

Was the Resurrection Necessary

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- [0 : 0 0] 1 Corinthians 15 is one of those go-to chapters on the resurrection of Christ.
- ! So we're going to look at it today.! You're going to see through all of the argument.
- You're going to see how foolish it is to even say some of the things that Paul brings out as arguments. Not that Paul's foolish. I'm not getting at that. But you're going to see that already we've sung enough doctrine.
- We've said enough scripture that what the Corinthians dealt with has already been answered. But it is my goal today to look at this situation and see where they struggled with something.
- We'll talk about what they struggled with in just a second. But they struggled with something that as Paul dealt with it, we're going to see some amazing things.
- [1 : 1 5] We're going to see God's goodness. So I want you to take your Bibles and follow along from chapter 15. We're going to start reading in verse 12. Chapter 15 and verse 12.
- 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. We are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God that he has raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that 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 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.
- [2 : 3 9] But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. The first fruits 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 died, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order. Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.
- Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.
- The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For God has put all things in submission under his feet. But when it says, all things are put in submission, it is plain that he is accepting who put all things in subjection under him.
- When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who hath put all things in subjection under him. That God may be all in all.
- [3 : 5 6] Let's pray. Father, as we come to you today, we come needy. I confess today my need of both physical and spiritual strength, need of your spirit today to preach.

I pray that you would be with us and be with me in that matter. Lord, it is not just me. We are all people who see through a glass darkly. And Lord, your word reveals amazing things.

And we need your spirit's help to understand those things today. And as we speak of Christ's resurrection and the things that are ours because of it, I pray that you would help us to grasp them.

Help us to rest in you and live based on them. And Lord, if the resurrection is true, the people to be pitied today are not Christians.

It's the people who've never trusted in this Savior. So I pray that today you would show grace and mercy to any and all who do not know you today.

[5 : 10] I pray your blessing as we share together from your word in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians was written by Paul to answer a situation that apparently had arisen in Corinth.

And probably either was reported back to him by way of saying this is what's going on, or was reported back to him by means of a question. We don't know.

But the situation was that Corinth, being a city in Greece, was full of Greek people. And Greeks were known to be people who saw the body as evil.

It was a prison for people to be entrapped in until they died. And their body would rot away and they'd be freed from that body. And there were all kinds of ramifications in relation to what they thought of the body and what they did with the body and all that.

But we don't need to get into that here. But the fact of the matter is, they saw the body as something to be rid of. Why would they want any kind of resurrection of the body?

[6 : 31] Why would they want to be reconnected to something so evil? Now, again, this is not Christian thinking. This is Greek thinking. And apparently, there were people in that church, in Corinth, who were coming in with this thinking and not letting the gospel transform their lives.

And so they were taking this teaching and beginning to spread it in Corinth. This was something that happened in other places. It happened in Ephesus.

We'll make mention of that in just a second. But it was something where this man brought this teaching in. And this teaching was, well, there's no resurrection.

Because we Greeks don't believe in resurrection. And so they were beginning to be people who denied the resurrection. Now, as you approach 1 Corinthians 15, you shouldn't approach it, first of all, from thinking that they were denying the resurrection of Christ.

They saw Christ as a bit special. And so many of them gave way and were willing to acknowledge Christ's resurrection. Their thought was that there was no resurrection for any human people with the possible exception of Christ.

[7 : 44] And so they denied the resurrection. It was no small matter. Paul had a disciple.

His name was Timothy. You all probably have heard of him, or many of you have heard of him. Timothy was left in Ephesus, another Greek city or close by. And as Timothy was ministering there, there was a man named Hymenaeus who was teaching in Ephesus.

And he made a shipwreck of his faith by holding to the idea that there was no resurrection. This is 1 Timothy 1, verses 17 to 20.

And Paul saw that as such a problem that he delivered Hymenaeus over to Satan for the destruction of the body. He was disciplining Hymenaeus for teaching this heresy of the fact that there was no resurrection.

But the sad fact of the matter was, as Paul talks to Timothy about the situation in Ephesus, he lets them know that he's sad for the fact that Hymenaeus' doctrine has destroyed the faith of some of the believers in Ephesus.

[9 : 07] And now it's come up in Corinth. No resurrection. And so Paul, here in chapter 15, is nipping this heresy in the bud as he addresses the Corinthian church.

