

# Jesus is Risen! (Fact or Fiction?)

## Mark 16:1-8 & 1 Corinthians 15

This morning we come to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Yet, some might find it ironic that we are celebrating Easter this year on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Some claim that we're fools for believing that someone rose from the dead 2,000 years ago. Are we fools?

Here are a couple of quotes from unbelievers regarding the resurrection:

- **“Resurrection is an action of God. Jesus was raised into the meaning of God. It therefore cannot be a physical resuscitation occurring inside of human history.” – John Shelby Spong (former Episcopalian Bishop)**
- **“The term resurrection means the energy pattern of love which transcends fear by replacing it. A miracle-workers function is forgiveness. In performing our function, we become channels of resurrection.” “Return to Love” from Oprah’s website**

In addition to these thoughts, one argument against the resurrection of Jesus is stated by saying something like this, “I don’t believe in the resurrection of Jesus because if you look at other mythologies, you find that resurrections existed before Jesus. So, Jesus fits in with all the other mythological stories before Him.”

While it may be true that there are some types of “resurrections from the dead” in mythological stories, the resurrection of Jesus still comes up as something completely different than that of any other religious story. From a Greek perspective, when someone would resurrect, only their spirit would raise. This was final freedom to the Greek because they perceived the physical body as sinful. From a Jewish perspective, when they considered the resurrection, they never perceived that an individual would be raised from the dead. They viewed resurrection in terms of an entire community of God’s people being raised at the same time. Upon the resurrection, the entire world would then experience freedom from all the effects of the sin of Adam and Eve. Truly the message of the resurrection of Jesus was unique, and many of the Jewish people would have rejected it outright for that very reason. For the disciples to run around with a message regarding an individual raising from the dead and coming back someday in the future to restore all things would have sounded absurd.

One theologian/scholar writes the following regarding Jesus’ resurrection:

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*In not one single case do we hear the slightest mention of the disappointed followers [of other first century messianic movements] claiming that their hero had been raised from the dead. They knew better. Resurrection was not a private event. Jewish revolutionaries whose leader had been executed by the authorities, and who managed to escape arrest themselves, had two options: give up the revolution, or find another leader. Claiming that the original leader was alive again was simply not an option. Unless, of course, he was. (quoted in *The Reason for God*, p. 208, from *Who Was Jesus?* by N.T. Wright, p. 63).*

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“Unless, of course, he was.” That’s a very important line to contemplate. If something like the resurrection of Jesus wasn’t assumed by Greeks or Jews, how or why would the disciples even come up with this message? Many people throughout the centuries have believed the message that the disciples proclaimed. Therefore, today, millions of people are gathering together in the open-air, in huts, in cathedrals, in homes, in buildings and warehouses around the globe to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. We gather on what is known as Easter Sunday to celebrate something that happened almost 2,000 years ago, yet (as I’ve already mentioned) there are many people who may feel sorry for us for doing so. Others are angered by what we believe. While still others are ignorant of what is really happening.

How is it that you can have people take such opposing stances on the resurrection of Jesus? Here are a few more quotes regarding Jesus’ resurrection:

- **“No one fact in the history of mankind...is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort [than the fact that] Christ died and rose from the dead.” Thomas Arnold (professor of modern history at Oxford)**
- **“In the whole story of Jesus Christ, the most important event is the resurrection” William Lyon Phelps (Yale professor)**
- **“Our Savior’s resurrection...is truly of great importance in Christianity; so great that His being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it.” John Locke**

How can you have Thomas Arnold say that not one fact in the history of mankind is proved better than the resurrection and then you have a liberal bishop saying that the resurrection couldn’t be a physical one? When we hear people come to such stark conclusions, I think that should cause us to think deeply regarding the resurrection of Jesus. Who is right?

