



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: • FOLLOWING CHRIST THROUGH CHAOS •
8.21.22 1 CORINTHIANS 15 •

MAIN POINT

Without the resurrection, our faith is useless.

INTRODUCTION

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

Quite a few people in the Bible were resuscitated from the dead. Name a few you remember.

What is the difference between “resuscitation” and “resurrection?”

Do you believe in the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus? Why or why not?

The gospel of Christ is the glorious message of salvation to all who believe. Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He was raised again to life on the third day. But is the

resurrection literally true? Did Jesus really physically die and come back to life three days later, never to die again?

Without the resurrection, the gospel is incomplete. Without the resurrection, Christ's work on the cross is insufficient to provide for our eternal hope. The Bible does not waver in its proclamation of the physical resurrection of Jesus.

UNDERSTANDING

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

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-8.

What vital elements did Paul include in his description of the gospel, by which “you are being saved?”

What evidence did Paul give to prove the bodily resurrection of Jesus?

Read Acts 4:1-20. Why were the Jewish leaders “greatly disturbed (Acts 4:2, NIV)?” Why did Peter and John refuse to obey their command to stop speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus?

In 1 Corinthians 15:4-8, Paul cited two sources of evidence for the bodily resurrection of Jesus. First, Paul reminded the believers in Corinth that the Old Testament Scriptures prophesied the Messiah's resurrection. Second, he pointed to the vast eyewitness testimony. And this short passage is just the beginning of the evidence that supports the reality of the resurrection of Jesus.

In the book of Acts, we encounter more proof of the resurrection. For instance, we see radically changed lives and the explosive growth of the church. We also witness the unyielding dedication to the gospel message by those who saw the truth with their own eyes. In Acts 4, Peter and John risked further imprisonment and persecution by continuing to share the gospel message. And in Acts 12, James the brother of John, was executed by Herod for his unwavering commitment to Christ and the gospel message.

From history and Church tradition we learn that many of those who followed Jesus during His earthly ministry were killed because they refused to recant the resurrection and their faith in Christ. They didn't just "believe" the resurrection was true, they knew it as fact because they had seen the resurrected Savior with their own eyes.

READ JOHN 19:28-37.

What evidence do you find in this passage for the certainty of Jesus' death?

Read Matthew 27:62-66. Why were the Jewish leaders still concerned after Jesus' death? What precautions did they take to ensure Jesus' body would not be stolen?

Read Matthew 28:1-10. What evidence do you find in this passage to discount the theory that Jesus' followers had visited the wrong tomb?

Read Matthew 28:11-15. Imagine you were one of the men who guarded the tomb. What report would you have given to the Jewish leaders? Ironically, what story did these same Jewish leaders pay the soldiers to tell after Jesus rose from the dead?

Since the first Easter morning, people have tried to explain away the resurrection. Some have said Jesus did not die, but merely "swooned." Others say His body was

stolen. And still others say the women and the disciples merely went to the wrong tomb. But the New Testament accounts easily discount these and other “theories.”

Consider the experienced Roman soldiers on the Golgotha hill. They were trained in execution and death. When they came to Jesus, they knew He was dead. But because the soldiers’ very lives depended on assuring the death of their prisoners, they confirmed Jesus’ death with a spear to His side. And John was an eyewitness.

The Matthew passages above show the impossibility of both the “stolen body” and “wrong tomb” theories. The guards sent to Jesus’ tomb were probably temple police — Roman soldiers assigned to the temple by Pilate. These highly trained men, who witnessed the opening of the tomb, were not likely to fall asleep because they were trained to stay alert at their post. Tragically, they were willing to take a “large sum of money” as a bribe to lie.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-23.

According to this passage, what are the dire consequences if Christ was not resurrected?

What glorious truths are made possible for believers because Christ conquered death?

Read John 11:17-27. What does the fact the Jesus is the “resurrection and the life” mean for you personally?

Jesus’ death on the cross was not sufficient to provide the abundant and eternal life God has promised us. Does that statement shock you? The apostle Paul made it very clear to the Corinthian Christians in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19 (CSB): “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.”

But, praise God, Jesus was resurrected from the dead! Therefore, He has the power to restore all who believe in Him—both spiritually and physically. Belief in Jesus impacts our current life, our physical death, and our eternal destiny. Physical death has no lasting power over believers. Jesus broke the hold and sting of physical death by His resurrection. Because the grave was not the final reality for Jesus, death is not the final reality for those who put their trust in Him. Jesus' resurrection gives us power for this life and hope for the next.

APPLICATION

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

What evidence for the resurrection discussed in today's lesson do you think is the strongest? Why?

How would you respond to a skeptic's doubts about the bodily resurrection of Jesus?

How should the reality of the resurrection impact your life today?

PRAYER

Jesus, I declare that You are the resurrection and the life. Because you live, because you conquered death, I will also live eternally with You. Give me wisdom to respond graciously to skeptics. Help me to live out the power of Your resurrection in my daily life.

COMMENTARY

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-23

15:1-58 This chapter represents the most comprehensive discussion of resurrection in the entire Bible.

15:3-4 These verses recount the basic gospel message as Paul delivered it in town after town.

15:5-11 Early Christian evangelists validated the certainty of Jesus' resurrection by recounting His post-tomb appearances to authoritative eyewitnesses (e.g., Ac 2:32). Paul refers to himself as one abnormally born due to his late arrival in the chain of eyewitnesses to Christ's resurrection (Ac 9:1-6).

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 (cp. Rm 8:23, where "firstfruits" can be translated "guarantee," "first installment"). 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.

JOHN 19:28-37

19:28-29 The reference to Scripture being fulfilled builds on verse 24, most likely in allusion to Ps 69:21: “They gave me vinegar to drink” (cp. Mt 27:34,48; see Ps 22:15). Soldiers and laborers used sour wine to quench their thirst (Mk 15:36). It is different from the “wine mixed with myrrh” Jesus refused on the way to the cross (Mk 15:23). Hyssop was a plant classified in 1Ki 4:33 as a humble shrub. It was used for the sprinkling of blood on the doorpost at the original Passover (Ex 12:22).

19:30 Gave up may echo “submitted Himself to death,” which was prophesied of the Suffering Servant (Isa 53:12).

19:31 On preparation day, see note at verse 14. That Sabbath was... special because it was the Sabbath of Passover week. For the Jews, bodies of hanged criminals were not to defile the land by remaining on a tree overnight (Dt 21:22-23; cp. Jos 8:29).

19:31-33 The legs of crucifixion victims were broken to hasten death. This prevented them from pushing themselves up with their legs to open the chest cavity and thus breathe better. Since the victims would now have to pull themselves up by the arms instead, suffocation occurred once their arm strength failed. See note at verse 36.

19:34 The flow of blood and water proved that Jesus was dead (1Jn 5:6-8). The passage may also allude to Ex 17:6: “Hit the rock, water will come out of it and the

people will drink” (cp. Num 20:11). The spear was about three and one-half feet long and consisted of an iron spearhead joined to a shaft of wood.

19:36 After verses 24 and 28-29, this is the third scriptural proof that shows that Jesus’ death fulfilled Scripture (Ex 12:46; Ps 34:20). Jesus escaped having His legs broken since He died so quickly, and the spear did not damage any of His bones.

19:37 The Roman soldiers again fulfilled prophecy without knowing it: “They will look at Me whom they pierced” (Zech 12:10; also cited in Rev 1:7).