

Easter Sunday
The Risen Christ is Our Hope
1 Corinthians 15:19

Big Idea – Because Christ conquered death we have hope beyond this life.

S.S. teacher asked her class of 8 year old kids what they thought Jesus first words after His resurrection might be? Little girl excitedly said, “I know teacher, I know!” What do you suppose he said Shirley? She jumped up excitedly, raised both arms in the air and said, “Ta Da!!

1 Corinthians 15:1 Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it.

2 It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place.

3 I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.

4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

1. The good news of Christ’s resurrection – vs. 1-4

(Romans 1:16; 10:9, 10, 13)

The Gospel is good news! This good news that saves you is in vss. 3 & 4 and in Romans 10:9, 10, 13.

2. The witnesses to the risen Christ – vs. 5-11

Paul lists the witnesses who saw Jesus alive after His resurrection as another proof of its reality!

– besides the disciples of Christ, there were more than 500 who saw Him.

3. The importance of Christ's rising – vs. 12-19

It validates our preaching of the Gospel.

It certifies our faith.

1 Corinthians 15:12 But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead?

13 For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either.

14 And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless.

15 And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead.

16 And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised.

17 And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins.

18 In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost!

19 And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

If Jesus did not rise then faith in Him is useless!

We are like the world, no hope!

1 Corinthians 15:20 But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

4. The last enemy to be destroyed – vs. 20-28

(Romans 5:12 – 14; 1 Corinthians 15:26, 45-47, 54)

Death!

21 So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man.

22 Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

Paul saw in Adam a type of Jesus Christ by the way of contrast (see also Rom. 5:12-21). The first Adam was made from the earth, but the Last Adam (Christ, 1 Cor. 15:45-47) came from heaven. The first Adam disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world, but the Last Adam obeyed the Father and brought righteousness and life.

23 But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

24 After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power.

25 For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet.

26 And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

This story about the famous artist Michelangelo shows why we don't use the crucifix!

ILLUS. On one occasion Michelangelo turned to his fellow artists and said with frustration in his voice, "Why do you keep filling gallery after gallery with endless pictures on the one theme of Christ in weakness, Christ on the cross, and most of all, Christ hanging dead?" he asked. "Why do you concentrate on the passing episode as if it were the last work, as if the curtain dropped down there on disaster and defeat? That dreadful scene lasted only a few hours. But to the unending eternity Christ is alive; Christ rules and reigns and triumphs!"

1 Corinthians 15:54 54 Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory.

5. The effects of denying Christ's resurrection – vs. 29-34

(2 Corinthians 5:10; 6:14-7:1; John 5:28, 29; Romans 8:18-23)

Evangelism is a waste, suffering for Christ is a waste, and godly moral living is a waste IF Christ did not rise.

Baptism for the dead (vs. 29) does not mean "proxy baptism" like Mormons do! The phrase probably means "baptized to take the place of those who have die,." i.e., new converts taking the place of older ones who had died.

In other words, if there is no resurrection, why bother to witness and win others to Christ? Why reach sinners who are then baptized and take the place of those who have died?

If the Christian life is only a "dead-end street," get off of it!

Each responsible person on earth will share in either the resurrection of life and go to heaven, or the resurrection of judgment and go to hell (John 5:28-29). We weep for believers who have died, but we ought also to weep for unbelievers who still have opportunity to be saved! **The reality of the resurrection is a motivation for evangelism.**

Why endure suffering and danger if death ends it all? "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die" (Isa. 22:13).

What we do in the body in this life comes up for review at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). God deals with the whole person, not just with the "soul." The body shares in salvation (Rom. 8:18-23). The suffering endured in the body will result in glory at the resurrection (2 Cor. 4:7-18). If there is no future for the body, then why suffer and die for the cause of Christ?