Now, as he does this, as I mentioned, we're going to see what he teaches them about Christ's resurrection. We're going to talk about what he teaches about resurrection and what he teaches them about Christ's resurrection.

But we're going to look at it from the standpoint of, okay, he's using these things to teach these people. What does that mean for us? Now, Paul starts in verses 1 through 11.

We'll talk about these later. But he starts in verses 1 through 11 by proving by indisputable facts that Christ has indeed risen from the dead.

And the rest of his argument is based on that truth. That Christ is risen from the dead and there's no disputing those facts.

[10 : 09] And so as we get into verse 12, he's going to first deal with this idea that these people are saying that there's no resurrection. And so if there is no resurrection, Paul says, then the first thing that you have to recognize is that Christ is not raised.

Now, remember, they made a bit of exception for Christ. They saw him as special. The Corinthian people who were influenced by Greek and Christian.

And so they left a little room. But their leaving a little room ruined everything. And so Paul was saying, you can't think this way.

If you deny that there's a resurrection, in verses 13 and 16, Paul makes it emphatic, then Christ has not risen.

Now, they may make a special exception. But Paul's saying that's not the true case of the matter. If Christ has not raised from the dead, then you're in trouble.

[11 : 20] Everything depended on the work of the Messiah. If the Messiah didn't rise from the dead, then no one is doing the work that the Messiah came to do.

If the Messiah didn't rise from the dead, then his work on the cross was not accepted. If the Messiah didn't rise from the dead, then his promise to be with us always was a lie.

If the Messiah didn't rise from the dead, then he was a liar. He claimed that he would die and that the third day he would rise again.

John 2.19, Jesus answered them, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then he was a liar.

And if Christ has not risen from the dead, you deny the foundation of everything that goes into establishing Christianity and our salvation.

[12 : 31] And so Paul's walking through and it's very dark, it's very down. As he's going through these things, he's going to prove what they lose if Christ didn't rise from the dead.

And even as I say it, it sounds so depressing to speak about this. Now again, as I mentioned, we've already sang enough truth and doctrine. We've already read scripture. So you know that these are not truths.

You know that these are not the things, but these are things people were believing. These were things people were holding to. And they didn't recognize where it would take them.

They didn't recognize what it would do to them. And Paul goes on to say that if Christ didn't rise from the dead, if there is no resurrection, our preaching is useless.

Why would you talk about a Christ who didn't rise from the dead? Why would you talk about someone who came and said he was going to do something and couldn't even complete his work?

[13 : 32] He lay in the grave and the work was unfinished. Why would you talk about somebody who was powerless to do anything? There'd be no work of Christ to persuade anybody of.

Fruitless. If there was no resurrection, your faith is useless. These people were trying to call themselves Christians, yes, and yet denying the resurrection.

He's saying, why? If Christ didn't rise from the dead, you're trusting in something that can't help us. Without Christ's resurrection, we lack justification before God.

Romans 4.25 Speaking of Christ who was delivered up for our trespasses, but if it stopped there, we were hopeless.

He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. It needed to be that Christ rose from the dead that we might be justified. If there is no resurrection, we have no justification.

[14 : 41] We're trusting in something that's not there. Paul goes on to say, if there's no resurrection, we are false witnesses. Because he has already claimed to be amongst over 500 people who have seen Christ alive.

And if there is no resurrection, then he's a liar. And all those over 500 people are liars. And if there is no resurrection, we are still in our sin.

For the wages of sin is death. And if Christ came and took all our sin upon himself and died in our place and went to the grave, if death held him, he wasn't good enough.

He wasn't perfect. He didn't pay for it. If Jesus stayed dead, he didn't pay for our sins. Romans 5.12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned.

Do you see the connection there? If he stayed dead, he was a sinner. Just like us. How hopeless. How hopeless.

[16 : 20] If there's no resurrection, those falling asleep in Christ are lost. saints from the beginning of time had been trusting in the one who would come to save them.

Adam and Eve in the garden. Adam and Eve in the garden were given the promise that there would be one coming who would crush the serpent's head. And they were trusting in the one. And they were trusting in that one as they looked forward.

If Jesus never rose from the dead, Adam, Eve, Seth, Abraham, Moses, David, and every single Old Testament saint, whoever looked forward to that one, are gone.

I mean, not just dead, gone. Nothing. No hope. And even as we here have loved ones who have trusted Christ, and they have died, parents, friends, loved ones, and one of our comforts is they've trusted Christ.

