

Open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 15:12-20.

- He is risen! (He is risen, indeed.)

Today is Resurrection Sunday.

- On this day, nearly 2,000 years ago, our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead.
- This day was the first Lord's Day, the beginning of a new era.
- This day changed the world forever.
- For on this day, our Lord was publicly vindicated by God, declared righteous (because He is), and the hope of every sinner who would ever be saved was made manifest in Him when He burst forth from the grave.
- And this we declare with no embarrassment or shame.
- Let the world mock us, let them say it is not possible. Let the infidel, atheist, and unbeliever rail all they want.
- We don't care. For He is risen. God has done it.
- Our Lord is alive. And He is reigning over all.

Our hope is in Christ. That's why we're here.

- Our only hope is in His sinless life in our place, His atoning death in our place, and His resurrection that secures our salvation and resurrection.
- Jesus Christ is our hope.
- But all of this hope is dashed to pieces if He was not raised from the dead.

In our text this morning, the Apostle Paul blatantly states that our entire religion hangs upon the Resurrection of Christ.

- No Resurrection. No Christianity.

- No living Lord Jesus. No salvation.
- No Resurrection. No forgiveness of sins.
- No risen Christ. No hope for us.
- If Christ is not alive, if He was not raised from the dead, then our entire religion, our faith, our lives, everything we hold dear as Christians is a complete sham and a waste of time.
- The Apostle lays it all on the line in this passage. He openly confesses that horrible things are true if Christ did not rise from the dead.
- Everything, and I mean everything, hinges on whether or not Christ is still dead or is risen.

So this morning, what I'd like to do is walk through much of this text.

- And in doing so, I want us soberly consider the horrors that belong to us if Christ is not raised from the dead.
- But, praise be to God, I want us to see how, since, in fact Jesus is risen, all of those dreadful things are reversed.
- And, because He is alive, the OPPOSITE of every terrible thing Paul says is actually true.
- So, really, I hope to show you the blessings that belong to believers because Christ is risen.
- And my prayer is that we all leave here this morning rejoicing and glorying in the living Lord Jesus.
- May God bless the preaching of His Word.

NOTE: Before I continue, I want to say something for the sake of transparency and honesty.

- The sermon I'm about to preach is basically my version of a sermon that John Piper preached in 1991.

- I want to give credit where its due.
- I found Piper's sermon to be a great approach to this text. So I used his basic outline.

If you would, and are able, please stand with me for the reading of the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God.

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

[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 futile and you are still in your sins.

[18] Then those also who have fallen 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.

(PRAY)

Our Triune God,

•Thank you for another opportunity to sit at your feet and hear you speak through your Word.

•We long to be instructed, enlivened, encouraged, corrected, strengthened, and comforted this morning.

•And so we ask that you, God of all grace, would be gracious to us and help us.

•Show the believing the blessings that belong to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

•And warn the believer of what curses belong to them unless they come to Christ in faith.

•Have mercy on each one of us. And give us all what we need. And what we need is a sight of the crucified, dead, and risen Lord Jesus.

•Work in us today by your Word and Spirit.

•Do your most holy will in us.

•We ask these things in Jesus' Name and for His sake.

•Amen.

1.) The Apostle Paul has just laid it all out there for us in vv12-19.

•Our religion is nonsense if the dead are not raised. For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Jesus Christ has not been raised.

•Apparently, there were some in the church of Corinth who had begun to deny a future bodily resurrection of believers at the end of the age.

•And Paul is refuting that heresy in this text. And his main point is that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ can't have been raised, either.

- And if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then there are seriously dreadful consequences for the Christian religion and for each Christian individually.

- Paul is showing them that the implications of denying the resurrection at the end of the age have a direct impact on the whole of our faith and future as Christians.

What I want to do now is walk through The Horrors That Are Ours if Christ Has Not Been Raised.

- I want us to really think about how awful things are for us if indeed Jesus was not resurrected in a glorified body.

1. In v14, the Apostle says, “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain...”

- All preaching about Christ, both Apostolic preaching and our preaching about Him, is utterly in vain.

- It is empty. That’s what the word means. It is meaningless. It is baseless. There is nothing to it.