Immorality was a way of life in Corinth, and some of the believers rejected the resurrection in order to rationalize their sin. "Evil company corrupts good morals" is a quotation from the Greek poet Menander, a saying familiar to Paul's readers. The believer's body is the temple of God and must be kept separated from the sins of the world (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

6. The results – a spiritual body – vs. 35-49

(1 Corinthians 15:36-49:

15:35-50 Here Paul deals with two common errors regarding the nature of the resurrection body:

- (1) that it is the same body that was laid in the grave, simply reconstituted; and
- (2) that the new body is unrelated to the original one.

Paul here explains that it is the body God has chosen (1 Cor. 15:38), related to the former (1 Cor. 15:36) yet different (1 Cor. 15:39-41).

15:42 raised an imperishable body, with no possibility of decay.

15:49 the image of the heavenly. I.e., the resurrection body will be like Christ's.

7. The final victory – vs. 50-58

(1 John 3:1-3; John 14:19; 1 Peter 2:24; Galatians 3:13)

Heaven is not made for the kind of bodies we now have, bodies of flesh and blood. So when Jesus returns, the bodies of living believers will instantly be transformed to be like His body (1 John 3:1-3), flesh and bone, and the dead believers shall be raised with new glorified bodies. Our new bodies will not be subject to decay or death.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychiatry, wrote: "And finally there is the painful riddle of death, for which no remedy at all has yet been found, nor probably ever will be." Christians have victory in death and over death! Why? Because of the victory of Jesus Christ in His own resurrection. Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall also" (John 14:19).

Sin, death, and the Law go together. The Law reveals sin, and the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Jesus bore our sins on the cross (1 Peter 2:24), and also bore the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13). It is through Him that we have this victory, and we share the victory today. The literal translation of 1 Corinthians 15:57 is, "But thanks be to God who keeps on giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We experience "the power of His resurrection" in our lives as we yield to Him (Phil. 3:10).

Vs. 58 Because of the assurance of Christ's victory over death, we know that nothing we do for Him will ever be wasted or lost. We can be steadfast in our service, un-movable in suffering, abounding in ministry to others, because we know our labor is not in vain. First Corinthians 15:58 is the answer to Ecclesiastes, where thirty-eight times Solomon used the sad word vanity. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" wept Solomon; but Paul sang a song of victory!

ILLUS. Little Philip, born with Down's syndrome, attended a third-grade Sunday School class with nine other 8-year-old boys and girls. Typical of that age, the children did not readily accept Philip with his differences,. But because of a creative teacher, they began to care about Philip and accept him as part of the group, though not fully.

The Sunday after Easter the teacher brought plastic eggs. Each receiving one, the children were told to go outside on that lovely spring day, find some symbol for new life, and put it in the egg-like container. Back in the classroom, they would share their new-life symbols, opening the containers one by one in surprise fashion. After running about the church property in wild confusion, the students returned to the classroom and placed the containers on the table. Surrounded by the children, the teacher began to open them one by one. After each one, whether a flower, butterfly, or leaf, the class would ooh and ahh. Then one was opened, revealing nothing inside. The children exclaimed, "That's stupid. That's not fair. Somebody didn't do their assignment." Philip spoke up, "That's mine."

"Philip, you don't ever do things right!" the student retorted. "There's nothing there!" "I did so do it," Philip insisted. "I did do it. It's empty. The tomb was empty!" Silence followed. From then on Philip became a full member of the class. He died not long afterward from an infection most children would have shrugged off. At the funeral this class of nine eight-year-olds marched up to the altar, not with flowers to cover the stark reality of death. With their Sunday school teacher, the nine eight year olds marched right up to that altar, each to lay on it an empty plastic egg!

Stand for the closing song and listen to this cute story:

It was our family custom to have a sing-along while traveling by car. It helped keep the boys out of trouble and in a good mood. On one trip our eldest, Aaron, asked if we could sing the Gravy Song.

"What's that?" we asked. "Teach it to us."

With all innocence Aaron began singing the Easter hymn, "Up from the gravy, a rose."