I've trusted Christ. I will see them again. But if Christ did not raise from the dead, they're just gone.

[17 : 51] How do you live in a world where there's no resurrection? How do you live in a world where there's no hope? Well, Paul puts forth this argument.

And of course, the true situation is that Christ indeed has risen. I didn't read the first 11 verses on purpose.

Because he's made all these proclamations. And how depressing would it be if Christ hadn't risen from the dead? But this is what actually happened.

Now, I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preach to you, which you have received and which you stand, and by which you are 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, according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, people could have checked, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep, then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me, for I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God, but by the grace of God,

[19 : 46] I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain, on the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me, whether then it was I or they, so we preached, and so you believed, all that would not have happened, if Christ was not raised, did happen, because Christ is raised, Acts 2 24, God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible, for him to be held by it, why?

he was not a sinner, he took our sin upon himself, but he was not a sinner, now on the cross, if he had suffered there, and his suffering had been insufficient, and he paid for 999.9, oh I'm saying that wrong, 99.9% of my sin, or your sin, or our sin, and he hadn't failed, he had failed to pay for that last tenth of a percent, that he wouldn't have risen, he would still be carrying, some speck of our sin, and since it was placed on him, he wouldn't have risen, but it was not possible for death to hold him, because he did pay for our sin, he paid for every speck of our sin, everything was placed on him, when he suffered on the cross, he said, it is finished, he paid for every speck of our sin, and it cannot be, that Christ would lay in the grave, because, he is sinless, people, die, because they're sinners, and Christ paid for all that sin, not his own, but ours, and Paul had said before, our preaching is vain, if people aren't raised from the dead, if Christ is not raised from the dead, well,

Christ has raised from the dead, our preaching is not vain, so preach, let the folks know, around us, that Christ has raised from the dead, there were witnesses, his word is true, both Old and New Testament, our preaching is not vain, because he is alive, Hebrews 10, 12 through 14, says, but when Christ, had offered for all time, a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down, at the right hand of God, waiting from that time, until his enemies, should be made a footstool, for his feet, for by a single offering, he has perfected, for all times, those who are being sanctified, he is not dead, therefore, what he has done, has paid for the sins, of all his people, your faith, is not in vain, you've not trusted, in a savior, who was not able to do it, you have trusted, in a savior, who did it, so believe, rest, there are witnesses, he is alive,

Paul had testified, that he had seen Christ, if there was no resurrection, he was a liar, but, there was a resurrection, and if by the mouth, of two or three witnesses, something can be established, what can be established, we'll just pick a number, what can be established, by the witness, of 525 witnesses, it's a sure fact, we are not false witnesses, we are not testifying, to a world, of a savior, who did not rise, from the dead, who did not pay, for our sins, we are testifying, of a savior, who has risen, from the dead, who has paid, for our sins, so testify, let others know, this is what the word says, this is what he's done, revelation 1, 4 to 6,

John to the seven churches, that are in Asia, grace to you, and peace from him, who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits, who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born, from the dead, and the ruler, of kings on earth, to him, who loves us, and has freed us, from our sins, by his blood, and made us a kingdom, priest to his God, and father, to him be glory, and dominion, forever and ever, amen, we're no longer, in our sin, it's all been paid for, proven, by the resurrection, of Christ, so, there is a resurrection, our sin, has been paid for it, so rest in that, and you know, I'll just take a second, to really emphasize this, because, so many of us, because of the way, we're built,

[25 : 20] I mean, Adam was a man, we talked about this, in Galatians, Adam was a man, built to obey, God's commands, and to earn, his righteousness, and that wasn't wrong, that was the way, God built him, but he chose, to disobey, and to eat, of the fruit, he was not to partake of, and from that point, on, his obedience, could never, earn him salvation, it could never, do anything, to get him, to be right with God, he had to depend, on someone else's, righteousness, at that point, he needed, someone's grace, he needed, someone's mercy, he needed someone, to take his place, and so that, is what Jesus, was planning, all along, to come and be that one, who would take our place, and now, it is done, and though, our very fiber, wants to say, I need to earn, God's favor, I need to earn, God's favor, it is not the case, that we earn,

