

1 Corinthians 15:1-19

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 September 2023

[0 : 0 0] of God. Take your Bibles, go and read to 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians 15, our text this morning will be verses 1 to 19. We will read verse 20, just because you'll understand as we're reading through it. I don't like to end with the 19th verse. Our text will be verses 1 through 19. I will read verse 20 because it answers the if then that we find part of the first section. We will read verse 20 again next week if the Lord allows us to hear and we're there as well. So if you're physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God found in 1 Corinthians 15 starting in verse 1 and reading down to verse 20. Now I make known to you brethren the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and which also you stand, by which also you are saved if you hold fast the word which I preached to you unless you believed in vain.

For I deliver to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve. After that he appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James and then to all of the apostles. And last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles and not fit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me did not prove vain.

But I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preached, and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached, that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain. Your faith also is vain. Moreover, we are even found to be false witnesses of God because we testified against God that he raised Christ whom he did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless.

You are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruit of those who are asleep. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. Thank you for the opportunity we have of gathering together. Lord, of singing your praise, of fellowshiping with brothers and sisters in Christ. But Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the opportunity we have to read it and to hear it. And Lord, now we pray that you would open our hearts and minds and ears to understand it. Lord, may it not be the thoughts or the persuasions or the intentions of man, but may it be the very word of God that pricks to the very depth of our being, showing us who you are, showing us who we are, Lord, and encouraging us as we move forward in daily life. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated.

[3 : 23] We have come now where Paul is moved beyond matters of corporate work. In the book of 1 Corinthians, he has addressed a number of issues. He has started out with the church reminding them that they are the saints at Corinth. It is good to be reminded that we are saints. It is good to be reminded of who we are in Christ. Paul opened his letter to the most wicked of churches that we find in all of the New Testament, a church with major issues. They had moral issues. They had theological issues. They had eschological issues. They had ecclesiological issues. They had issues of all sorts of things. That is, they didn't have their theology, their thoughts of God right. They didn't have the ecclesiology, how they practiced church right. They didn't even know about the end times right, because it all started with a heart issue. But Paul refers to them as the saints which are at Corinth. And he understood this reality that in our failures and in our faults and in our stumblings, we have an enemy who loves to stand on the shoulder and contradict a reality which we have in Christ. And that enemy comes to steal and to kill and to destroy and to annihilate. He comes to remove our joy in the Lord. He comes to remove our effectiveness. I believe in the eternal security of the saints. I believe it with all of my heart, with all of my soul. I believe the scripture rightly teaches. But also believe that one of the things that the enemy can do more than any other thing is render you useless for the sake of the kingdom while you're waiting to get into glory. So I believe that the enemy comes and in all of our weaknesses accuses us sometimes with good material because let's be honest. In our daily life we give

Satan a lot of material to work with. Right? We give him a lot of material to bring up. We don't have to bury our dirty laundry. Quite often we have it out there hanging on the clothesline and Satan just points to it.

And we understand that he comes to us with these accusations and wants to render us useless for the sake of the kingdom. Paul has reminded them who they are. Then he began to rebuke them for what they were doing. And then he began to correct them for how they were behaving when they came together corporately. He wanted them to do all things right. And then he comes to this wonderful passage in 1 Corinthians 15. He pauses here for just a little while and starts speaking of the glory of the resurrection because you know when the enemy is finally defeated is when you understand the grave is really empty. You know when the enemy is finally defeated in your life is when your own grave will be empty because you won't be there any longer. When you get to glory you don't have to worry about the enemy.

And we understand that. And Paul here brings this encouragement, this reassurance. And he was bringing it to a church in Corinth that didn't believe in bodily resurrection. He said, well wait a minute.

They believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We're getting there in just a moment. But evidently they thought maybe he was the only one that was going to be raised and did not believe in their own bodily resurrection. So I want you to see this morning the centrality of the resurrection.