Today, **I want us to go on a quest to see 1) how we can be assured that Jesus is risen and 2) why the resurrection is so important.** I’m speaking to people who may have doubts. I’m also speaking to resolute Christians to help them to dig deeper in the Word so that their faith is even more firm in Christ. So, this morning, we will search the Bible’s testimony about Jesus’ resurrection and we will discover evidences that will help point us to the glorious truth that Jesus has been raised! And, my hope is that everyone in this room will affirm that Jesus Christ is risen indeed!

## **How can we be sure?**

### **1. The gospels are written historically.**

Some of you may wonder why I word this point the way I do. The reason is because we need to see something clearly before we move any further. There are certain genres of writing. There are allegories. There is hyperbole. There is also historical writing. The books that we call “The Gospels” (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) fit within the historical genre. The reason we know this is because of the way that the books are written. As opposed to various ancient writings that talk about the Greek gods with certain types of details, the stories in the gospels give more details that reveal historicity. For example, when we read about Jesus’ birth, we read of the Herod at that time. When we read about Jesus’ death, we find that Pontius Pilate was ruling at that time. These are historical figures that necessitate a historical reading of these accounts. That’s why the ancient Apostle’s Creed has, “suffered under Pontius Pilate” in the creed. The early Christians were declaring that the death of Jesus is historical fact – not just some odd tale like the Easter Bunny who lays eggs.

With this in mind, let's turn in our Bibles to Mark 16:1-8. Let's pray before we read:

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*16<sup>v</sup>When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>2</sup>And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup>And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" <sup>4</sup>And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. <sup>5</sup>And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup>And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup>But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." <sup>8</sup>And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. <sup>1</sup>*

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This is one account that we are going to turn back to later on in the message as well, but right now I am going to focus on specific details here and add some other details from the other gospel writers.

In the story of the resurrection, we have the following situation: There are some women who are going to anoint Jesus' body with spices. They waited until the Sabbath was over to do this – in keeping with the law. The reason why they took these spices was probably to keep Jesus' body from stinking as bad as it possibly could smell. On their way, they are discussing how they are going to roll the stone away from the tomb. The tomb that Jesus was in was actually the tomb of a wealthy man named Joseph. This tomb was a comparatively rare type of tomb where a circular stone was placed in front of the entry way. While the stone was moved on a slant, once it was in place, it would have been very difficult to move. Given the conversation among the women, it seems as though they may have been unaware that there were guards at the tomb.

As they walk to the tomb, an earthquake shakes the ground and sends the guards to the ground, causing the stone to roll away. We also find that the women were alarmed at what was happening! The reason for this response isn't simply because of the earthquake, but because the earthquake is caused by the physical manifestation of bright, shining angels. Then the angel speaks the following: "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here."<sup>2</sup> Notice how the angel speaks in a historical fashion to point to proofs that Jesus has risen. The angel refers to Jesus as "Jesus of Nazareth." The angel isn't talking about some other Jesus. The angel isn't talking about a reincarnation of Jesus. The angel is talking about the Jesus that these women walked with and talked with. The angel goes on to affirm that this is the same Jesus by saying he is the one who died. The gospel's testimony is that a real, historical Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, was crucified. Then the angel says, "He is risen!"

To the people who say that the resurrection was not physical, the gospel accounts do not allow for that interpretation. You can choose to take that viewpoint, but then you do not fall in line with God's Word. The angel doesn't merely say that Jesus' body isn't there, but the angel then says, "See the place where they laid

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Mk 16:1–8.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Mk 16:6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Him.” Now we have eyewitness testimony that Jesus’ body is not in the tomb. Then the angel tells the women to communicate this to the disciples (and Peter) to meet Jesus in Galilee. The women do this, and Jesus appears not only to these disciples, but we’re told that he appears to many people over the course of 40 days in His resurrected body before He ascended into Heaven.