God's favor, we cannot earn, God's favor, Christ has risen, from the dead, means his sacrifice, was sufficient, it was complete, then I need, to be, reminding myself, I am no longer, in my sin, yes I struggle, with sin, but my sin, is paid for, my sin, is paid for, by another, and I can rest, in what he's done, so Christ, is risen from the dead, rest, in that, rest in him, rejoice, in that, love him, because of that, he's shown, his love to you, and love others, because of that, serve, 1st Thessalonians 4, 13 to 18, but we do not want you, to be uninformed brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as others do, who have no hope, for since we believe, that Jesus died, and rose again, even so, through Jesus,

God will bring with him, those who have fallen asleep, for this, we declare to you, by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left, until the coming of the Lord, will not precede, those who have fallen asleep, the Lord himself, will descend from heaven, with a cry of command, and with the voice, of the archangel, and with the trumpet, the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ, will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together, with him in the clouds, to meet the Lord, in the air, and so, we, will always, be with the Lord, therefore, comfort one another, with these words, there's no resurrection, our loved ones are lost, all those who have trusted Christ, and died in Christ, would be lost, even all those,

Old Testament saints, that's not the case, Christ has risen from the dead, and Paul doesn't want us, to be uninformed, God will bring them with us, lost a loved one, lost a friend, one who's in Christ, be comforted, be encouraged, because of the resurrection, they will be with us, we will be with them, but most importantly, we will be with Christ, without the resurrection, we're the most pitied people, and I seem to remember, forgetting this point, so I'll just mention it here, we're the most pitiful people, on earth, if Christ didn't rise, from the dead, we're living for nothing, I mean, we endeavor, to live according, to rules, and codes, and the things, that God has laid out, we endeavor, out of love, to live for someone,

God, a life, that brings glory, to him, we endeavor, to love others, but if there was, no resurrection, that's a huge, waste of time, the phrase, eat drink, and be merry, should be our theme verse, if that's the case, nihilism, that, that, false teaching, that says, that when we, die, we just, we're gone, we're nothing, leads to that same conclusion, but yet, Christ, has risen, from the dead, we have hope, in this life, first Peter 1, three, blessed be, the God and father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, according, to his great mercy, he has caused us, to be born again, to a living hope, through the resurrection, of Jesus Christ, from the dead, when you choose, to learn,

[30 : 40] God's commands, and want to do them, out of love for Christ, love for brothers, you're not wasting your time, when you choose, to turn away from sin, because our Savior, has died for you, and you want to live, in obedience to him, you choose, to turn away from sin, you abstain, from things, that the world, just gives itself to, you're not wasting, your time, because Christ, is alive, because there is, hope in this life, and the next, so live for Christ, not only live for Christ, endure suffering, most of us, all of us suffer, many of us, do not suffer, in ways that people, like in Nigeria, right now, are suffering, where the, right now, it's the country, of the most Christian martyrs, in the world, we don't suffer, many of us, don't suffer that way, but we suffer, we go through trials, we go through heartaches, we all suffer, endure suffering, the brothers and sisters, we pray for, that suffering, pain and agony, week upon week, upon week, day upon day, is it worth it, it is worth it, it is worth it, because Christ is risen, because he's seated, at the right hand of the father, so endure suffering, and don't heed those who mock, it's worth it, there are a couple other, basically what I've dealt with now,

I've just finished, dealing with verses 12, through 19, there are, a few more things, that Paul deals with, in verses 20, through 28, I'm just going to mention a few, these are consequences, of the resurrection, of Christ, the first is glorious, in verses 20, 20 and 20, 20 through 23, Christ has been raised, from the dead, the first fruits, of those, who have fallen asleep, what's first fruits, first fruits, are the first crops, that ripen, people of the time, would have known, especially Jews, would have known, it was required, of the Jews in Israel, when the harvest began, the first few things, that became ripe, they would gather them up, take them, to the temple, or they were supposed, to take them to the temple, and offer them, in praise to the Lord, for the fact, that he's provided a harvest, so it was an act of praise, but scripture also talks about, how it's a promise, the first ripe fruits, were a promise, that there was, more of a harvest coming, you know, you could see, a few apples on the tree, but you could see, that the tree, was full of other apples, and that the first fruits, were an indication, that there were more fruit coming, and so what Paul's getting at, as he quotes, from some of the,

