

Deeper Applications: “Because I Know”
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Cross Community Church, Savannah, Ga.
October 4, 2026

1 Corinthians 15: 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? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting 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. 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 \asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- **Main Idea: Since the tomb is still empty, our hope is still FULL**

Sermon Summary:

What does it mean to truly live with hope? That question sits at the heart of this powerful message drawn from 1 Corinthians 15. Paul writes to a divided church in Corinth, a city remarkably similar to our own world in its cultural diversity, moral complexity, and spiritual confusion. His argument is bold and unflinching: if Christ has not been raised, then everything we believe collapses. Our preaching is empty, our faith is pointless, and we are of all people most to be pitied. But then comes that world-altering phrase, 'But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead.' Those four words change everything. The resurrection is not a footnote to the Christian faith. It is the foundation. It is, as one theologian put it, God's amen to Christ's declaration that 'it is finished.' Because the tomb is empty, our hope is full. We do not have to wait for circumstances to improve, for questions to be

answered, or for fears to subside. What we do know, that Christ is risen, has the power to inform everything we do not know. That is the anchor for every uncertain season we walk through.

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 is the primary passage, with the sermon drawing broadly from the full chapter, including verses 42-44 on the nature of the resurrection body and verses 54-58 on death's defeat
- Psalm 103:1-5 was read as a call to worship, describing God's forgiveness, healing, and steadfast love
- 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 was referenced at the close, addressing the call to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ
- Galatians 1:18 and 2:1 were cited to establish Paul's practice of conferring with eyewitnesses in Jerusalem
- Acts 15 was referenced regarding the Jerusalem Council

Discussion Questions

The pastor says 'what you do know can inform what you don't know' -- in what areas of your life do you need to let the certainty of Christ's resurrection speak into your deepest uncertainties?

Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 15 that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised and our faith is empty -- how does the logical interdependence of these two truths strengthen or challenge the foundation of your own belief?

The pastor describes the church at Corinth as a community where the culture was shaping the church rather than the church shaping the culture -
- in what specific ways do you see this same dynamic at work in your own life or church community today?

Paul's creed in 1 Corinthians 15 is grounded in eyewitness testimony that he personally verified with the apostles -- how does the historical and evidential nature of the resurrection change the way you think about sharing your faith with skeptics?

The pastor states that 'because Christ has been raised, your pain has purpose' -- how have you experienced or struggled to believe that suffering in your own life carries meaning in light of the resurrection?

The sermon draws a parallel between ancient Corinth and modern Savannah, noting shared traits of geographical importance, cultural diversity, and moral challenges -- what does it mean for your church to be a resurrection-centered community in a city with those characteristics?

Paul ends 1 Corinthians 15 by declaring that our labor is never in vain because Christ is risen -- what work in your life have you been tempted to view as pointless, and how does the resurrection reframe its significance?

The pastor describes Christianity as inherently a resurrection faith, calling it 'the hinge upon which the story of the world pivots' -- how does centering your identity as a believer on the resurrection, rather than on moral behavior or religious tradition, change how you live day to day?

Stephen Curtis Chapman's song about dying with hope was written in response to a school shooting -- how does the resurrection give us a framework for grieving alongside others who are suffering, without minimizing their pain?

The pastor challenges believers to stop living as though they are without hope, saying the tomb is empty and therefore our hope is full -- what practical habits or mindsets might you need to change in order to live in a way that reflects genuine resurrection hope rather than quiet despair?

Small Group Guide

"Because I Know" | 1 Corinthians 15

Overview

This week's sermon centered on the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the foundation of Christian hope. Drawing from 1 Corinthians 15, Pastor Kevin challenged believers to let what they do know inform what they do not know. The central truth of the message was this: since the tomb is still empty, our hope is still full.

Key Takeaways

- The resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of believers are inseparably linked. You cannot affirm one while denying the other.
 - Paul builds his case in 1 Corinthians 15 by following the logic of unbelief to its natural conclusion, then overturning it with the declaration that Christ has, in fact, been raised.
 - The church is called to impact culture, not be shaped by it. When the church loses its resurrection hope, it loses its witness.
 - Because Christ has been raised, our preaching, our faith, our labor, and our suffering are never in vain.
 - Christians are not people to be pitied. We are people with a hope that will not disappoint.
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Icebreaker

Think of a time when you had information that others around you did not have, and that knowledge changed how you responded to a situation. Share that story with the group.

Discussion Questions

Getting Into the Text

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 together as a group. What is Paul's overall argument in this passage? How does he use the logic of the doubters and deniers against their own position?

2. Paul uses the word "vain" repeatedly in this passage to describe preaching and faith without the resurrection. In your own words, what does it mean for faith to be empty or without effect? Have you ever experienced a season where your faith felt that way?
3. In verse 20, Paul writes the words "but in fact." The sermon described this as perhaps the biggest small phrase in the Bible. Why does this pivot matter so much to Paul's argument? What does it change about everything that came before it?

Going Deeper

4. The sermon described three groups of people responding to the resurrection: those who deny it, those who doubt it, and those who are dependent on it. Which of these postures do you think is most common in your workplace, neighborhood, or social circles? How does that shape the way you share your faith?
5. Pastor Kevin pointed out that the church in Corinth had allowed the surrounding culture to shape the church rather than the church shaping the culture. Where do you see that happening today? Where do you see the church faithfully pushing back against that trend?
6. The sermon referenced the city of Corinth and drew a comparison to Savannah, noting geographical importance, cultural diversity, and moral complexity. How does understanding your city as a mission field change the way you think about your daily life and interactions?
7. Paul closes 1 Corinthians 15 by telling believers to be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing their labor is not in vain. What does it look like practically to be immovable in a season when results are not visible?

Personal Reflection

8. The sermon offered this challenge: let what you do know inform what you don't know. What is something you are facing right now where you do not have clarity or certainty? What do you know about God that can speak into that uncertainty?
9. Pastor Kevin said, "Because Christ has been raised, your pain has purpose." Do you find that easy or difficult to believe in the middle of suffering? What has helped you hold onto resurrection hope during hard seasons?
10. The sermon closed with three action points: be born again into life, live with purpose, and die with hope. Which of these three speaks most directly to where you are right now, and why?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One:

- **Anchor yourself in what you know.** Write down three to five things you know to be true about God. Keep that list somewhere visible and return to it whenever anxiety or uncertainty begins to crowd out your hope.

- **Engage someone with the gospel.** The sermon reminded us that the church's calling is to engage the city with the gospel, make disciples, and let God grow his church from there. Identify one person in your life who does not yet know Christ and commit to praying for them by name every day this week. Look for a natural opportunity to share your hope.
 - **Examine your witness.** Consider whether there are areas of your life where the surrounding culture has shaped your thinking or behavior more than the resurrection has. Bring one of those areas before God in prayer and ask him to realign your perspective with the truth of the empty tomb.
 - **Encourage someone who is laboring.** Think of a pastor, church planter, missionary, or fellow believer who may be in a season of discouragement. Reach out this week with a specific word of encouragement rooted in the truth that their labor in the Lord is never in vain.
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Closing Prayer Focus

Close your time together by praying through these three areas:

1. **Gratitude** for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the hope it produces.
 2. **Intercession** for those in your lives who deny or doubt the resurrection, that God would open their eyes.
 3. **Courage** to live and speak with resurrection hope in every area of life, knowing that because the tomb is empty, your hope is full.
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"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." 1 Corinthians 15:58