[6 : 34] The greatest apologetic. Now this is probably one of the most important messages that we will ever hear when it comes to always being ready to give a defense for your faith. You know you are called in scripture to be able to defend why you believe what you believe. If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you have been called to give a defense for that. The old word for that is apologetics. Apologia. To be able to not to apologize and say oh I'm sorry about that. No but to be able to defend to have an apologetic. The greatest apologetic for the faith throughout history has been found in this passage of scripture which we have before us this morning. As a matter of fact many agnostics, and even some atheists after studying this passage understood that upon this the truthfulness of scripture, not just of Jesus Christ, but the truthfulness from Genesis to Revelation hinges on this one passage. It is the hinge on which the door of the gospel swings. And it is the passage that we must have an account to and we must stand before because if this is true then everything else must be as well. And namely it is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If the resurrection of Jesus Christ be true, I mean if he's really raised from the dead, you need to understand that the word resurrection that

Jesus has been raised in the dead, you need to understand that Jesus has been raised in the present active tense. It wasn't that he was raised and then died again. We have that in scripture. It is that he has been, and this is going to sound really bad English, right? He is being raised. He is living a raised life. He is living a resurrected life. He was raised at a point in time in history and he is still raised today. That is that he never went back into the tomb. And that is what the gospel message hinges on. Because if the resurrection is true, then everything else bears our identity. As a matter of fact, Lee Strobel, who wrote a number of books, *The Case for Faith*, *The Case for Christ*, and all these other matters, when it came to his agnostic mind of wanting to really dispute the scripture and to look down upon the scripture, he came to this one passage and this one central issue, this one matter which had to be addressed. Was Jesus Christ raised from the dead? And if you answer that in the affirmative, then you must go back and accept everything scripture says. And the reason you must is because that if he was raised from the dead, then he himself is true. And if he himself is true, then you must pay attention to the in which he has said, and he affirmed the reality and the truthfulness of the rest of scripture.

See, this is of utmost importance. He said, well, pastor, you're, you're preaching to the church. Sure, we believe in the resurrection. But do you know why you believe in the resurrection? Because see, though we walk by faith and not by sight, we do not walk in the ignorant faith.

We have good grounds for what we believe. We have grand grounds for what we believe. And we understand that the matter of the resurrection is a central issue. It should take prominence in the church.

We don't just celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday. As a matter of fact, every time we come together on Sunday, we come to celebrate the resurrected Savior. It is the resurrection day. And we come to proclaim that by our public gathering together as a church. And we see this central issue. The first thing I want you to notice about the resurrection, it is the cornerstone of salvation. The resurrection is the cornerstone of salvation. Paul says, now I make known to you, brethren, again, a reminder of who they are, the gospel which I preach to you. So he comes to him, gospel means good news. And he says, I want to point out to you, and I want to remind you of the good news I shared with you. Now, what follows this is a grand display through this 15th chapter of the reality of the resurrection.

[10 : 52] And we see that the gospel which Paul brought to the church at Corinth, upon which the church at Corinth was founded, was a gospel that was hinged upon the reality of the resurrection. He says that this is first importance. We'll get to that in just a moment. And he does not go anything else about good works or when he speaks of the gospel that he preached to them. He doesn't talk about their social injustices, which they must take care of, even though the gospel has an impact upon society as well. He does not talk to them about their tithing and their giving or their Bible study and their reading and their church attendance. He talks to them about the resurrection. He said, the resurrection is the cornerstone of your salvation. Because he said that I preach this to you, which also you received and which also you stand. Friend, listen to me. The hope of the believer is not his good works.

The hope of the believer is that there was a Savior who was dead and buried and came back to life. It is the cornerstone. Everything we believe, everything we stand on, everything that we do is grounded and built upon the resurrection. He says, by which also you are saved. We'll get to that at the end of the message that if there is no resurrection, then there is no salvation. Your salvation is literally founded upon the cornerstone of the reality of the resurrection. If you hold fast the word which I preach to you, I preach to you unless you believe in vain. He said, well, pastor, that seems to contradict the eternal security of the saints you referred to just a moment ago. No, it is a reality that there are some who profess a vain faith that is non-genuine faith. But the genuine believer, the true biblical salvific faith is rooted and grounded and built upon the reality of the resurrection.

