

TITLE: The Resurrection

PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:1-34

LOCATION: St John's Wishart 9AM

BI: Because Christ is risen, all who trust in him will rise with him.

STRUCTURE:

- 1-11 - The Gospel
 - 12-19 - The Dead will Rise
 - 20-28 - Christ has Risen
 - 29-34 - The Resurrection is Foundational
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- Hopefully last weekend, we were left full of chocolate, hot-cross buns, maybe some seafood and some good family time..
 - But even better than that - I hope that last weekend, we were left once again full of hope and joy because of the good news that we recalled!
 - But here's the even better news - we don't just have to have this hope on one weekend of the year, this hope of the death and resurrection of Jesus that secures our life, is a hope that we ought to have every weekend...every weekday...
 - Because the resurrection of Jesus Christ changes absolutely everything.
 - That's why we are going to be looking at the effects of the resurrection in a bit closer detail this Sunday and we'll pick it up again in a couple of weeks.
 - We're going to examine 1 Corinthians 15 which is a gold mine of hope and joy.
 - To orientate ourselves - 1 Corinthians was written by Paul to the church in Corinth.
 - The church in Corinth had gone a bit astray in their practises and so at the same time as encouraging them in the Gospel - Paul doesn't hold back in correcting them.
 - He corrects them on the topics of sexual immorality, proper worship, spiritual gifts, church unity, tongues and prophesy, and now in chapter 15, he corrects them on their view of the resurrection of the dead.
 - It seems that some people may have taken on some of the beliefs of the pagan world of the day, that when someone dies, their soul just floats up and bodies just rot. Perhaps they didn't have any belief in the afterlife whatsoever!
 - But Paul here is completely adamant that:
 - Because Christ has risen, we will rise (v1-34) and that
 - We will rise with renewed physical bodies (vv35-58)
 - And if none of this is true - then we are all fools.
 - If the resurrection of Jesus didn't happen - then we are all fools!
 - If Jesus didn't rise - we are wasting a perfectly nice Sunday morning
 - If Jesus didn't rise - than the church over thousands of years has pulled off the biggest hoax and prank ever seen.
 - If Jesus didn't rise - then I am wasting my time here and I'm in the wrong job.
 - BUT the resurrection of Jesus not only assures us of our eternal hope - but it is foundational to our life this side of eternity.
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- **The Gospel**
 - Paul begins by outlining the common ground. The foundations of what Christians believe. Paul could have even been quoting an early form of a creed statement in the early church.
 - 15:1 "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve."

- This is Paul laying down the groundwork. Laying down the foundations.
- The things of FIRST IMPORTANCE.
 - Who cares about churchmanship, robes, candles, church carpets and carparks..
- This is what God has done for us:
- If you reject this and reject what God has done for us - you will have believed in vain.
- If you hold fast to the Gospel - you will be saved.
- And the core of it is this:
 - Christ has died for our sins.
 - Christ was buried
 - Christ rose on the third day. - Just as it was written about him in the old testament.
- That's what we saw last week - that Jesus took our sins in his death and Jesus is the risen Lord of all!
- This is the core of our belief. This is at the heart!
- And this is why we will keep on preaching about it, singing about it, teaching our creche kids, Sunday School kids, and Youth about it, and banging on about the Gospel, because its by that Gospel, we are saved!
 - *In preaching class at bible college - Gary Millar told the story one time about when he was a new assistant minister at a church in Dublin...*
 - *And he received some feedback from one of the congregation members who told him that his sermons were all the same - they always came back to Jesus and his death and resurrection.*
 - *And I really think that Gary should have replied 'thank you'*
- Because it's by this news, this real, authenticated, tangible news - the fact that Christ is risen - that is the event in human history that saves us.
- We don't preach life advice, good morals - we preach Jesus died and risen!
- And because Christ is risen - that means that we will rise with him.
- **What if Jesus didn't rise?**
- It's from V12 that Paul really gets going.
- He strikes up an imaginary conversation using hypothetical questions.
- And in this we see that our resurrection and Jesus' resurrection are completely intertwined. Linked. Inseparable.
 - *If Jesus rises - then that means that all who trust in him will rise.*
 - *If we deny or don't believe the fact that we will rise again - then we deny Jesus' resurrection from the dead.*
- He says "Let's just take a step back and take a logical look at what happens when you deny the resurrection of the dead...lets see if it holds together conceptually"
- Logically - if you say that the resurrection of people who have died in Christ won't happen, then what's the point of Christ rising? What did it achieve? Nothing! You're believing as if Jesus is still in the grave. In fact - If Jesus didn't rise - what was the point of him coming at all!?
- V12 "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain....V17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied."
- If we only have hope of this life now - we are fools. We deserve to cop it from the public!

