

Mount Olive Baptist

Implications of the Resurrection • IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION •

1 Corinthians 15:12-32 • 11/17/19

MAIN POINT

The resurrection of Christ guarantees the future resurrection of all believers and motivates us to live for the greater cause in the present.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What do you consider to be the “essential elements” of your life? What would happen were you to remove one?

What are the essential elements of Christianity? What would happen if you removed one?

Many people today are willing to accept that Jesus was a good man and gifted teacher, but unwilling to believe He physically rose from the grave. However, like a puzzle with missing pieces, Christianity without the resurrection is not the entire picture. An incomplete picture of the gospel is a false gospel.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-19.

What obstacles kept the Corinthians from believing in the resurrection? What keeps people from believing today?

If the resurrection of the dead is not true, what impact does that have on our faith, forgiveness of sins, and the future of deceased believers?

Read verse 19. How should people feel about Christians if the resurrection is not true? Does this verse explain how some today feel about Christians?

What did Paul mean when he suggested that without the resurrection we only have hope in this life? Why is faith in a Jesus who did not rise from the dead

insufficient?

Read Romans 1:4. What did the resurrection prove about Jesus' identity?

When Paul preached the gospel at the Areopagus, it was the resurrection that caused the Greek philosophers to stop listening to him (see Acts 17:32). Though they acknowledged the possible resurrection of the soul, the philosophers of the day denied any form of bodily resurrection. The society and worldview that surrounded the Corinthians on all sides scoffed at the idea of a bodily resurrection. However, the resurrection of Jesus is important because it verifies His identity as the Son of God. Believing that Jesus is only a good man and moral teacher offers us an example to follow in this life, but it does not offer us life in the next. Christ's resurrection offers hope in this life as well as the one to come.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-28.

What events does Paul describe in these verses? Consider making a timeline. How do these verses describe the whole history of man?

Read Romans 5:12-14. What did Paul mean when he said Adam was a type or pattern of the one to come? How is Christ the new Adam?

Paul wrote Christ is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. What are first fruits and how do they help us understand this passage?

In farming, firstfruits are the initial yield of a field or crop. They indicate to the farmer what he can expect from the rest of his crop. In the same way, followers of Jesus can look to Him as an example of what is to come. As Christ was raised, so will all believers.

What does it mean to be subject to someone or something? How is death subject to Christ? What will Jesus do upon destroying death?

These verses describe the grand sweep of human history from the fall of Adam to the consummation of God's kingdom. Every Christ follower's story ends with resurrection and eternal communion with Christ. Because Christ has been raised from the dead, all believers have unwavering assurance that they too will be raised.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:29-34.

What sacrifices did Paul and the other apostles make on behalf of the gospel? Would they have done this if they didn't believe in the resurrection?

Many of the problems the Corinthians had were because they were easily

influenced by the views of the people around them. What is the danger in becoming too comfortable with prevalent cultural ideas and norms?

How can you learn from others without being influenced by them?

What final charge and warning does Paul give the Corinthians?

These verses ask the same rhetorical question: “What is the point of living as a Christian if there is no resurrection?” Paul was characterized by his bold and constant proclamation of the gospel. Without the resurrection, there is no gospel to proclaim. Living the Christian life and taking a risk to advance the faith would be utterly pointless if the gospel were not true. Paul closes with a stern warning to the Corinthian believers to wake up and continue doing the work of the Kingdom.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What effect does the resurrection have on you today? What difference does it make in your relationships? in your work? in your recreation?

How does the resurrection of Christ motivate you to share the gospel with others? What reactions can you anticipate when you do? How can you respond to those reactions?

Do you look forward to eternity? If not, what does this reflect about your faith?

Though it may seem counter-intuitive, living focused on eternity is the best way to produce fruitful living in the present. What we believe about the resurrection affects every aspect of our faith. Resurrection is the hope of every Christian. Living life for the greater cause of the gospel means living with our eyes on eternity.

PRAYER

Thank God for the love He has shown you in Jesus Christ. Pray for those around you who do not have the hope of the resurrection. Pray the resurrection would motivate you to live a faithful and vibrant life in the present.

COMMENTARY

| 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-32

15:12. Though it is uncertain what caused some Corinthian believers to deny the resurrection

of the dead, Greeks viewed bodily death as final, with some saying the spirit survived disembodied. This view likely influenced the church at Corinth.

15:13-15. If Christ were not raised, then apostolic preaching of the resurrection was without foundation, the Corinthians' faith was void, and the apostles were false witnesses. "Faith" here refers to the content of the gospel message, and is synonymous with "system of beliefs."

15:16. A restatement, in reverse order, of the implications of the Corinthian skepticism regarding resurrection.

15:19. Christians should be pitied more than anyone if there is no resurrection, for in that case we have placed all our hopes in a falsehood. Christianity is fundamentally a resurrection faith.

15:20. Christ's genuine, well-attested resurrection is the guarantee of our future resurrection. "Firstfruits" refers to the guarantee that Christ's resurrection is the first-of-a-kind resurrection that promises others will follow in the end time. In this instance, the phrase "those who have fallen asleep" refers specifically to those who have died in Christ.

15:21-22. Paul presents a parallel of necessary effects. Through one man, Adam, death came to humanity. If this is ever to be reversed, it must be done so through like kind: a man. God has appointed just such a man: Jesus Christ, who is fully divine and fully human. Through His resurrection, the promise of resurrection comes to a new humanity "in Christ." The second occurrence of the word all refers to all those who are joined to Christ through faith.

15:23. Jesus' resurrection precedes and makes certain the resurrection of those who belong to Christ at His coming.

15:24-28. The Son, as the resurrected Messiah, will conquer and subdue everything, including the last enemy— death. By saying "He must reign," Paul touches on the set-in-stone divine plan that assures us that history will end in just this way: with God triumphant over all evil and God's people reigning with Christ forever.

15:29. "Being baptized for the dead" probably refers to the practice, apparently unique to the Corinthian church, of someone undergoing baptism on behalf of a believer who had died without undergoing baptism. Paul was not condoning this practice, and certainly Scripture nowhere directs us to conduct such baptisms. Paul simply pointed out that it was meaningless for the Corinthians to enact such practices.

15:32. "Wild animals" is almost certainly metaphorical for struggles Paul faced from human opponents of the gospel.

