TEXT SUMMARY

The Corinthian fellowship was long on enthusiasm and short on spiritual maturity. One of their problems was their confusion about the resurrection of the dead. Paul argues that because Jesus rose, we can be confident that the end of our physical existence is not the end for us. In our text, 1 Cor 15:12-19, we see Paul lay out his argument for the theological necessity of the Resurrection of Jesus.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

1. The entire chapter is a long discourse on the Resurrection of Christ, covering an array of topics related to death and resurrection. Read the chapter in one sitting to get a feel for Paul's approach to this vital matter.

2. Paul uses a series of "if-then" statements to build his case.

    - What are the implications if Christ did not rise from the dead? (There are several answers. See v. 14-15, 17-18.)

    - What are the implications if all our hope is limited to what we can know in this life (v. 19)?

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

Verse 17 presents an intriguing connection: if Christ did not rise, "your faith is futile and you are still in your sins." What is the connection?

What do the contents of the tomb of Jesus have to do with His success or failure in His mission to save us from our sin?

SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

The Resurrection of Jesus casts a bright shadow over everything else in the life of the believer. The implications are both numerous and glorious.

1. **Continue Paul's thought experiment:** If the story of Jesus had ended with his death, He would still be remembered as a great teacher and martyr. But we could never think of Him or our faith the way we do now; our confidence in Him would be diminished.

    - What would His audacious claims mean if He had not risen? (See Mark 2 for some of them.)
    - What would it mean if the tomb of Jesus was, like the tombs of all the other great religious leaders, occupied?
    - How would your own faith be impacted if it didn't include the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead? How would you handle setbacks differently? How would you experience bereavement differently? (See 1 Thess 4:13-17.)

2. **Paul concludes this glorious chapter (and the body of the letter) with a surprising exhortation (v. 58).** He doesn't tell his readers to comfort one another (as he does in 1 Thess 4:16); rather, he urges them to persevere. How does the Resurrection of Jesus encourage you to persevere?