It is the cornerstone of our salvation. And it is the one thing which we cannot vary or waver on. He says, for I deliver to you as of first importance. The thing we have to have right first is the resurrection. Friend, do you understand? Do you understand that it is absolutely possible to acknowledge and affirm the reality of the person of Jesus Christ. That it is absolutely possible to acknowledge and affirm that there was a man named Jesus Christ who lived a good life. It is absolutely possible to acknowledge and affirm that a good man by the name of Jesus Christ lived between the early A.D. periods, sometime dying between 30 to 33 A.D., depending on how you date his birth. You say, well, that was one A.D. Well, we don't get into that right now. And that it is absolutely possible to acknowledge and affirm that a good man named Jesus Christ lived at that time while Pilate was procurator of that region, that he lived in Jerusalem, that he had 12 followers, that he went around teaching good, that he delivered great messages, and that there are wonderful signs that are attested to this man. That it is absolutely possible to acknowledge and affirm every one of those biblical truths, yet not be saved.

Because salvation does not rest in the reality that he lived, that he lived at a certain time, and that he did good things. Salvation rests on the reality that he was alive, dead, buried, and came back to life.

The resurrection is the cornerstone. Many historians, many Bible scholars, and we have to be careful when we use the term Bible scholars, because that does not necessarily mean born-again believers. Many scholars will affirm the reality and acknowledge the truthfulness of a man named Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, every major world religion affirms the reality of a man named Jesus, who was called the Messiah, who was a Jewish people, who taught grand and great things, who completely transformed and changed the world, yet they do not build the faith upon the resurrection.

[15 : 07] And without the resurrection, there is nothing. It is the cornerstone of our salvation. The second thing that we need to acknowledge in this scripture, not only is it the cornerstone of salvation, it is the confession of the earliest church. It is the confession of the earliest church, and this is where we get into our apologetics, so stay with me if you will. I love apologetics.

I don't get a chance to teach apologetics very often, but I want you to see this, okay, because this is so rich. It is the confession of the earliest church. Paul says, for I deliver to you as of first importance, notice this next phrase, what I also received.

What I also received. That phrase there is a highlight of what's about to follow it. And what follows this phrase affirms for us that this is not original to Paul, okay?

So what Paul says following this does not originate with Paul. He says that he received it from someone else. Many, and I agree with, would affirm that this is what takes place in Galatians chapter 2.

In Galatians chapter 2, if you remember, we went through the book of Galatians several years ago. But in Galatians chapter 2, Paul says after an interval of about 14 years, he went back privately to Jerusalem, and he sought the church leaders in Jerusalem.

[16 : 19] And he wanted to make sure the gospel which he preached did not contradict the gospel which they declared. He wanted to make sure that everybody was saying the same thing, right? Paul had been on these missionary journeys, and he went back after 14 years, and he had a private meeting with James and Peter and John, and he had all the church leaders of Jerusalem there.

And he just, in this private matter, just wanted to make sure, which is good. Good, wise counsel, right? Every pastor ought to do that. Seek out the counsel of others. They weren't in conflict with one another. Understand this.

Listen, the churches that Paul planted and the churches that the early church fathers were pastoring weren't in competition with one another because the world was full of lost people. We need to acknowledge that today. We're not in competition with other churches because the world is full of lost people, right?

We need to make sure that we're all proclaiming the same message, and then we start getting into the differences there. But here, Paul wanted to make sure that what he was declaring was what they also declared. Paul was one who came to faith, never had the opportunity to walk personally with Jesus Christ.

Galatians 2 records that event, and many believe, and I believe so as well, that what we have here in 1 Corinthians 15 is what was given to Paul, that which I also received.

