

Introduction

Today, we are going to look at a very important passage. It is important for three reasons. First, the gospel message was how we were saved. We heard the gospel preached to us, and we placed our trust in Christ. Without the gospel message, we would not be saved. Paul said that the gospel was the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

(Ro 10:14–17) “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?... {17} So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

(Ro 1:16) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Second, we have been called to preach the gospel. Statistically, 90% of Christians have never led someone else to the Lord. Most believers are not confident in their ability to share the gospel. They are not confident in their knowledge of what to share and how to share it. They feel inadequate and do not feel prepared or trained. This message is one that every Christian should become familiar with and feel confident in sharing it with others.

(Mk 16:15–16) “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. {16} “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

The third reason that this message is extremely important is that Paul said if anyone preaches a different gospel, let him be accursed. The gospel message needs to be preached accurately. I have seen the gospel message diluted and softened to try and be less offensive or difficult for people. Jesus did not compromise on the message He preached. He made it very clear that if anyone wanted to be His disciple, he needed to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Him. Many want the free gift of salvation, but they do not want to deny themselves, pick up their crosses, and follow Jesus.

(Ga 1:6–9) “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; {7} which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. {8} But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! {9} As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!”

In our passage today, Paul wrote the Corinthians and reminded them of the gospel message that he had preached to them. He gives the key elements of the gospel. Second, he recorded the witnesses of Christ’s resurrection, a key element of the gospel message. Third, he spoke of the importance of the resurrection.

The Gospel and Resurrection that Paul Preached (1 Cor 15:1-19)

1. The Key Elements of the Gospel (1 Cor 15:1-4)
2. The Witnesses of the Resurrection (1 Cor 15:5-11)
3. The Importance of the Resurrection (1 Cor 15:12-19)

(1 Co 15:1-19) “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, {2} by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. {3} For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, {4} and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, {5} and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. {6} After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; {7} then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; {8} and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. {9} For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. {10} 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. {11} Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed. {12} 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? {13} But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; {14} and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. {15} 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. {16} For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; {17} and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. {18} Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. {19} If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”

1. The Key Elements of the Gospel (1 Cor 15:1-4)

Paul is making known to the Corinthians the gospel that he had originally preached to them. This is the gospel message that they had heard and received, and in which they stand. This was the gospel message by which they were saved. This was the gospel message that they were to hold fast. In our passage today, the word, preach, is used five times. The word that is used is euangelizo (Strong’s G2097), which means to declare or proclaim good news. There are two Greek words that are used for preach. The other, kerusso, means a public herald. When we think of a preacher in a church, that is kerusso, someone who is standing before a group or congregation preaching a message. The word, euangelizo, is different. It simply means to declare the gospel. All of us are called to preach the gospel, or share the good news with the people God brings into our lives. Not everyone is called to publicly preach sermons from a pulpit. Paul did both. He was called to preach publicly, and he also proclaimed the gospel. He had shared the gospel message with the Corinthians, and it was this message that they believed, and were saved.

(1 Cor 15:1-2) “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, {2} by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.”

What was the gospel message that Paul preached to them? The first element of the gospel message is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. That is something that every single person in the world needs – forgiveness of our sins.

(1 Cor 15:3-4) “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, {4} and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,”

In Romans 3:23, Paul wrote, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” There is not a single person who has not sinned in their life; we have all sinned. Isaiah, the prophet, said the same thing in Isaiah 53:6. He said, “all of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

(Rom 3:23) “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

(Is 53:6) “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

What was the consequence of our sins? Why did the Lord need to die for our sins? It goes back to Genesis 2. When the Lord put Adam in the garden, He told him that he could eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He said if he ate from that tree he would surely die. And, Adam ate from that tree and there was a spiritual death. His sins separated Him from God. There was a physical death that came later, but there was an instantaneous spiritual separation from God. He was no longer covered with God’s glory, and he and Eve recognized that they were naked, and they were also ashamed.