- If we don't believe that we will physically, bodily, rise again when Christ returns - then we've completely and utterly missed the point.
- If Jesus didn't rise again - then our faith is useless!
 - Just as a car without fuel is useless
 - Just as a light without electricity is useless
 - Just as a chair without legs is useless
 - A faith without a risen Jesus is useless.
 - A faith without resurrection is useless.
- *I once heard a sermon on John 14 by a bishop who will remain nameless. This is the passage where Jesus says that he is going to prepare a place for us in eternal life.*
- *And this bishop said quite plainly, that heaven and what comes after this life isn't a place...but rather it is a state of being. It's a state of peace.*
- *This is quite reminiscent of some kind of Buddhist belief of reaching enlightenment..not any form of Christian belief!*
- But this isn't the case - we will physically rise because Christ is risen!
- **But - Christ has Risen**
- V21 "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."
- Again, Paul restates that Christ has risen from the dead. God raised him from the dead.
- And just as surely and certainly as Jesus' rose from the dead - the same can be said of us.
- We can be sure and certain of our resurrection because of Jesus' resurrection!
- Paul writes that Christ is the firstfruit, or the forerunner, or the example of what's to come.
 - *At harvest time, a farmer might take a sample to see what the crop is like. This very first fruit of the crop - is a demonstration of what the rest of the crop will be like.*
- And Jesus is like this. His resurrection and his resurrection body, shows us what we will be like!
- If we put our trust in Jesus - we will rise just like him!
- Why? Because Jesus has begun his work of destroying death and sin.
- V23-28 are rich in theology and we get a beautiful picture of the rule of Jesus and his relationship with the Father.
- But here are the headlines of these verses:
- At the moment, we will still die. And we still feel the sting of that, the pain of death, and the hurt of it.
- When Christ rose though, he began his work of defeating death. He was the first one to die and rise again and not die again - he won the battle! He wasn't just resuscitated, no, he became truly alive...
- But when Jesus returns - that's when the final blow will be given to death, sin, and evil and it will crumble.
- That's when Jesus will have put all his enemies under his feet! That's when Jesus will be completely and utterly victorious!
- And that's when he'll give everything over to the Father. Including us!
- We were the captives of death, and slaves to sin - but Christ has begun to rescue us and will rescue us fully when he returns, and then give us over to the Father.
- And we will never die. But be eternally raised.
- And this work that Jesus does for us - is completely foundational. Without the resurrection of Jesus, we don't only deserve people's pity, but life itself is meaningless.

- **The Resurrection is Foundational**

- Now V29 has got to be one of the weirder ones in the New Testament:
 - “Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?”
- According to commentators there are roughly 40 different views about what Paul means about being baptized on behalf of the dead or as the NIV has it “baptised FOR the dead” it could also be translated as “Baptised BECAUSE OF the dead”
- Now since this obscure verse has so many different interpretations, there’s probably a grain of truth in some of them...and claiming that you have the complete indisputable understanding of what it means - is probably unwise.
- What I think sounds reasonable is that people were so inspired by the witness of those who have died in a relationship with Jesus - that they too went and got baptised.
- They were being baptised “Because of” or “For” the dead. For their example of faith.
 - There’s no other evidence in the bible or outside of the bible of people being baptised on behalf of a dead someone in any religion in the first century - and I think that it’s hard to imagine Paul stating this and not correcting this if it was happening!
- But no matter where you land - the point that Paul is saying is this:
 - There’s really no point in any baptism or any ritual or any mission or evangelism if Jesus hasn’t risen from the dead.
- In fact the very reason that Paul puts himself in danger is because Jesus has risen from the dead.
- The resurrection of Jesus and our resurrection should drive us into mission, into evangelism, and into holiness!
- V30 “Why are we in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.””

- Here at St John’s:
 - Why are we here on a Sunday morning?
 - Why are we donating money, using our time and our skills for the church?
 - Why are we going to be having a public lecture next week for non-Christians?
 - Why do we risk potential friendships or relationships by sharing the good news of Jesus in our personal evangelism?
 - Why do we risk promotions at work by not hiding our faith?
- Because Jesus Christ is risen - and we will rise again when he returns.
- And if we won’t - then lets just all go home, party like there’s no tomorrow - because there won’t be any tomorrow
- The resurrection is foundational...//

- I know that I’ve told you this before - but if I have the privilege of visiting you on your deathbed - I will ask you 2 simple questions:
 - Are you confident of eternal life and being raised from the dead? And Why?
- And I hope that you will answer - Yes, because Christ has died and has risen for me!
- That’s the difference Jesus’ resurrection makes. That’s the hope of Easter.
- That’s why we’re here today.
- Because Jesus Christ has risen - **we will** rise again.