[17 : 25] So we have the early church fathers here. What you have recorded following this is the earliest known church creed in existence. It is the first church creed, not a creed being something which they profess.

It is a profession of faith, right? Church creeds aren't bad. It is, we believe this, the doxology. We stand every Sunday and sing a doxology. Do you know why you stand and sing the doxology?

They'll say, yeah, pastor, because it's in the program. We're supposed to sing the doxology. We're praising God for the offering. That's not the doxology. You know what the doxology is? The doxology is an early church creed that was an attestation to the Trinity of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

That's why it says it. Read the doxology. It's in the words. It's an affirmation of the reality, and it was there in the early to mid-300s when they were having to defend the reality of some that were denying the Trinity of God.

So they came up with this church creed. We know it today as a doxology. It was eventually put to words, and we stand, and we profess that. So we stand and we profess that we believe in the Trinity of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

[18 : 28] It is a profession of something that we stand upon. The earliest church creed you have recorded for you here in 1 Corinthians 15 is this. This is what he received. Here's the creed.

Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day, according to the scriptures, and that he appeared, and we stop right there, because the early church began to do all these things.

So here's the creed, that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day, according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the twelve, and after that, he appeared to more than 500.

The creed probably would have stopped in verse 5, and then he appeared to Cephas, and then to the 12. This is the earliest creed that we know in existence of the church. Even non-believers will attest to the reality that this creed was in existence, listen to this, some three to five years after the resurrection.

So merely three to five years after the actual event, the church was already making this a public profession. As a matter of fact, this profession was what it took to be a member of the church.

[19 : 33] And the church was growing exponentially. You can see the early book of Acts, and believers were coming in from all over. And this creed was the profession upon baptism to declare that you believe what everybody else is believing.

As a matter of fact, it only builds a stronger church. One of the things that I have learned throughout my pastoral history and even reading church history is the churches with the greatest requirements are the churches that are the strongest for the kingdom.

Those with easy membership and easy believism are not those who seem to do the most for the sake of the kingdom. Those that hold a higher standard and individuals understand they know what they know and they know what they believe and everybody's walking on the same page being focused on one thing.

And this creed was put into place very early, some three to five years after the resurrection event. And the reason we know this is a church creed really testifies to a lot of it, and there's some things that should stand out to us, and one that I heard of this past week in my study of this passage that I had not caught.

As a matter of fact, I had studied this so many times, I had never caught this. I preached this passage and this passage so many times. I preached it on Easter mornings and all this reality, and I never caught this, is we notice also what is absent from this passage.

[20 : 42] Now, this does not mean any defamation. This does not mean anything belittling, but I want you to see why it's absent. Because if you know anything about the resurrection account, then you know that though Christ was dead and buried according to the Scriptures, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and then he appeared, the first person that he appeared to was not Peter.

It was not Cephas. As a matter of fact, the first evangelists were women. Mary was the first one that he appeared to. We understand that, right? Yet, merely three to five years after the resurrection, the church had established a creed which were silent on the testimony of women, and that wasn't in a bad way.

It's not in a bad way. Because the church understood to profess that creed in that society would disregard and would bring, actually, lack of trust in the creed which they were professing.

You say, Pastor, you're saying it didn't matter that they appeared to know. One of the greatest apologetics that we also have for the resurrection is that the church affirmed the reality and they're writing it in the gospel accounts that all four accounts recorded the reality that women were the first to see him.

Yet, the church knew that to go out into society, go out into community, the moment the church would have said that he appeared to all these women, people would say, Oh, well, now, ladies, don't get mad at me because this is not me. This is historically recorded for us, right?

[21 : 56] They said, Well, the testimony of women is not worthy to be leaned upon because women tend to spread gossips. So, the church knew that to go out into the public square and declare this creed would have not brought credence to the creed, but, as a matter of fact, it would have caused disregard for it.

