

# Why Is Jesus' Resurrection So Important?

Sunday 2/17 at 8:00 & 10:45 | Monday 2/18 at 7 PM

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany – 2019

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today is part 5 of a 6-part series on Paul's first letter to the Christians living in Corinth.

So far in this series we have learned about the work of the Holy Spirit to ✦make us Christians, ✦give us a spiritual gift, and ✦make us members of the one body of Christ! We have also learned ✦the *great importance* of proceeding with *true love* and ✦many important things regarding our weekly Divine Services!

**Today we focus on the importance of Jesus' resurrection!**

1. **Key Ingredients:** Sometimes [1 Corinthians 1-11](#) are read on Easter Sunday. Those words tell us the *key ingredients* of Jesus' work – *all of which took place according to the Scriptures*; so God told us in advance what would happen – *and then it did!* What are those key ingredients? ✦His death *to remove our sins*, ✦His burial *to prove His death*, and ✦His third-day resurrection – *to prove that all of His teachings and yet-to-be-fulfilled promises are true!*
2. **Let's Be Consistent:**
  - a. <sup>12</sup> **Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?** // Paul was trying to get the Corinthians to see how they were being inconsistent, *by believing that Christ was raised, yet believers were not raised.*

- i. Greeks in the first century: “Commonly the Greeks believed that at death, only a person’s soul” survived, so they were skeptical of the resurrection (CC, 561). For example, when Paul preached in Athens (Acts 17:22-31), he †called the people to repent, †spoke of the coming judgment, and †said they should believe him *because God raised Jesus from the dead!* The result: some believed, and others were willing to hear more, *but some mocked Paul for proclaiming such a foolish teaching!*
- ii. Mixing current beliefs and new beliefs: The new believers in Corinth “had to admit that faith in Christ’s resurrection was central to Christian teaching.... [But] they may have insisted, in line with Greek tradition, that the only resurrection they would see was a spiritual one...” (CC, 561). Many so called Christians today tend to do something similar – *by saying they believe in Jesus for eternal life and yet, in reality, continuing to trust in their own good works for their entrance into heaven.* Even when the Bible doesn’t make logical sense, *God is calling each one of us to fully believe His Word of Truth!*

- b. <sup>13</sup> **But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.** // *It’s an all or nothing situation. Therefore, if it is true that dead people will not be raised; then, it is also true that Christ is still dead!*

3. **If Jesus Is Dead; then Preaching and Faith Are Worthless:**

- a. <sup>14</sup> **And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain [empty, worthless] and your faith is in vain [empty, worthless].** // Think about the beginning of today’s sermon, *which contained the key ingredients of Jesus’ saving work* – that He †died, †was buried, and

‣ was raised. Preaching includes **law** – *that we have all done wrong and deserve the worst*, and **gospel** – *that through Christ and His work we have the best!* But if Jesus is dead; *then all Bible preaching and our faith are totally worthless!*

- b. **<sup>15</sup> We are even found to be misrepresenting God [false witnesses of God], because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.** // A major requirement for every apostle is to have seen the resurrected Christ; then, *as eyewitnesses*, they were to tell others. If they spoke falsely; then, † Christ is dead, † people will remain dead, and † they are liars!

4. **If People Will Not Be Raised; then Jesus Is Dead:** **<sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.** // As noted earlier, some, *possibly even many*, of the Corinthian believers did not believe the dead would be raised. Therefore, *Paul basically said*: If the dead ones are not raised; *then Jesus is still dead!*

5. **If Jesus Is Dead; then Believers Are In Sin and Condemned:**

- a. **<sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile [worthless] and you are still in your sins.** // What do we believe about our God-given faith? By it we receive the forgiveness of our sins; however, if Christ has not been raised; *then our sins have not been taken away; therefore, our faith in Christ is worthless!*
- b. **<sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.** // The Bible teaches: Those who die in Christ go to paradise when they die. But if Christ has not been raised; *then those who die in Christ go to hell!*

c. <sup>19</sup> **If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied** [*most miserable*]. // Think about our lives in Christ: We believe in Him as our Savior and Lord, so we ▶read the Bible, ▶pray, ▶receive Word and Sacrament, ▶give money, ▶serve, ▶try to avoid sin, and ▶try to reach out to others. If Christ has not been raised; *then all such things are a total waste of time!*

6. **BUT Christ Has Been Raised:** <sup>20</sup> **But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep.** // Finally, Paul affirmed that Christ is risen and called Him the “**firstfruit**” of those who died in Christ. What does that mean? The OT Feast of Firstfruits included a formal acknowledgment of the first ripe sheaf of barley, *believing that the LORD would grant the blessing of the full harvest!* Therefore, *as Jesus died on a Friday, and then was actually raised on the following Sunday* – which was the actual Feast of Firstfruits ([Lev. 23:9-14](#)), *so God calls us to have total confidence that – when Jesus comes again – all believers will be raised to the fullness of eternal life* ([John 5:28-29](#))!

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Father in heaven, even though – *from logic* – Jesus’ resurrection seems impossible, let us know that *He has been raised and we will also be raised!* In Jesus’ name!

**This Week’s Sermon Challenge:** Since we have faith in the Risen Christ, let us go to God in prayer right now to express our thanks for ▶God’s Word of Truth, ▶the dead believers being raised, ▶the forgiveness of sins, and ▶our own upcoming resurrection!

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