

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## **No Pity Please!**

*1 Corinthians 15:12-19*

**Keywords:** Easter, resurrection, hope, gospel, risk-taking

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:** What a waste of time and energy to be a follower of Jesus Christ if he never rose from the dead. What an act of utter folly to turn from sin and live a life that is counter-cultural, enduring much mocking, if Christ never rose. But if Jesus did rise then those who are following Him are not to be pitied. Their eyes are to be focused on something far greater than the next party, the new car, or a life of comfort. Their eyes are upon that day when they too shall be resurrected unto glory. No pity please!

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. Brief greetings and explanation about the nature of Easter.
- B. Today I wish to make a simple argument/case that without the resurrection there is nothing for us to do but to party, get drunk, eat till we puke and die.
  - 1. If no one rises from the dead then there is no purpose.
  - 2. There is no reason to love people, to live holy lives, to come here on a Sunday to worship, or any other religious or good thing.
  - 3. Rather it would be better to simply live for yourself and get whatever pleasure you can gain from your life.
- C. That message is made clear in the bible in 1 Corinthians 15.
  - 1. In vs 32 the Apostle Paul declares this simple and very true statement, “. . . If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”
  - 2. It is that simple and frankly you see it in your homes, schools, neighborhoods, not to mention, this nation. A mass of humanity that has no reason to live for the only certainty that they possess is that tomorrow they die.
  - 3. Along with what I just said was a consequence of no hope of a resurrection, Paul makes additional points regarding the consequences of there being no resurrection.

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4. Today I want to unpack these seven points regarding the absolute necessity for the resurrection and then show you what happens when you see it and believe it.

## **II. What Would Happen If There Is No Resurrection?**

- A. First, if there is no resurrection, then Jesus could not have been raised (13).
  1. Here is the first and most basic issue regarding resurrection.
  2. In our land the idea of evolution is now fully woven into what the people believe and also how they live.
    - a. You see this in various ways, whether it be abortion or euthanasia, the mind set for most is that afterward there is nothing.
    - b. The belief comes through in a very practical way, dying is not a barrier because there is nothing afterward.
    - c. One prominent agnostic simply says that dying is no different than being born. You experienced nothing before birth and won't after death.
    - d. So death is at best a release from pain and life ultimately has no real purpose.
  3. But what Paul shows here is that ideas have consequences. If there is no resurrection, fine, but then that means that Jesus never rose from the dead.
    - a. No big deal for many. Who cares. . . .
    - b. But as I said, there are consequences to these things.
- B. Second, if Jesus had not risen from the dead, then all those people who are sharing the good news that you can be saved from your sins and have eternal life are wasting their time (14a).
  1. For a non-Christian this one is of little importance. If you don't follow Jesus or believe the Christian faith, what do you care of what they are saying was really a waste of time?
  2. But what about all here in this room who has made it your goal to preach and teach these things?

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- a. If there is no resurrection, then the God I preach to all is a fraud and I have wasted my life.
  - b. Why are you wasting your time with memorizing the bible? Why are you praying with your children and telling them to trust in Jesus?
  - c. For so many in this room, your life too is a waste. Just shut up and play video games, for there is nothing that matters.
- C. Third, if the good news is a waste, then how much more is it a waste for those who believe in it (14b)?
1. Again I come to the idea of evolution, that everything is simply the result of random events of incredible complexity coming together to produce life. But without any real meaning.
    - a. To believe in evolution is to deny resurrection. They are mutually opposing ideas.
    - b. How many believe today claim to be followers of Jesus Christ but don't believe in a future resurrection?
    - c. And if they are wrong, what a waste of faith.
  2. But Paul is telling us here that there were Christians in the church at Corinth who believed this.
    - a. But why would anyone call themselves a Christian and yet deny the resurrection of Jesus?
    - b. Perhaps they held to some spiritual form of resurrection, or simply that Christianity was a religion and some of the details were unimportant.
    - c. Humans are masters at rationalization. Perhaps they see some good in identifying as a Christian and that it is a good belief system but that we shouldn't be too radical and believe every part of it, like a resurrection of the dead.
    - d. Here is how one who would call himself a Christian today put it:

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First of all let me say that I do think that the Resurrection was real. By that I mean that it was not an event that was simply invented or faked by Jesus' followers. I do think that Jesus was "crucified under Pontius Pilate," that he "suffered death and was buried," and "on the third day he rose again," as the Nicene Creed states. However, I do not think that the Resurrection involved Jesus' body coming back to life. By that I mean that the Resurrection was not simply resuscitation -- as if Jesus somehow simply recovered from the crucifixion. Even further, I find it highly unlikely that the Resurrection involved Jesus taking up his old body in any sense. To me the Resurrection was a completely transformative event, one in which Jesus took on a wholly different existence from the one he had on earth.

- e. Paul's response is simple to this person. If he did not rise from the dead then this man's claim of faith is simply worthless.
- f. He needs to go be a Buddhist, but stop wasting time calling himself something that has no meaning.
- 3. The entire basis of Christianity rests upon this event—if Jesus did not rise from the dead we should all go home, drink whatever we like, and move on in life—there is nothing here.
- D. Fourth, those who continue to declare that Jesus was raised from the dead by God His Father, are false, lying witnesses to something that never happened (15).
  - 1. Here we begin to get even more serious.
  - 2. It becomes no longer simply a discussion in theory, where we are "just talking."
  - 3. It becomes a matter of integrity and truth.
  - 4. And it starts 2000 years ago with the disciples of Jesus.
    - a. Show them 15:1-9.
    - b. Point out that if there is no resurrection, then the Scriptures are false, for they speak of it.
    - c. Point out the massive number of other liars there are listed in vss 5-9.