And so, in their creed, they were not wrong. They did not say that this is the chronological order, but that he appeared, and he appeared, and he appeared, and he appeared. And we see very early on that this is a reality and it's recorded for us.

And so, when we have this creed being professed, there's three to five years after the resurrection, church setting a standard that this is what you must believe to be a part of it. And then we have Paul writing here around 55 A.D., which, depending on how you date the resurrection, either in 33 A.D. or 30 A.D., you see that this is 22 to 25 years after the resurrection event.

And Paul declares that he appeared to 500, many of whom are still alive today. So, when Paul is writing this, listen to this, because this gives us grounds. The resurrection is the most historically accurate, and we have more credence for the resurrection event historically than anything else in history.

As a matter of fact, there are more historical evidences for the resurrection than anything else you can ever think of. Who wrote Romeo and Juliet? You say, well, William Shakespeare.

[23 : 23] How did you know it? You say, well, that's what my teacher told me. Well, what if they were wrong? Were you there when Shakespeare wrote Romeo and Juliet? No, you weren't. How far do you have to get away from Shakespeare's writing of Romeo and Juliet before you have the first account?

Many, many, many, many years, by the way. And you don't have any firsthand eyewitnesses. But when Paul is writing this, Paul says to this church at Corinth, there are a number of eyewitnesses, firsthand eyewitnesses that were there you can go talk to today.

And this is a letter that is circulated in Corinth in a city which does not believe in the resurrection. Therefore, the thing that they probably would have done was go talk to these things.

So you have to understand these realities, right? When we look at them in their setting. And he begins to listen. And there's something else that you need to be careful here that the church is affirming this.

This is the earliest creed. This is something that is the confession of the earliest church because it is a requirement for membership, for genuine membership. It testifies to the reality that there are eyewitness accounts that you can go kind of contradict this with.

[24 : 27] If you want to, you can talk to individuals. And we see, you know, there's all these theories on the resurrection. That Jesus didn't really die. You have this swoon theory that he didn't really die.

Well, when we open up the gospel, we find that they pierced his side and blood and water came forth, which is a testimony to a literal death. Something that happens there. We also understand the Romans were pretty good at this one thing.

Romans were pretty good at killing people. So when the Roman soldiers declared that he was dead, and he was dead, right? So it's not a swoon theory. They knew all about that. They would make sure that individual was dead.

Not only that, we have the mummification of him with all the embalming of spices and those matters and the sealing of the tomb. Some people believe in a hallucination theory that people, they just really wanted to see Jesus.

And they were so distraught. By the way, they knew about hallucinations back then that they were so distraught that they just really wanted to see Jesus. Well, you're going to have a hard time telling me that 500 people at one time had the same hallucination that weren't gathered at Woodstock.

[25 : 27] Some of you will catch that later. Right? And even there, even there, the hallucination that was so singular is an impossibility.

So we have to discount that because of the number of people. It had been one or two or there or this and there. Then maybe. But we have this. And then we have this question.

If you ever ask a question while you open up the book of Acts, you read the gospel accounts, right? And in the gospel accounts, you find Jesus' brothers kind of mocking him. His brothers kind of mocking him. Saying, well, if you're the Messiah, why don't you go and declare it publicly?

And if we're going to the Passover feast, why don't you make yourself known? And Jesus said, my hour has not yet come, but your time is always at hand. And they're mocking him. And then all of a sudden, you open up the book of Acts and you find the church council in Acts chapter 15.

And in the church council, the man that is presiding over the church council is a man named James, who is the half-brother of Jesus. And he writes a book in the back of your Bibles, the book of James, which by the way, one of the most practical of all application, what does it look like to walk in faith?

[26 : 28] Read the book of James, right? And you have this half-brother of Jesus that when Jesus was alive, he was mocking him. But by the time we get to Acts 15, he is the leader and the overseer of the church at Jerusalem.

