

GOD QUESTIONS??

Questions about God and faith that matter.

Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

Series Overview

Does God really exist? If God is good, why is there suffering in the world? Can you trust what the Bible says? In this short series, we'll address these and similar questions so that we can have confidence in what we believe and be prepared to give an answer to those who are searching (1 Pet. 3:15).

Sermon Introduction

Christianity has lots of beliefs. That God created the world. That sin broke the world. That God is triune—One God, three Persons—and that salvation is a gift of grace, not something we can earn. But the central belief of Christianity isn't a religious idea or doctrine. It's a historical event: Jesus' resurrection. Put simply, if Jesus didn't really rise from the dead, Christianity doesn't count for anything. So... did Jesus really rise from the dead?

Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:3-6; 14-19 (NIV)

1Cor. 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

1Cor. 15:4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1Cor. 15:5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

1Cor. 15:6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

1Cor. 15:14 ... If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

1Cor. 15:15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

1Cor. 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

1Cor. 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

1Cor. 15:18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

1Cor. 15:19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

1. Read the passage. What stood out to you? Was there anything that you found surprising or confusing?
2. Fill in the blank: “If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, the Christian faith is _____.” Why does Paul consider Jesus’ resurrection paramount to his faith?
3. How important is Jesus’ resurrection to your faith? Do you think it’s possible to be a Christian and not believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Why or why not?
4. Are there arguments you’ve heard that have convinced you that Jesus truly rose from the dead? Are there any that have made you doubt?
5. Tim Keller, in his book *The Reason for God*, gives a list of historical questions that have to be answered when considering the veracity of Jesus’ resurrection:
 - a. Why did Christianity emerge so rapidly, with such power?
 - b. No other band of messianic followers in that era concluded their leader was raised from the dead—why did this group do so?
 - c. No group of Jews ever worshipped a human being as God. What led them to do it?
 - d. Jews did not believe in divine men or individual resurrections. What changed their worldview virtually overnight?
 - e. How do you account for the hundreds of eyewitnesses to the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:6) who lived on for decades and publicly maintained their testimony, eventually giving their lives for their belief?

Most skeptics argue that either Jesus’ disciples stole his body from the tomb and fabricated the resurrection, or (more popularly) many of them experienced an ecstatic vision of Jesus that led them to believe he was alive. Do you think either a tomb-robbery conspiracy or a collective vision adequately account for these historical facts?

6. If Jesus truly rose from the dead, what does that reality mean for your life today?
7. If Jesus truly rose from the dead, what does that reveal about our hope for the future?

Prayer

Often a position of submission helps us physically connect with the spiritual reality of meeting God. A posture of kneeling with open hands can demonstrate our willingness to submit to God's power.

- If you have doubts about whether Jesus rose from the dead, admit them to God—they're not too big for him.
- Ask God to give you confidence that belief in the resurrection is not only reasonable, but the best solution to the historical evidence.
- Thank God that Jesus rose from the dead, conquering sin and death, so that you can have forgiveness for sin and the sure hope of eternal life with him.
- Ask God to show you what it means to live in light of Jesus' resurrection.