At this point in time, you may question certain of these truths or you could accept them completely. I hope you would accept these truths, but I hope you wouldn’t accept them blindly. Some people, in talking about the Christian message will talk to unbelievers and say, “You just need to believe it in faith.” And, what they mean is, “Even if it doesn’t seem to make sense, just believe it.” Now, granted, there are things that we cannot fully comprehend in the Scriptures. But, when we get to the person of Jesus and what He did, the Scriptures say that these things are historically verifiable and therefore can be believed with absolute certainty. Therefore, the Christian message is set apart from various other religions. For example, within Mormonism, you have the story of Joseph Smith going out in the woods and receiving a vision from an angel – even saying that he received tables that he needed to record. The tablets are not verifiable nor is the existence of the angel. But, don’t you think that if this “new” revelation were so important, God would verify it not only to Joseph Smith, but also to those who follow? Or, take Islam. Similar events happened to Mohammed. Yet, again, these events aren’t verifiable.

Many other religious systems seem to purely be based on the personal, individualistic whims of the people. Yet, the Christian message is different. The Apostle John says, “but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”<sup>3</sup> John wrote in such a way so as to convince the people of the realities that took place. Then, if the people were truly believing these realities, they would entrust themselves to Jesus with their entire being! But, some people still wonder if Jesus truly did rise from the dead. Do the gospel accounts give sufficient enough evidence? Let’s turn to another portion of the New Testament to gain more insight into the resurrection.

## **2. The Literal, Physical Resurrection of Jesus is confirmed by eyewitnesses (1 Corinthians 15).**

The problem of people ignoring the resurrection is not a 21<sup>st</sup> century issue. It has been rejected among so-called Christian groups as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century. And, the Apostle Paul wrote at length to confront one of the churches that seemed to be influenced by a false gospel that included no resurrection. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 15:3 to see how Paul addresses these individuals.

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*<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.<sup>4</sup>*

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Paul starts off his argument for the resurrection the same way the gospels speak regarding Jesus’ exit from the tomb. The gospels write like it is fact because it is historically factual. Paul says that the good news for the human race is found in Jesus and what He has done. He died, was buried and rose again. Paul speaks of

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Jn 20:31). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 1 Co 15:3–8.

these things as though they really happened. But, does Paul write about these things as though these things happened in some dark corner? No. Paul bases these circumstances among verifiable evidence. Paul says that Peter, the 12 disciples, five hundred people, the apostles and even he saw the resurrected Jesus. This really should be sufficient evidence for anyone – especially in Paul’s day. Paul is basically saying, “If you don’t believe me, go talk to the hundreds of people who saw Him.” As I mentioned earlier in this message, it would have been common for any person to question such a belief. Therefore, you’d need many eyewitnesses to this. And, in the days of Paul, it would not have been that difficult for any Corinthian to hop on a boat to Jerusalem to do his due diligence in seeking to find out the facts in this. Paul is so confident in the resurrection of Jesus that he says, “If you don’t believe me, talk to the hundreds of people. They’ll verify it.”

In our government, we have a phrase, “Innocent until proven guilty.” The justice system works on the basis of this phrase. That is why, whenever there is an injustice take place, witnesses to speak out for or against an individual. In some cases, in our judicial system, all we need is one eyewitness. If we can prove that person was there and that they aren’t necessarily gaining anything by giving this testimony, we can be confident that the testimony is going to lead to either the acquittal or the conviction of an individual. In a very similar fashion, this is the type of speech that Paul is utilizing here. Jesus has been raised. Over five hundred people have seen Him.

What’s sad to me is how many people can read a passage like this and still ignore Jesus. They’ll say something like, “If five hundred people saw Him, then why don’t more people believe in Him?” Maybe it’s because they’re asking the question that you’re asking and you’re stubbornly using that question to keep you from really believing that Jesus really is Lord. Still other people deny a physical resurrection and say that it really isn’t necessary to believe in order to love God. But that’s not how the Scripture’s write. The resurrection is absolutely vital in granting a zeal for godliness. And, this leads to the third evidence to believe in the resurrection.