(Gen 2:16-17) “The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; {17} but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

In Romans 6:23 Paul wrote that the wages of sin is death. That is the message that God promised Adam, “in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” Our sins have earned us death, a spiritual death. Since all of us have sinned, and all of us deserve death, we all need forgiveness of our sins by God. The first part of the gospel message is that Christ died for our sins. He is the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world. The gospel means good news, and the forgiveness of our sins is really good news.

(Rom 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Jn 1:29) “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Isaiah wrote about this separation. In Isaiah 59:2, he said, “Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God.” God is a holy God and when Adam sinned, he was no longer holy and could not be in the presence of a holy God. His sin separated him from a holy God. All of us like sheep have gone astray. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Since God created us to have fellowship with Him, He created a plan to redeem us and to forgive us.

(Is 59:2) “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”

When I became a Christian, I did not need anyone to tell me that I was a sinner; I knew that I was a sinner. The only thing that I questioned was whether God was real or not. I wanted to see evidence that God was real. How did God prove His love, and that He is real? When I saw the love of Christ in the lives of those professing to be Christians, my heart was softened and drawn to Christ.

Paul wrote that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. It was prophesied to us in many different Scriptures. In Isaiah 53:4-5, the prophet wrote that He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. Jesus was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. He was pierced through for our transgressions, and was crushed for our iniquities. He was chastened for our well-being, and we are healed by His scourging. Isaiah gave a pretty descriptive picture of what happened to Jesus when He was arrested, scourged, crucified, and pierced.

(Is 53:4-5) “Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. {5} But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.”

In Psalm 22, David gave a very vivid picture of Jesus dying for our sins. He wrote that Jesus was He was poured out like water, and all His bones were out of joint. He said that His tongue cleaved to His jaws. He was surrounded by dogs, which would be Gentiles. He was encompassed by a band of evildoers, and Jesus was in between two thieves on the cross. David prophesied that they would pierce His hands and feet, but that He could count all His bones. The Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two men on either side to speed up their death, but Jesus had already died, so they did not break His bones, which was a fulfillment of this prophecy. David wrote that people would look and stare at Him, which took place. They would divide up His garments and cast lots for His clothing, which is what the soldiers did. Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

(Ps 22:14–18) “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. {15} My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and You lay me in the dust of death. {16} For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. {17} I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; {18} they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

Besides the prophecies, there were pictures and examples that pointed to Jesus dying for our sins. John wrote that Jesus is the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world. Jesus is the Passover Lamb, and He died on Passover, exactly as it had to be. We also see a picture of God telling Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his only son. That was a picture of what God the Father was going to do, by sending His only begotten Son to be sacrificed for our sins. Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

After Jesus had died and risen from the dead, Luke recorded an account He had with two men on the road to Emmaus. Jesus said to them, “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory. Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.” Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

(Lk 24:25–27) “And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! {26} “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” {27} Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”

The next part of the gospel that Paul preached to the Corinthians was that Christ was buried and raised from the dead on the third day. The death, burial, and resurrection is a critical part of the

gospel message. Paul said that this happened on the third day according to the Scriptures. David prophesied in Psalm 16:10 that God would not abandon the Messiah's soul in Sheol, the place of the dead, or allow the Messiah's body to undergo decay.

(1 Cor 15:4) "and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

(Ps 16:10) "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."

Jesus was more specific about the time He would spend in the grave. He told His disciples on a number of occasions that He would be killed, and be raised up on the third day. He had also told the Jews at the beginning of His public ministry that if they destroyed this temple, in three days He would raise it up. They understood that He was referring to the physical temple in Jerusalem, but He was speaking of His resurrection on the third day.

(Mt 16:21) "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day."

(Jn 2:19–22) "Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." {20} The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" {21} But He was speaking of the temple of His body. {22} So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken."