Old Testament ordinances, is the idea that, when Christ rose from the dead, he was the first fruit, he rose, and ascended on high, but that doesn't mean, that he's just leaving us, it means that, as he is risen, so we will rise, and be with him, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ, shall all be made alive, each in his own order, Christ the first fruits, then at his coming, those who belong to him, and so, because Christ arose, we will rise, we've sang of that, even today, we're not to be left, in the grave, forgotten, we will be with him, for all eternity, secondly, in verses 24, and 25, then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom, to God the father, after destroying every rule, and every authority, and power, for he must reign, until he has put, all his enemies, under his feet, this is what's going on, right now, everything, that has been opposed, to Christ, is being brought, in submission, under Christ,

Christ, has all authority, the resurrection, guarantees, Christ's authority, it guarantees, that Christ's kingdom, will be built, and you say, but it's evil right now, doesn't mean, he's not bringing it, all under his control, scripture guarantees, that everything, will be properly submitted, to God, in the end, there's more, that we can get into there, but everything, everything, so, all that works, against us now, all that tries, to do us in now, all that would oppose, what we're doing now, God, is bringing that, into control, because Christ, is risen from the dead, and thirdly, death, the last enemy, will be destroyed, for he must reign, until he has put, all his enemies, under his feet, the last enemy, to be destroyed, is death, let me read you, three verses, verse, second Timothy, 1, 10, and which now, has been manifested, through the appearing, of our savior,

Jesus Christ, who abolished death, and brought life, and immortality, to light, through the gospel, revelation, 20, 19, then death, and Hades, were thrown, into the lake of fire, this is the second death, the lake of fire, revelation, 21, 4, he will wipe away, every tear, from their eyes, and death, shall be no more, neither, shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, anymore, for former things, have passed away, the last enemy, to be destroyed, is death, now, we fear death, and, you know, yes, I like what, R.C. Sproul said, as he got, long towards the end, of his years, he says, I'm not afraid, of dying, I'm afraid, of the, I'm saying it wrong, but the process, of dying, in other words, he's afraid, of the pain, that he'll feel, and what he'll go through, and what stages, that'll take, but he's not afraid, of dying, because he knows, at that point, he'll be with Christ, but there's coming, a day, when death, will be gone, see, for, for the unsaved, now, death, is not just, the first dying, it's being resurrected, to die again, eternally, that eternal death, will be gone, because, because of the resurrection, of Christ, just a couple, of things, to wrap up, brothers, and sisters, notice how, in all of this passage, there's no, do this, do this, do this, in all of this passage, it's what Christ, has done, your salvation, is not a matter, of your works, it's a matter, of his work, and it's done, all we must do, is rest, in what he has done, so as we, mark the event, of Christ's resurrection, today, we remember it, every week, but we mark the event, today, we mark the fact, that everything's done, now we wait, in process, but everything's done, if you're here, without Christ, if Christ, didn't rise, from the dead,

[38 : 54] Christians, would be the most, pitied people, in the world, but Christ, has risen, from the dead, and as I mentioned, at the beginning, those, most to be pitied, now, are those, who refuse, to come, to trust Christ, because, their death, will lead, to an eternal death, a separation, from Christ, a torment, for their sin, a separation, for loved ones, a separation, from God, that's, who should be most, pitied, be pitied, now, so I encourage you, if you don't know Christ, today's the day, of salvation, today's the day, to trust Christ, I want to encourage you, to do that, I want to close, I think, there's no better way, of closing, than just reading, the last, part of this chapter, starting in verse, 50, but I tell you this, brothers, flesh, and blood, cannot inherit, the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable, inherit the imperishable, behold,

I tell you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we, shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkly of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet, will sound, and the dead, will be raised, imperishable, and we shall be changed, for this perishable, body, must put on, the imperishable, and this mortal, body, must put on, immortality, when the perishable, puts on, the imperishable, and the mortal, puts on, immortality, then shall come to pass, the saying that is written, death, is swallowed up, in victory, oh death, where is your victory, oh death, where is your sting, the sting of death, is sin, and the power of sin, is the law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory, through Jesus, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding, in the work of the Lord, knowing, that in the Lord, your labor, is not in vain, let's pray, father we praise you, that the work of Christ, was complete, and that you were satisfied, and Christ was raised, from the dead, thank you that he is, the first fruits, and that as, we come to trust,

Christ as our savior, we will be that fruit, that follows, I pray that if there be there, here today, those who don't know you, that today would be that day, that they turn, to rest, and trust in you, and for us, father, who know you, help us to be people, who are resting, in the work that's done, but then also, even as the chapter ends, Lord, help us to be steadfast, movable, always abounding, in the work of the Lord, we pray in Jesus name, Amen,