands of persecutors. So Mt 20:22, 23: “But Jesus answered and said, Are ye able to drink of the *cup* that I shall drink of? &c.” (Can ye go through my *sufferings*?) “They say unto him, We are able. He saith unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of my *cup*,” (ye shall bear your part of the *afflictions* of the Gospel,) “and be *baptized* with the *baptism* that I am *baptized* with (that is, ye shall suffer *martyrdom*.) See also Mr 10:38. So Lu 12:50; “I have a *baptism* to be *baptized* with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” That is, I must *die a violent death* for the salvation of men. 10. The sum of the apostle's meaning appears to be this: If there be no resurrection of the dead, those who, in becoming Christians, expose themselves to all manner of privations, crosses, severe sufferings, and a violent death, can have no compensation, nor any motive sufficient to induce them to expose themselves to such miseries. But as they receive baptism as an emblem of *death* in voluntarily going under the water, so they receive it as an emblem of the *resurrection* unto eternal *life*, in coming up out of the water; thus they are *baptized for the dead*, in perfect faith of the resurrection. The three following verses seem to confirm this sense.” - Clarke

“Proofs of Jesus’ resurrection” from Bruce Phillips:

- *Jesus died by crucifixion.*
- *The disciples BELIEVED they saw the risen Christ.*
- *Paul was converted.*
- *James was converted.*
- *And the tomb was empty. This last is not 95% agreement, but certainly a significant majority of scholars accept it.*
- *(And if I can humbly add: Nearly all of the disciples died martyrs.)*

If Christ *is* raised, then life on this earth is not the be-all, end-all.

There is something more important than life!

Verse 30-31 – Why are we in danger every hour?

If Paul didn’t believe in Jesus’ resurrection, why would he risk death at every turn?

If Christ *is* raised, then there is reason to risk death to bring people to Christ.

Verse 32 – Why did I risk my life? - Paul

Why did Paul risk his life with mortal enemies?

If Christ *is* raised, then risking my life has a reward!

Verse 32 – Why do we deny self?

Why don’t we eat and drink and live life for the utmost of sensual pleasure?

If Christ *is* raised, then there is the utmost of life for eternity.

Living as if Jesus really is raised from the dead:

Verse 20 – But now Christ *has been* raised from the dead, ...

“...the first fruits of those who are asleep...”

What does that remind you of? _____

We should be living in active belief.

Knowing He guides our steps, provides for our every true need, and protects us from any harm.

“Bulletproof”

Story about near-martyr whose daughter saw Jesus protecting her.

Conclusion

If Jesus isn’t risen, then we’re wasting all of our time in our Christian endeavors. **But if He is, then is this all you’ve got?**