In Romans 10:9-10, Paul talks about what we must do to be saved. He said we must confess Jesus as Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead. We must believe and confess that Jesus is the Messiah, and we must also believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is very much a part of the gospel message. It is not enough to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah; we must confess Him to be our Lord or Master. In James 2:19, he wrote that the demons also believe and shudder. The demons know that Jesus is the Messiah and part of the Godhead, but they have not submitted their life to Him and confessed Him as Lord.

(Rom 10:9-10) "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; {10} for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

(James 2:19) "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."

2. The Witnesses of the Resurrection (1 Cor 15:5-11)

The gospel message was prophesied in the Scriptures, and it took place accordingly. The resurrection of Christ is one of the key parts of the gospel, and Christ appeared to hundreds of people after He had risen from the dead. Paul gave the Corinthians (and us) an account of some of these witnesses. Christ first appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve, and then to more than five hundred brethren at one time. At the time of the writing of this letter to the Corinthians, which was around 56 A.D., most of those people that saw Jesus were still alive.

(1 Co 15:5-6) “and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. {6} After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;”

In Acts 1:21-22, the eleven remaining apostles put forth two men that had accompanied Jesus, beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from them, and this man was to replace Judas, who had turned aside. These were the twelve apostles of the Lamb. There were going to be many other apostles, but at this point, Jesus appeared to the twelve. Luke records one of the purposes of the apostles of the Lamb was to be a witness of His resurrection. Therefore, it was necessary for Jesus to appear before the twelve so that they could be a witness.

(Ac 1:21–22) “Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— {22} beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

Then, the Lord appeared to James, and then to all the apostles. James was the half-brother of Jesus, and it was James that eventually became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. James became one of those other apostles that are mentioned in the New Testament. Last of all, Jesus appeared to Paul, who did not consider himself to be fit to be called an apostle because he had persecuted the church. Paul fully understood that it was by God’s grace that he was saved, and was called to be an apostle. Paul worked hard and labored more than any of the other apostles, and God’s grace did not prove vain. Through the preaching of Paul, or the other apostles, they preached the gospel message and the Corinthians believed.

(1 Cor 15:7-11) “then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; {8} and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. {9} For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. {10} 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. {11} Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”

In Acts 26, when Paul shared the gospel with King Agrippa, he shared about the death and resurrection of the Messiah according to the prophets. He said, “for the king knows about these matters...since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.” Paul also shared that Christ had appeared to him. The number of witnesses of the resurrection of Christ is an important historical fact. Josh McDowell wrote a book, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, and there is one chapter devoted to the historical evidence of the resurrection of Christ. There is evidence that demands a verdict, a verdict to trust in Christ.

(Acts 26:22-26) “So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; {23} that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles... {26} For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner.”

3. The Importance of the Resurrection (1 Cor 15:12-19)

Apparently, there was a group of people that were saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. They were not denying the resurrection of Christ; there was too much evidence and proof of His resurrection to question that. However, they were denying what this meant to Christians. They were saying that there was no resurrection of the dead. Therefore, Paul is dealing with this doctrinal error.

(1 Co 15:12) “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?”

There are two possibilities of this false doctrine springing up in the church in Corinth. I will give the most unlikely case first. Among the Jewish leaders there were two groups, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead, but the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. When Paul was standing before the Sanhedrin Council in Acts 23, which was made up of both Pharisees and Sadducees, he used his knowledge of their positions to his advantage, and said, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!” Luke records that there “occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.... and there occurred a great uproar; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and began to argue heatedly, saying, ‘We find nothing wrong with this man.’” There was such a dissension that the Roman commander ordered the troops to go down and take Paul away by force and bring him to the barracks. It is possible that some Sadducees believed that Jesus was the Messiah and became part of the church in Corinth, and they carried with them some of their beliefs.

(Ac 23:6–10) “But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul *began* crying out in the Council, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!” {7} As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. {8} For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. {9} And there occurred a great uproar; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and *began* to argue heatedly, saying, “We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” {10} And as a great dissension was developing, the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them and ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force, and bring him into the barracks.”