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5. The importance of this idea.
  - a. With the exception on the Apostle John the other Apostles all were killed for their faith in Jesus Christ and their telling of the gospel—and that gospel/good news centered upon the reality of the resurrection.
  - b. Why? Would you? If you knew for a fact that Jesus had not risen, he was merely rotting in the grave. Would you put your life on the line for what was a lie?
  - c. Would you let others put their's on the line? The early church suffered much.
  - d. Why would Paul, who says he saw the risen Lord (9), suffered hugely for something that was a lie?

2 Corinthians 11:23-27 Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more **imprisonments, beaten** times without number, often **in danger of death**. 24 Five times I received from the Jews **thirty-nine lashes**. 25 Three times I was **beaten with rods**, once I was **stoned**, three times I was **shipwrecked**, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from **robbers**, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often **without food, in cold and exposure**.

6. There are consequences to ideas. Do not forget this.
  7. In ever increasing seriousness Paul is systematically showing the reality behind a casual thought—"there is no resurrection."
- E. Fifth, if Jesus is simply a corpse in the ground, then every person in this room is still trapped under the power of our sin (17).
1. What was the death of Christ for? (3) Explain this.
  2. Yet, there is unbreakable connection between His death and His resurrection.

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3. This is so important to grasp. Jesus did not just die. It was a death that was to resolve the problem of sin and the judgment attached to sin—death.
  4. But how do we know and have confidence in what Jesus did? By the resurrection. And if there was no resurrection then. . . .
    - a. This means that there is no forgiveness.
    - b. No hope.
    - c. No purpose.
    - d. No way to God.
    - e. No way to have a conscience made clean.
    - f. Simply judgment and eternal wrath.
- F. Sixth, those who have died as Christian are rotting in the ground as Christians, it meant nothing (18).
1. This then makes us realize that any Christian burial was a waste of time. And there is nothing to hope in.
  2. This is the idea behind that word “perished.” It means much more than “to die.”
    - a. It is to be undone in every sense of the word. It would be used of a city that is utterly destroyed, with no stone or stick left standing.
    - b. But it also is used in the bible to speak of eternal death—Hell.
    - c. John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”
    - d. John 10:28, “I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.”

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3. We are all simply going to become dirt. People may mourn us for a bit, but honestly we will be forgotten in but a few days by most.
4. However, the bible is clear that for all humans there is one end, “It is appointed once for man to die, and then face judgment.”
  - a. And if you are not safe under the saving work of Jesus that is all you have.
  - b. Judgment that declares you guilty of your sin and the reality of eternal judgment. That is what it means to perish.
- G. Seventh, a faithful Christian is at best something to be pitied if Jesus never rose (19).
  1. We are a sad joke to follow Jesus if He is dead.
  2. More than just a joke, we are to be looked at by all others with pity.
  3. BTW this implies that the life of a Christian is something very different than what all others live.
    - a. Let me challenge you with that and think through it carefully.
    - b. If you are a person claiming to be a Christian, what would change in your life if He hadn’t risen?
    - c. What things do the people who are believers pity you over?
    - d. You must understand this, Paul is assuming that there are lifestyle differences between a true Christian and those who do not love Jesus. Major differences.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. The life of a Christian is to be marked by a self-sacrificial life where you lay down your life in service to your Lord.
- B. And if you are a genuine believer this is your desire though you find it to be a struggle often perhaps.

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1. Many of you struggle often with dreams of this world and all that it offers you.
  2. There is the lure of comfort, money, pleasure of every type.
  3. And if that is what you truly live for then this sermon is making little sense.
  4. But if you truly love Jesus then hopefully you are seeing what I am heading toward. The call of a radical following of your Lord.
  5. All here need to take stock on what would be pitiable in their life if they found that Jesus did not rise.
- C. Think of Stephen in Acts 7
1. Explain the story, read then from vss 52-60.
  2. You could look at that man and pity him.
  3. But he wanted no pity for he saw true life staring at him even as the stones fell upon his body.
- D. Think of the many in this world today who are suffering in prisons, facing death for the name of Jesus.
1. In Nigeria Christians were recently attacked in their village by Muslims. Are they to be pitied?
  2. In China the ongoing pressure and imprisonment of Christians continues while the world yawns. Are they to be pitied?
  3. Perhaps it is you. Perhaps you are a recent convert and now you believe the gospel. You follow Jesus. You hope in the coming resurrection. But you are losing friends quickly. Are you to be pitied?
- E. Listen, there is no need to pity a Christian, for there is no loss of anything.
1. Is this you? Luke 14:14 “Blessed/to be envied is everyone who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God.”



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2. It will be you if you can get your heads around this then you will begin to put away some things that need to be put away. And the first thing must be unbelief.
  3. But if the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not large in your heart, then your life will likely be one of compromise after compromise until there is nothing left but hopelessness.
- F. Beloved, be bold in your faith and speaking of the gospel. Live and speak it because it is life for you.

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## Small Group Questions

- Honestly discuss how your life would look differently if Jesus never rose.
- What are things that are in your life right now that would be absolutely pitiful if it were not true that Jesus rose?