- If Christ is still dead, then there is no good that preaching Christ can do for anyone.

- There is no salvation to be had in Him. For a dead Savior is no Savior at all.

- What business do we have to declare that Jesus is Lord and reigning over all things and will return to judge the living and the dead, if He is still dead Himself?

- What good is it to declare that Christ can forgive you of your sins, if He is still dead?

- What good is it to declare that Christ ever lives to intercede for you, if in fact He doesn’t live?

- Our preaching would be in vain.

God would not be in the preaching, for it would be false. And God is no liar.

- There would be no power in it. For there is no true, saving power in lies.
- Everything we declare to the world would be founded upon a falsehood.
- And, therefore, our preaching could do no real good for anyone.

Again, I say, the entire Christian message would be nonsense.

- And that's because the heart and soul of Christian preaching is that Christ died as a substitute for sinners and then was raised from the dead for their justification.
- He was raised as their surety. He was raised as proof that His work at the Cross to take away the sins of those who believe on Him was effective.
- As Romans 4:25 says, He "...was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."
- But that is false if Christ is not raised. And if something is false, it is worthless.
- Truth matters, according to the Apostle. And Christian preaching is not true if Christ is still in the grave.

2. Second, in vv14 and 17 we're told, "...if Christ has not been raised...your faith is in vain...your faith is futile..."

- Your faith in Christ, your belief in the Christian religion, your faith in the Gospel, trusting that Christ has done enough to save you from your sins, believing the message of the Apostles is in vain.

•It's empty. It's groundless. It's baseless. To be blunt with you, it's worthless and stupid to believe on Christ if He has not been raised from the dead.

Reason with me for a moment:

•What will it profit you to believe in a dead man whom God condemned by hanging Him on a tree?

•As the Scriptures say, "...Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree..." (Galatians 3:13)

•If God cursed Him at the Cross, but did not raise Him up on the Third Day, then Jesus died under the curse of God FOR HIMSELF.

•Romans 6:23 tells us, "The wages of sin is death."

•So, if Jesus is still dead, then death still has a claim on Him. And if death still has a claim on Him, then He had His own sins that He died for.

•If Jesus was a sinner, and had to suffer God's wrath for His own sins, then there is nothing good that will come from trusting in Him.

•If Jesus was not raised, then He cannot do anything for you, for He was just as bad and wicked as you are.

•And one sinner cannot do anything eternally and spiritually good for another sinner in the MOST ULTIMATE sense.

•One sinner cannot save another sinner. And if Jesus is still dead, then He was a sinner.

If Christ is not raised, then the Gospel is a hoax.

•And you believe a lie.

•Your faith is vain and futile, if Christ is not risen.

3. Third, v15 tells us that if Christ has not been

raised, “We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that He raised Christ...”

- The Apostles were liars and we have not good reason to believe them. They are lying about God and what He has done in Jesus, if Jesus is still dead.

They were, quite blatantly, bearing false witness about God.

- They were claiming to speak on behalf of God as appointed messengers of Christ, but are in fact LYING about what God has done.

- That is blasphemy. And what is worse, is that they would've KNOWN whether or not they were telling the truth.

- The Apostles, then, are the most evil, lying, deceptive, abominable, damnable men who have ever lived.

- They are imposters and frauds of the worst kind because they know Christ has not been raised, but they keep proclaiming that God raised Him from the dead.

- And they will stand before God in their lies and blasphemy and be judged.

Furthermore, believing their preaching is damnable, then, because you're believing, confessing, and propagating lies about God.

- You're attributing something to God that He has not done, namely raising Christ from the dead.

- Both the Apostles and those who believe them (us) are carrying out lies in the name of God IF JESUS WAS NOT RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

If the Resurrection was supposed to be God's

vindication of Jesus and His claims, but Jesus is not raised, then the Apostles are lying about who God says Jesus is.

- If Jesus is still dead, then God Himself has spoken that Jesus is not God's only begotten Son, the Messiah, who came to save sinners.

- But He is instead a damnable heretic who died for His own sins, if He was not raised from the dead.