### **3. The resurrection changed the disciple’s lives.**

Go back to Mark 16. I think here we can find some practical encouragement regarding the resurrection. Look with me in verse seven: “But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee.”<sup>5</sup> Do you ever find it interesting that the angel specifies Peter’s name to the women? Peter was the one that said he would die for Jesus rather than deny Him. Yet, as the story unfolded, we find that Peter boldly denied Jesus. I can imagine Peter, during the days between Jesus’ death, contemplated Jesus’ words, “whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”<sup>6</sup> Peter denied Jesus. Is Jesus denying Him? Peter is probably despairing like the other men and then he hears the women come to him, “Jesus is risen! He’ll meet you in Galilee.” We read other accounts of Jesus meeting the disciples, and the disciples worshipping Him upon seeing that He has truly risen. Even the so-called “doubting Thomas” cries, “My Lord and my God!” But, what about Peter? What did Jesus want to teach Peter through the resurrection? I believe that He wanted to affirm Peter’s forgiveness and also teach Peter that he had hope for this life and even the life to come. And, this is what Jesus’ resurrection provides for us. In John 21, you read the story of Jesus going to teach the disciples. The story starts off with Peter going back to his previous job, before he had met Jesus. He goes fishing. Obviously, Peter hadn’t understood the depth of the resurrection yet. Then they discover that Jesus is on shore. Peter, in a desire to see him again, jumps overboard and swims to shore – awaiting to hear something from Jesus that will give him life-encouraging

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<sup>5</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mk 16:7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>6</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 10:33). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

words, I imagine. The disciples had already seen Jesus two times before this, and it doesn't seem like Peter has any relief from the gnawing guilt of rejecting Jesus. Yet, here we read of Jesus' interaction with Peter. He asks Peter if he loves Him. And, Jesus doesn't merely ask once. Jesus asks three times. The fact that Jesus asks three times challenges Peter to the core. Does Peter really love Jesus? Finally, Peter expresses his sorrow to Jesus - being broken and again affirming his love for Jesus.

It is here, post-resurrection, that Peter then hears Jesus calling him into gospel-proclaiming ministry. He hears Jesus again basically say, "Put down your net. Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men." Then Jesus says something that seems odd. Jesus prophesies the way in which Peter will die. This seems like a very odd thing to say, but as Pascal once said, "**I [believe] those witnesses that get their throats cut**" (*The Reason for God*, Keller, p. 210). What Pascal was saying is something that I think Jesus is at least alluding to. Because of Jesus' resurrection, the disciples are going to be changed from weak, cowering, fearful, uncommitted people to bold, emblazoned, God-fearing, miracle-working slaves of Christ! And, most of them will die for this message.

This yet another great testimony to the resurrection of Jesus. In just a few weeks the disciple's entire demeanor changed. Read the gospels and then read Acts. The disciples lives change dramatically – including Peter's life! And, Peter's life was so subdued by God that history records that Peter was martyred for his faith in Rome. After having written inspired letters, Peter dies. After having moved to a different region to share the love of God, Peter dies. Jesus' prophecy of death came true. One question, "If Jesus' resurrection was a hoax, why would the disciples live lives suffering by the hands of people?" History records that Peter's hands were stretched, but not identical with Jesus. Peter made a request to the people not to hang him upright like Jesus. Instead, he asked that he would be hung upside down because he wasn't worthy to be killed in the same way as his Lord.

Here's the reality. The knowledge of Jesus' resurrection grants us the strength to both live and die as well! As the Apostle Paul writes, "To live is Christ. To die is gain." To live is Christ because Jesus is risen! We can know more of Him today we can grow in godliness because He is risen. We can have boldness today because we have assurance that He rose from the dead. And, we have hope throughout eternity, because we will have greater life, joy and peace in the presence of God; therefore, we can even die well and not despair because no matter how difficult this life may seem, there is an eternity to look forward to that is for our greatest good and God's wondrous glory! The knowledge of the resurrection changes everything. Romans 6 says, "...just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Philippians 3:10 says, "...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection." The reality is that because Jesus rose from the dead, he now gives the freedom of forgiveness and the freedom to glorify God in our lives – if we trust him and look to him! His death took the punishment for our sins and promised the immeasurable love of God to all who trust in him. His resurrection opens the door to all the blessings in being reconciled with God, leading us to zealously pursue the Lord. For those who experience the resurrection power, we shout out the phrase with Paul "to live is Christ and to die is gain."