The second, and most likely way that this doctrine sprung up in the church was a carry-over from what the Greeks philosophers believed. Earlier in 1 Corinthians 1-2, Paul had addressed the divisions in the church, primarily about leadership, but there were also some divisions over the Greek philosophers. Some of these Greek philosophers got saved, but they brought with them some false beliefs about the resurrection of the dead. The Greek philosophers believed that when someone died, the spirit is saved, but the body is buried, gone, and forgotten. They thought the body was essentially evil, and it was something we had to put up with in this life, when we die, we are freed from this evil body. When Paul was in Athens preaching the gospel, the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers ridiculed Paul because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. His teaching about the resurrection of the dead was a strange teaching to their ears. Some of them sneered, but there were others whose hearts were stirred, and they said, “We shall hear you again concerning this.” Athens was roughly sixty miles from Corinth, and these various Greek philosophers were prominent in the whole region.

(Ac 17:18–20) “And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, “What would this idle babbler wish to say?” Others, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. {19} And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? {20} “For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean.... {32} Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some *began* to sneer, but others said, “We shall hear you again concerning this.”

Paul links the resurrection of Jesus with the resurrection of the dead. Paul makes seven ramifications of this false belief. His first point is that “if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised.” He has just given them evidence that hundreds of people, including himself that had seen the Lord. By linking Christ’s resurrection with our resurrection, and that Christ’s resurrection was a proven fact, then our resurrection must also be true. If there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised.

(1 Co 15:13) “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;

Paul’s second point is that if Christ has not been raised, then Paul’s preaching was in vain, since he preached that Christ had been resurrected from the dead. Not only was his preaching in vain, but the preaching of Peter, and the rest of the apostles that Christ had appeared to was also in vain.

(1 Cor 15:14) “and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.”

Paul’s third point was if Christ has not been raised, their faith was also in vain. The Corinthians had believed, and they had received the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit. Lives had been changed, and now Paul is telling them that if the resurrection is not true, their faith is in vain. Our faith is inseparable from the resurrection of the dead.

Different things will strike us differently. Having our faith in vain speaks loudly to me. I want my life to count. I do not want my life and my work to be in vain. In Psalms 127, Solomon wrote that unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain. He spoke about the vanity of rising up early and retiring late, and eating the bread of painful labors, and I identify with that. I get up early and work hard for the kingdom of God. I want to give my life and energy to what the Lord is building. I do not want to labor in vain. At the conclusion of this chapter, Paul wrote a verse that has been very meaningful and motivating for me. He exhorted them to “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” When I don’t see the fruit and results that I want, I examine what I am doing to see if I am building what the Lord wants to build. Then, I endeavor to be steadfast, immovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord. I am encouraged by this verse that my toil is not in vain in the Lord. Paul’s point is that if there is no resurrection, our faith is in vain.

(Ps 127:1–2) “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. {2} It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved *even in his* sleep.”

(1 Co 15:58) “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.”

Fourth, Paul said that if there is no resurrection of the dead, he and the rest of the apostles are false witnesses. He said, “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.”

(1 Cor 15:15-16) “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. {16} For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;”

Paul’s fifth statement is that if Christ has not been raised, their faith was worthless, and they were still in their sins. If vanity was not enough, then worthless is even worse. We need forgiveness of our sins. If Christ was still held by death, then our sins were not paid for. In Romans 4, Paul addressed Abraham’s faith and how it was credited to him as righteousness. Then he added that it was not only for his sake, but it was also for us, who believe in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Jesus was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. Justification means to be declared innocent and righteous. Jesus’ resurrection was necessary for our justification. Without it, we are still in our sins.

(1 Cor 15:17) “and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

(Ro 4:23–25) “Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, {24} but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, {25} *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.”