4. Fourth, in v17 Paul says, "And if Christ has not been raised...you are still in your sins."

- What a dreadful thought for us to consider!
- As I've said already, if Christ is still dead, then He died for His own sins. He died like any other sinful man.
- And that means that His death can do nothing for you.
- There then is no forgiveness of sins for you.
- There is no Second Adam. There is no New Covenant in His blood for the forgiveness of sins.
- His death did not save you or make atonement for you, if He is still dead.
- And so, you must still be dead in your sins before God and headed to Hell for them.

The wages of sins must still be paid. And you will have to pay them.

- The wrath of God still abides on those who believe in Christ.

- You are hopeless and guilty and damned in the eyes of God.

- If Christ has not been raised, then Romans 8:1 gets reversed and would now read, "There is therefore now NOTHING BUT condemnation for those who are in

Christ Jesus.”

5. Fifth, Paul tells us in v18, if Christ has not been raised, “Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.”

- Those who died trusting in Christ to save them have perished in their sins.

- They are damned. They are lost in the most ultimate sense.

- Those who died trusting in Christ for salvation, died believing a lie about God and Christ. And so, they died in their sins.

- And, dying in their sins, they are in Hell. They did not enter Heaven upon their deaths, and they will not be raised to eternal life in glorified bodies on the Last Day.

- Rather, there is no future or hope for them of any kind. They are lost. They are under the eternal wrath of God for their sins.

- With the rest of fallen humanity, they have perished in their sins.

- Every single Christian you’ve ever met who has died, has died deceived and damned, if Christ is not risen.

6. Lastly, the Apostle says in v19, “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

- If Christ has not been raised, then our “hope” in Him is only for this life. And that’s no hope at all.

All that you’ve suffered for Him is in vain.

- All you’ve denied yourself, all you’ve endured as a Christian, all the mocking, all the pain for His sake, all of

it has been for nothing.

- There is no reward in the life to come. This life is all you've got and then Hell comes later.

- There is no salvation for you.

- And so, we are of all people most to be pitied.

- We've been fooled. We're wrong and have wasted our lives to the highest degree.

- If our hope is only in this life, then "Let us eat and drink and be merry for tomorrow we die." But we haven't done that. We've been fooled.

- If Christ has not been raised, then it would be better to be ANYTHING BUT A CHRISTIAN.

If your expectation for salvation is only good for this, because Christ can't actually save you and give you eternal life because He was not raised, then you are to be pitied by all men.

- Why? Because your hope is worthless.

- Your hope was only good for this world. It gave you a false comfort. It was a false hope.

- And even for this world, you've believed in a delusion and that does you no real good even on earth.

- You are to be pitied above all because you are, literally, a hopeless and damned fool.

- We've been whistling in the dark, oblivious to the fact that we've believed and devoted our lives to a lie that only made things harder for us on earth.

Brothers and sisters, if Christ has not been raised, these things belong to us.

- If Christ has not been raised, we're wasting our time here today.

- If Christ has not been raised, there is only dread and terror and horror.

- How awful it is to consider a world where Christ is still in the grave!

2.) Now, having seen that, look at v20: “But...”

- STOP THERE! There is a contrast coming. A glorious contrast! A blessed contrast!

- All that has been said to this point is dreadful and terrible. “BUT,” says the Apostle!

- There is a glorious turnaround in this verse!

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

I love this verse. Paul says, “But IN FACT...”

- “...IN FACT...” Catch that! Hold onto that!

- It is a FACT that Christ has been raised from the dead.

- No more “ifs” from the Apostle. He’s done with that. No more, “IF Christ has not been raised from the dead...”

- The Apostle has now moved from dreadful hypotheticals to solid, revealed, attested to, historical FACT.

- And that fact is this: Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead!

God had promised in the OT that His Christ, His Messiah, would come into the world, die, and be raised from the dead.

- “For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your HOLY ONE see corruption.” (Psalm 16:10)

- After prophesying the Messiah’s death to take away

the sin and guilt of God's People, Isaiah said, "...He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. Out of the anguish of His soul He shall see and be satisfied..."

- And the only way for the Messiah who was crushed and dead to see His offspring, prolong His days, and see and be satisfied with His work is IF HE LIVES after dying.

- God had promised that the One He would send would come back from the dead.

And here is the declaration of God Himself concerning Jesus Christ.