And he's even writing a book which included in the canonization of Scripture. You know, there's only one place in Scripture that we ever find how he came there. It's 1 Corinthians 15 because it says, and then he appeared to James.

Because at his death, James did not believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior. He just thought it was his older brother. Paul testifies, Paul has the key that unlocks the door.

How in the world is James, the one that's sitting over the church in Jerusalem? How is it that James writes this book of what it looks like to live out a life of faith? I'll tell you how. It says it right here. And then he appeared to James.

Because you know what? When you meet the risen Savior, life looks different. And the transformation that takes place after every one of these individuals, after meeting the resurrected Savior, is a testimony to the reality and the centrality of the event.

[27 : 34] And then Paul says, and last of all, as to one born out of due season, he appeared to me. If you ever want to defend the faith, you can say, well, the apostles should have professed the resurrection.

James maybe could have wanted to believe in the resurrection. Paul didn't want to believe in the resurrection until he met the risen Savior on Damascus Road.

We make this progression here. This is the confession of the earliest church. When we confess the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are joining with the saints from ages from all the way back to the birth of the church.

The grand confession of the church is that he died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried and he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to individuals.

That's the grand confession. It's the cornerstone of salvation. It's the confession of the earliest church. And number three, it is the confidence we have for a hope in the future. The resurrection is the only confidence we have for any hope moving forward in the future.

[28 : 47] Paul refers to himself as an apostle born out of due season. He says, I am the least of all the apostles and not fit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God, but by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me did not prove vain, but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

And we begin to get into this hope. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believe. Now here it is. The foundation of your hope is the resurrection of Christ and I'll show you why. Not only for salvation, but also for the future.

Look at what it says. Now if Christ is preached that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead. So here's what was going on.

The early church had believed the gospel. The church of Corinth had believed the gospel that accepted the reality of a resurrection savior, yet they were saying the resurrection stops there because see, in the city of Corinth, the body was seen as that which hinders your perfection.

The body was seen as that which is stifling your soul. In the very core of your being, you're a good person. Your soul is good, but your body is defiling that because you know, everything bad you do, you do it with your body.

[29 : 57] Well here's the problem. When you take the soul of the body, the body doesn't do anything on its own, so the problem must be at the core of the being, not the being itself. Because without the soul, the body doesn't do anything bad, but in the mind of the Corinthians, the body is that which is evil and the soul is good, and therefore the grandest thing that could ever happen to you would be to get rid of your body.

And if you could ever get rid of your body, at death, your soul would be liberated and your soul could go into perfection because it would no longer be restricted by the confines of your destructive soul, I mean your destructive body.

You would be free from this body of sin. Now your soul could move on to perfection. There's a problem with that. And the problem with that is the things that you do bad first originate from within you.

And so they were preaching a resurrected Savior, but they were not believing a resurrection for themselves or the resurrection of anyone else. And Paul says if that's the reality, if we preach that Christ has been raised, but we're saying that there is no resurrection, then we're contradicting ourselves.

And listen to this encouragement. What he's telling them is to live like you're going to be raised someday. Right? To live like you're going to be raised someday. You're not just going to go off to some blissful nothingness.

[31 : 03] You're going to be raised to walk in the newness of life. You're going to be raised in flesh and bones and you'll be able to touch and handle the Savior. You will be as he is. Paul says, I will see him as he is.

And the last time Paul saw him, he was alive. Right? But look at what it says. But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not just of Christ, but of no dead, but if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, preaching is vain, then your faith also is vain. So if you're believing in a resurrection of Christ, but you don't think in a resurrection for yourself, then what good is that to you? Your faith is in vain.

Moreover, we are even found to be false witnesses of God. He says if there is no resurrection, then he said you ought to run and whoever else preaches the gospel, myself included, get us away from him because we are testifying falsely to God.

For if there is no resurrection, then we are false witnesses of God because we testify against God that he raised Christ whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

[32 : 06] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless and you are still in your sins. Why? Because the resurrection of Christ is not the end all be all. The resurrection of Christ is that which opens up the reality of the resurrection of everyone else.