Paul’s sixth point is that if there is no resurrection, then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. Their life is over and finished. Jesus was very clear that He was not the God of the dead, but of the living. When the Sadducees questioned and tested Jesus about the seven brothers who all had the same wife, He said that those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. He said they were now sons of the resurrection. He brought up Moses and the burning bush, where he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. “Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him.” They are alive, and there is a resurrection of the dead. The lives of those before us have not perished.

(1 Cor 15:18) “Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.”

(Lk 20:34–38) “Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, {35} but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; {36} for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. {37} “But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the *passage about the burning bush*, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. {38} “Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him.”

Paul's seventh and final point is if there is no resurrection of the dead, those of us who have hoped in Christ in this life only, are of all men the most to be pitied. Why work hard if your work is in vain, and you are going to perish like everyone else? Why not listen to the world and live it up right now?

(1 Cor 15:19) "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."

The resurrection of Christ is directly linked to our salvation. We have to believe that Christ was raised from the dead, and confess Him as Lord. That is a crucial element of the gospel message. Jesus demonstrated His deity by telling people that He was going to be raised from the dead, and then being raised from the dead. In Romans 1:4, Paul wrote that Jesus was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.

(Ro 1:4) "who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,"

Conclusion and Applications

What is the message of the gospel? The message of the gospel is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised up on the third day according to the Scriptures. His resurrection was witnessed by the twelve apostles, to Paul, and to more than five hundred people at one time. He also appeared to James, and also to Paul.

The resurrection is a key part of the gospel message. Without the resurrection, our preaching is in vain. Without the resurrection the preaching of the gospel is in vain. Without the resurrection, all the apostles are false witnesses and liars. Without the resurrection, all the prophets who wrote about the resurrection are false prophets. Without the resurrection, our faith is in vain, and our sins are not forgiven. Without the resurrection, all the dead in Christ have perished, and those of us who are alive are the most of all to be pitied.

The good news is that Jesus was resurrected on the third day, and we will also be resurrected from the dead. Next week we will be looking at the next section of 1 Corinthians 15, and the order of the resurrection.

There may be someone who has been in church, but has never received Christ into their lives. You have tried to live a good life and have attended church faithfully, but have never placed your trust in Christ. Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9 that it is by grace through faith, and not as a result of works. Doing good works is great, but it won't get you into the kingdom of God. In Romans 10, God tells us two things we must do to become a Christian. We must believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, and we must confess Him as Lord. If that is your desire this morning, pray with me.

(Eph 2:8-9) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

(Ro 10:9-10) "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; {10} for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

Jesus, I believe that You came and died for our sins. I believe that you were buried and were raised from the dead on the third day. I ask You to forgive me of my sins. I believe that You are Lord and I ask You to come into my life and be the Lord of my life. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Thank You for the gospel message, the good news that our sins are forgiven. Thank You for all the witnesses of Your resurrection from the dead. Thank You for making our lives meaningful. Thank You that we will also be raised, just as You were raised. Thank You for the inheritance that You have for all of us. Father, the gospel message is a simple message. Help us be confident in sharing the gospel with others. Give us boldness and confidence in sharing this message. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Gospel and Resurrection

Introduction (Ro 10:14–17, 1:16, Mk 16:15-16, Ga 1:6–9, 1 Cor 15:1-19)

1. **The Key Elements of the Gospel** (1 Cor 15:1-4, Is 53:6, Ro 6:23, Gen 2:16-17, Rom 6:23, John 1:29, Is 59:2, Is 53:4-5, Ps22:14-18, Lk 24:25–27, Ps 16:10, Mt 16:21, Jn 2:19–22, Rom 10:9-10, James 2:19)

2. **The Witnesses of the Resurrection** (1 Cor 15:5-11, Ac 1:21–22, Acts 26:22-26)

3. **The Importance of the Resurrection** (1 Cor 15:12-19, Ac 23:6–10, 17:18–20, Ps 127:1–2, 1 Cor 15:58, Ro 4:23–25, Lk 20:34-38, Ro 1:4)

Conclusion and Applications (Eph 2:8-9, Rom 10:9-10)