

**Subject: *Why Christ's Resurrection Matters***

**Scripture: *1 Corinthians 15:1-23***

Harry Houdini was a master escape artist. There wasn't a box, bag, or barrel that he could not escape from...until death knocked on his door. Harry met his match when death held him with a firm grip and wouldn't let go.

Just about every week I go to a cemetery somewhere. As a believer in Christ I have hope that the graves will one day be empty and the dead in Christ will rise. Just think what it would be to visit a cemetery without any hope beyond the grave. How awful that would be.

This chapter is about the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of all who believe in Him. Because Christ lives, we have forgiveness of our sins, eternal life, and hope. If Christ did not rise, then we have no forgiveness, no eternal life, and absolutely no hope. From this monumental chapter I want you to see why Christ's resurrection really does matter.

### **1. It matters because our salvation depends on it (vs. 1-11)**

Paul begins this chapter with a declaration (vs. 1). He had preached the Gospel (good news of salvation); the saints at Corinth had received it and were standing in the truth of it. They were saved by the Gospel.

Paul had delivered the Gospel that he had received (vs. 3-4). The Gospel message includes three truths: 1) Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 2) He was buried; and 3) He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

***Romans 1:16*** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* Without the resurrection of Christ, there is no Gospel or good news of salvation.

In verses 5-11, Paul lists some of the witnesses that saw Christ after His resurrection. The evidence was sure—He was alive! He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3). Their lives were never the same. Even Paul saw Him alive on the Damascus Road and his life was changed forever, from a madman to a missionary.

### **2. It matters because the entire Christian faith rests on it (vs. 12-19)**

Some people doubted the reality of the resurrection at all, not just Christ's resurrection, but the resurrection of any person. The Jewish group called the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection. The Gnostics believed that only the spirit world was good, but matter was evil, and so they rejected the idea of a bodily resurrection. Either or both of these false teachings may have been at work. So Paul addresses the issue head on. If there is no resurrection of any person from the dead then Christ has not been resurrected. And if He has not risen then these are the terrible consequences:

- Preaching would be pointless
- Faith would be foolish
- Disciples would be deceivers
- Sin would reign supreme
- Death would have dominion
- Hope would be hollow

### **3. It matters because our future resurrection depends on it (vs. 20-23)**

- Christ is the firstfruits of the harvest
- Christ is the head of redeemed humanity (the last Adam)
- Our union with Adam is a physical union
- Our union with Christ is a spiritual union
- Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection

### **4. It matters because His resurrection body is a picture of our future body (vs. 45-57)**

- We now bear the image of Adam
- We will bear the image of Christ

**Philippians 3:20-21** <sup>20</sup> *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>21</sup> Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

**1 John 3:2** *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

### **5. It matters because our life and service now has an eternal purpose (vs. 58)**

The word “therefore” draws a conclusion from everything Paul has written. Because Christ rose from the dead and because you will also rise from the dead, that changes how you live your life and serve your Lord. The phrase “in vain” means to no purpose. Your Christian life and labor for the Lord does have eternal purpose.

At the southern end of South Africa near Cape Town, some 8,100 miles from Bristol, is a place called the Cape of Good Hope. For many years the ocean waters off that point became the grave of many ships due to the notoriously high winds and waves. Until a brave sailor by the name of Bartholomew Diaz in 1482 determined to sail through those waters, and he did. He opened up the trade route to the East and the place that was once known as the Cape of Storms was changed to the Cape of Good Hope.

That's what Christ did for us. He conquered death and came out of the tomb, and because He is alive we have a good hope.