

"Why Jesus had to be Resurrected," Part 1 - 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 – April 3rd, 2016

- Today's teaching will be part one of a series I've titled, "Why Jesus had to be Resurrected."
- Because last week was resurrection Sunday vs. 1-11 was our text, which deals with the importance of the Christ's resurrection.
- Now here in verses 12-19, we'll deal not only with the importance of the resurrection, but also the relevance of the resurrection.

- For believers in, and followers of, Christ, the resurrection is the foundational doctrine, upon which the entirety of our faith rests.
- As such, it's incumbent upon every Christian to not only know what we believe about the resurrection, but also why we believe.
- The chapter before us, is such that, it provides an all-important answer to the "why" behind the "what" we believe as Christians.

- It's for this reason the Apostle Paul devotes a large portion of his epistle in this chapter, in order to address the "why" question.
- More specifically, "why" we believe "what" we believe about the crucifixion, burial, and subsequent resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Simply put, it's not just a matter of believing that Jesus rose from the dead, it's really a matter of knowing He absolutely had to.

- At the risk of an oversimplification, this seems to be the point of the passage namely, Jesus Christ had to rise from the dead.
- In other words, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then, Christianity is the joke of all jokes, and the joke is on us as Christians.
- You'll forgive the crassness with which I say that, however, this is exactly what Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says to the Corinthians.

- Enter today's text where Paul begins in verse 12 by asking the rhetorical question of how can some say there's no resurrection.
- Then, from verses 13-19 he answers this question with hypothetical answers to what it would mean if Jesus wasn't resurrected.
- What follows are six implications were there no such thing as the literal resurrection of the dead, chiefly, that of the Savior's.

1. Jesus would still dead (Verse 13)

- Here Paul walks them through the logic of what it means if there is no resurrection of the dead, saying, then Jesus is still dead.
- If Jesus is not alive, and seated at the right hand of the Father, then He's not interceding on our behalf, nor is He coming back.
- If Jesus is not coming back, then we might as well just live it up today, because this is all there is. You live, pay taxes and die.

If Jesus is not coming back, then it would also mean that Frank Sinatra was right when he famously said, "You only go around once, but if you play your cards right, once is enough."

2. Our faith would be useless (Verse 14)

- Paul continues with his logic saying that if Christ has not been raised from the dead then our preaching and faith is just useless.
- If Christ wasn't resurrected, then preaching the Word of God is pointless because now the gospel has been totally gutted out.
- If Christ wasn't resurrected, then our faith is in vain, because it's in a dead man. So too are our prayers; dead men can't hear.

3. Everyone would be a liar (Verse 15)

- Paul says that if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then everyone would be liars and even blasphemers who bear false witness.
- Furthermore, it would make Jesus of Nazareth the biggest liar who ever walked the face of the earth in the history of mankind.
- I suppose you could say that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, He pulled off the most elaborate scam ever on human beings.

Charles Spurgeon - "If Jesus rose, then this gospel is what it professes to be; if He rose not from the dead, then it is all deceit and delusion."

4. The dead could not be raised (Verse 16)

- To make matters worse, Paul goes on to say if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then the dead won't be raised either.
- If the dead won't be raised from the dead on that great and final day, then all of our loved ones, who died, will always be dead.
- If that were true, then all of the memorial services and celebrations of life were just one foolish farce with no hope for eternity.

5. We would all go to hell (Verses 17-18)

- If all of this weren't bad enough, if Christ wasn't raised from the dead, then our faith is futile, which means we're still in our sins.
- If we're still in our sins, then that means there's no payment for our sins, and if there's no payment, then we're damned to hell.
- While I realize the mention of this is unthinkable, the fact of the matter is, absent the resurrection, there's no access to heaven.

6. We would be pathetic and pitiful (Verse 19)

- What Paul says here is most interesting in that if only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.
- What's so interesting about this is if anyone could say this, it was the Apostle Paul, by virtue of how much he suffered for Christ.
- One commentator so aptly noted, "Paul can write this 'because none out of hell ever suffered more than the saints have done.'"

- Thankfully v. 20 follows 19, which we'll begin with next week where Paul says but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.
- Because Jesus was raised from the dead, death had no power over Him and it could not defeat Him, which means He is God.
- Because Jesus is God, He can offer a complete sacrifice for our sins, which means all our sins are completely paid for by Him.

- Lastly, if I accept the payment Jesus made for me paying in full for all of my sins, I will have salvation for all eternity in heaven.
- Because I can know that I have salvation, I'm able to live by faith for Christ, as I walk with Christ, waiting for the return of Christ.

1 John 3:2-3 – 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.