In me saying this, I'm transitioning to the next major point I want to make today. I want to emphasize *why* the resurrection is so important. In other words, if Jesus didn't raise from the dead, there's no point in being a Christian at all!

## **Why is it so important?**

1. **Without a resurrection, our faith is vain (1 Corinthians 15).**

As I communicate the things I've been talking about this morning, some people in this world may respond by saying, "Wow, you're putting a lot of stock in resurrection. Don't you want to play it safe?" I've heard of people who claim to be Christians, who have said, "If we found the bones of Jesus, that wouldn't do anything to my faith." For some reason, these people think that they're better off. But, I say that if we found the bones of Jesus, we better abandon Christianity. I believe that the resurrection is of such great importance that I say with John Locke, "Our Savior's resurrection...is truly of great importance in Christianity; so great that His being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it."

Now, is this a safe assertion to make? I think so. If the Bible is going to speak in such a bold, historical way, I think this is a safe assertion to make. But, just to verify, let's continue reading in 1 Corinthians 15, starting in verse 14.

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*<sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.*

*<sup>15</sup> We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.* <sup>7</sup>

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#### **If Jesus has not risen from the dead:**

- **There is no resurrection whatsoever.** What Paul is saying is that if Jesus did raise from the dead, then how should we expect to be risen from the dead someday? If Jesus is the firstborn from the dead and it is because of Him that we will one day be with the Lord, how do we have assurance of being with the Lord if He isn't with the Father right now? Jesus said, "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also."<sup>8</sup> Jesus has already said that He must go before us. He paves the way.
- **The Scriptures are lying.** If there's no resurrection, then it makes sense why Paul would say that God is found to be a false witness. In other words, God is a liar if Jesus didn't rise from the dead! Many people soft-pedal the resurrection and say they're not rejecting God simply by not denying the resurrection, but the Bible is too clear to ignore. To deny the resurrection is to call God a liar.
- **Our faith is empty.** Paul now moves on to our individual experience. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, our faith is vain. There's no real substance to our faith. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, and people still trust in Jesus, they're not gaining anything eternal. Paul moves on to describe why that is the case, but let's just take Paul's logic for where it's at in this given point. To believe in a dead Savior is to possess a dead faith. I can recall that there have been numerous occasions where my dad has said to me on Easter morning (and on other occasions), "I've been to the tomb. Guess what? He isn't there!" Do you realize that there are shrines for so many other religious leaders in the past. There's documented fact that these leaders have died, and we all believe that these leaders have died. But, with regards to Jesus, it's documented that He is no longer in the tomb. Even the enemies of Jesus admitted that His body was no longer in the tomb. And, in any court system, to have an enemy

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<sup>7</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 1 Co 15:14–19.

<sup>8</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Jn 14:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

acknowledge something meant that it was very probably true. So, Paul will not have an empty faith. He is calling us to believe in a factual, life-altering truth – the resurrection of Jesus.