He is the first fruits of the resurrection. First fruits always imply more fruit. You don't get first fruits and stop right there. The reason you brought the offering of first fruits or the sacrifice of first fruits in the Old Testament, you brought the first fruits because you said, Lord, here are the first fruits.

Therefore, we are praising you and trusting you for more fruit. Christ is the first fruit of the resurrection. He is the one who opens up the resurrection.

The possibilities, there's grand implications all throughout scripture. I don't have time to take you there. I'd love to take you there. And this is why when we get to the Old Testament and all this, it's a grand thing. This is the key which unlocks every other passage about what happens in the saints of old.

And some of you know that. We've been here on Sunday nights in those Q&A; ones. But he is the first fruits. He is the firstborn of the dead. He is the one who goes before. He is the forerunner, the Bible and the book of Hebrews says. Forerunner means there are other people running after him.

[33 : 09] So the reality of his resurrection is also to our resurrection. And if we do not want to affirm our resurrection then we are saying that he is not raised because the two are connected.

By the way, I believe in the resurrection of all people, not just the good. I believe in the resurrection of all people because all people will live eternally somewhere. Because God has had eternity in the heart of all men.

Ecclesiastes chapter 3. And the reality of that testifies. Some will go into eternal punishment, others into eternal life. But the wording is the same. The wording is eternal. And I believe in the bodily resurrection of all people who will stand before him and give an account.

Some people would like to think there is no resurrection so that they could do whatever they want to and someday they will lay their body down and they will go into nothingness and it will all just end there. The reality is that his resurrection proves beyond a doubt that all will be raised someday and after that resurrection there will be a day of accountability.

And that day of accountability we will stand before that resurrected Savior and give an account for what we've done in this body. And then we will live eternally from that point on. Because it says, that if he has not been raised your faith is worthless and you are still in your sins.

[34 : 16] But here's the hope. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. I'll think about that just for a moment. Those who have fallen, if Christ has not been raised and those who have fallen asleep, by the way I love how scripture, and I know my time is getting away from me but not so much that we can't stop right here.

I love what scripture says about the death of believers who are just to fall asleep. Because you know what, as much as I believe in the bodily resurrection I also believe the body gets tired in this life and there's a time when it needs to sleep.

There's a time when it needs to sleep. Those who have fallen asleep have perished. If we have hope in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pity.

Listen, if our hope for Christ is this life only, I don't know what gospel you have affirmed. If that is your hope of Christ in this life only, when I open up scripture, I find that there's persecution, trials, tribulations, struggles, pains.

When I open up my own life, I know that there's struggles and spiritual warfare, trials and tribulations and struggles. You said, you said, you're right, I did. That's okay. Yesterday I went to eat somewhere and on their menu they had all their sides listed and they had turnip greens listed twice.

[35 : 27] You know what I got as one of my signs? Turnip greens. Evidently they listed twice. They must think they're really good so I get some turnip greens. They weren't bad. Not the best greens I've ever had, but they weren't bad. But trials are there.

So what we understand here is that if we hope in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied because Christ doesn't offer you peace and hope for this life. He offers you peace and hope for eternal life.

And the resurrection is the promise of that because someday we will be as he is and we will stand before him. And we ought to live like the resurrection is a reality.

And we ought to live like the resurrection of Christ is what is central to our life because it reminds us of the resurrection we'll enjoy someday. The centrality of the resurrection is that which holds the church together in their praise and adoration.

Let's pray. Lord, I thank you for this day and I thank you for your faithfulness and goodness to us. Lord, I thank you for your word, the power that it has, the hope that it brings.

[36 : 28] Lord, may the resurrection ring true in our lives on a daily basis. May we live according to it. May we adjust our lives because of it. And Lord Jesus, may we look to you as our risen Savior each and every moment that you give us to live on this life looking for the day where we live and face to face with you in that life.

And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.