- Here is what God Himself has said, what He had recorded in His Holy Word concerning Jesus Christ:

- "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek **the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen....**'"

(Luke 24:1-6a)

- This is what God Himself inspired to be written concerning His only begotten Son, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- God has spoken. And God says that Jesus is risen from the dead.

More than this one place, though, God had it

recorded in all four Gospels that Jesus is risen.

- His Apostles saw the resurrected Christ.
- John 20 and 21 tell us how they met with Him, touched Him, ate with Him, spoke with Him, after He was raised from the grave.
- He is alive. And the Apostles are His witnesses. There were multiple appearances of Christ after His Resurrection.
- The Word of God declares this to us. God Himself has spoken concerning the resurrection of His beloved Son.

The Apostles themselves attested to what they had seen.

• In Acts 2:32 and 36, the Apostle Peter, speaking on behalf of many said, “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses... Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- He was crucified, died, and IS RISEN!
- Christ’s holy Apostles declared what they had seen. And they had seen Christ alive after dying on the Cross.

Brothers and sisters, God has spoken in His Word and through His Apostles that Jesus is alive.

• What Paul says here in 1 Corinthians 15:20 is an absolute fact, for God has said it.

But let’s go further.

- The Apostles, who were formerly cowardly and terrified by men are now found to be bold to declare the Resurrection and Lordship of Christ.
- Knowing they would be ostracized, imprisoned,

beaten, poor, and killed for His sake, they preached that Christ is risen and reigning and Lord of all.

- How do you account for this boldness if Christ remained dead and they never saw Him?

The Apostle Paul tells us boldly in 1 Corinthians 15:6,

- “Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.”

- Paul tells us that Christ appeared to over 500 eyewitnesses after He was raised from the dead. And most of them were still alive when he wrote to the Corinthians.

- There were witnesses! People alive back then could've gone and found them and asked them what they saw.

- This was not done in a corner. Christ is risen! And there were many, even beyond the Apostles, who could confirm this.

Miracles were performed in Jesus' Name after His crucifixion.

- The Book of Acts records these things.

- Now how could the dead be raised, the lame be made to walk, and other miracles be performed in the power of Jesus Christ, if He was powerless and dead in the tomb?

- They couldn't! But they happened! So He is risen.

Consider the changed lives for those who came to believe on Christ.

- Consider how Christ changed Paul from an enemy of the Church to the greatest preacher the Church ever saw!

- How does our Faith change people so dramatically if there is no power in it?

- There would be no power if Jesus is dead. But there is power in our religion. Christ is risen!

And this is all not even mention the fact that Christ's body was never produced by any who opposed Christianity.

- There was an empty tomb. That was all.

- All they needed to do to destroy our religion was to produce the dead body of Jesus.

- But they never did.

- They even guarded His tomb heavily with Jewish and/or Roman soldiers who had to guard the tomb with their lives on pain of death.

- And yet, His body was not there on the first Lord's Day morning.

- Why did they never produce His Body? Because it was raised and later ascended into Heaven.

- He is alive!

And consider this as well: I find this to be very powerful. It was very powerful to me in my former life of atheism.

- The Apostles knew whether or not they were lying.

- They knew whether or not Jesus was actually alive or if they were making the whole thing up.

- And yet, all of them except John lived in poverty, infamy, imprisonment, ostracism, and eventual brutal

deaths for the message they proclaimed about Christ: That He died but was raised from the dead as Lord of all.

- None of them ever bent or broke. None of them recanted.
- And all they had to do to end their suffering was to admit they were lying and stop preaching about Jesus.
- BUT THEY DIDN'T.

Now, I know this: People don't die for a lie that they know is a lie.

- People might die for a lie if they've been deceived. But people don't die for what they know is false.
- Let me rephrase that: People might die for a lie they know is false if it will gain them something in this life. Someone might trade a life of wealth, pleasure, and ease for a terrible death in the end.
- But what people won't do is suffer all their lives for a lie and then go to an excruciating death for that lie, when they know it's a lie the whole time.

But, again, brothers and sisters, none of the Apostles ever changed their story.

- Now, why would that be?
- I think the only reasonable answer is that they saw the risen Christ.
- And because they knew He lives, they knew that whatever they suffered in this life was nothing compared to what He would give them in the next.
- Hear me: JESUS IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!