- **We are still in our sins.** You may ask, “Why is our faith in vain for simply not believing in the resurrection.” The first response of Paul is that we are still in our sins.” In other words, at the cross, Jesus is said to have forgiven us from our sins and taken our punishment. But, if Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, then He must not have really died for our sins. Jesus isn’t God. Jesus was just a man playing a horrible trick on the human race. But, if we believe that the resurrection really did happen, the Bible says that “just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”<sup>9</sup>
- **The dead are still dead.** Paul also adds that a resurrection-less belief system is vain because that means the dead are still dead. Paul writes elsewhere, “to be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord.”<sup>10</sup> If the Lord Jesus Christ is still in the grave, when we die, we’ll still be in the grave and we’ll decompose just like He did. That type of belief system is vain.
- **Christians are most to be pitied.** Paul concludes this by basically saying, “If we only have hope in this life, we are most to be pitied!” Have you ever turned on your television to listen to preachers who seem to only speak in such a way as to make the most of *this* life. They talk like Jesus’ only purpose was to make us healthy, rich and well in *this* life. They speak like Jesus’ life and death are purely moral examples to us. These people don’t speak of a resurrection from the dead where we will receive resurrected bodies. They don’t seem to talk about how our hope really resides in God and knowing Him both now and into eternity. I pity those preachers. Maybe they do believe a resurrection, but I know that oftentimes people can simply go to church because they believe that church is primarily about them and helping them become better.

I got news for you. If you only view church as a means to get better in this life, you’re wasting your time. You may be thinking, “Pastor Timothy, shouldn’t we grow in becoming better?” If by that you mean godly, then yes! I affirm that, but being good for goodness sake is not the goal. If that’s the goal of the church, they’ve become like every other worldly, moralistic system. There’s nothing that sets the Christian message apart if the resurrection never happened because the message of the resurrection reminds us that there’s an eternity, we ought to be living for the One Who is eternal, and Jesus is the One who brings us to God! So, Paul’s argument is basically, “If we believe in no resurrection, we must be living for this life. Therefore, while we may think we’re living for an eternal God, we’re not. So, the world should pity us because we’d be living a lie.”

These are serious claims to make. And, I hope you believe the resurrection as firmly as the Apostle Paul and the writers of the New Testament. Now, Paul moves on to say what we gain if the Resurrection really did happen.

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*<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death.<sup>11</sup> . . . <sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of*

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<sup>9</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ro 6:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>10</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 (2 Co 5:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>11</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 1 Co 15:22–26.

*the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.<sup>12</sup>*

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**Some glorious blessings of resurrection are: We will rise with a gloriously new body like Jesus' body. The future Kingdom will come. God reigns forever. Jesus rules today to subdue His enemies. Death dies.**

Each of these claims counter what I've already said, and these claims garner greater assurance and hope in God. These claims cause us to rejoice. And all that Paul is writing here keeps in mind the big storyline of human history and God's redemptive plan. All the way back in Genesis, God created humans as vice-regents and priests to God. They lived in a sinless garden. They worshipped God perfectly and experienced peace with him. Then they rebelled, sending all humanity plummeting into the curse of sin and brokenness in this world. God shows mercy and justice in this world – revealing our need for him. And God also gives glimmers of hope, stating that people can be reconciled to God and be restored to a new world where humans will be worshippers of God and rule the earth. But how could that be?

Enter Jesus. As a new Adam, he perfectly honors God. Then he submits himself to the punishment of Adam's race. He conquers sin on the cross – and then he conquers death at the grave. Now, we're told that all who trust Jesus will have eternal life, and we will be with God forever in a world to come. Better than Eden because Jesus is superior to Adam! We will be in a New Heaven and a New Earth. Until then, we have his grace to follow him in this world. But none of this happens if Jesus didn't raise.

Humanity's freedom is dependent on Jesus and his death and resurrection! I know that the story can seem crazy to people around us. Some here might think, "Do I really believe this?" But I encourage you, read the evidence. I've only mentioned some evidences. I encourage you to ponder it truly. **If Jesus didn't raise from the dead, it's the worst April Fool's Joke ever. But if Jesus did raise from the dead, then it's all gloriously true. And, it is gloriously true. I praise God for the resurrection! Forgiveness, life, freedom and eternal hope are given through Jesus. He is risen. He is risen indeed!**

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<sup>12</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 1 Co 15:42–43.