Again, I say, "BUT IN FACT CHRIST HAS BEEN

RAISED FROM THE DEAD...

- And this fact undoes all the horrors that the Apostle considered in vv12-19.
- You read vv12-19 and its like there are clouds, darkness, grime, dirt, filth, and sadness all over them.
- But then you get to v20 and it's like light and cleansing water begin to flow from v20 back up the page to the rest of the verses.
- And the negative words begin to rearrange and become positive statements for those who believe.
- And everything becomes clean and bright and full of joy and hope for those who trust in Christ.

3.) So let's now consider The Blessings That Are Ours Because Christ Has Been Raised.

- All of the negative hypotheticals in vv12-19 are now changed into positive facts for the believer.
- The horrors of those verses are transformed into blessings and realities for us.
- So let's consider them together.

1. Since Christ is risen, we are no longer in our sins.
 - His resurrection from the dead was His vindication. God declared Christ righteous when He raised Him from the dead.
 - Death had no legitimate claim on Him, for He had no sin. And so death had to give Him up.
 - In His resurrection, God was putting His seal on Christ, His claims, and His work at the Cross.
 - God declared Christ to be righteous in His resurrection from the dead, because CHRIST IS RIGHTEOUS.

And this means that His death was indeed FOR SINNERS.

•His death was not for Himself, for He had no sin. Instead, it was a substitutionary death that God accepted in our place.

•His suffering and death on the Cross then, was in order to satisfy the wrath of God that stood against us for our sins.

•Brothers and sisters, His resurrection was His justification. And that He is justified, that He is declared righteous by God, means that those who are in Him by faith receive the same thing: Justification.

God's declaration over Christ is His declaration over us by faith in the risen Lord!

•And that means that our sins are forgiven, because the forgiveness of sins is part of justification for sinners.

•Christ's death was for us. The debt of justice has been paid. And His merits are credited to our account.

•We are no longer in our sins. We are no longer under the wrath of God.

•But we are saved by faith in the resurrected Christ.

•Our sins have been taken away. They were laid upon Him and paid for. And His resurrection is the proof.

2. This leads us to the next blessing: Our faith in Christ is not foolish, but is well-founded.

•Romans 1:4 says that Jesus, "...was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead..."

•He is the Son of God. He is God in the flesh. He is the Messiah. He is the Savior of sinners. He is everything

that He said He is.

- And His resurrection is the proof.
- Again, God raising Him from the dead was God's seal of approval upon Him. It was the vindication of every word and claim of Jesus Christ.
- He is the Son of God.

To whom else, then, will we go?

- Who else is there to trust in?
- Who else can save us from our sins?
- Nobody. Nobody else. There is no other Savior.
- And this means that our faith in Him is not in vain. It is not futile. It is not foolish. It is not stupid.
- Our faith in Christ is founded in the very act and declaration of God!
- To what higher court, to what greater evidence can you appeal to?
- God has put His stamp of approval on the Lord Jesus Christ. God has put His "amen" to Christ.
- Jesus can do all He says He can do. He is all He says that He is.
- And the proof is that He is alive.

Be comforted, Christian!

- You are no fool for trusting in Christ.
 - For He is risen.
- 3.** The Apostles' words are true and our preaching about Christ is not in vain but is life for sinners.
- The Apostles were not lying about Christ! They were not misrepresenting God.
 - The Gospel they preached, "...that Christ died for our

sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...” is absolutely true!

- Jesus really did die for sinners and was raised from the dead on the third day.
- The Apostles are not liars but are chosen messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ and the foundation of the Church!
- **SO WE MUST LISTEN TO ALL THEY SAID!**
- We are not fools for listening to and obeying the messengers of the risen Lord Jesus Christ!
- Rather, we are the wisest people in the world. For Jesus is Lord!

And this means that our preaching, which is the preaching of the Apostles, for it is the same message, is not in vain.

- Rather, it is life for sinners.
- It is the only true message of hope. It is the only true message of reconciliation between God and sinful men.
- There is no hope outside of our preaching! And that's because it is only by hearing and believing the Word of God that sinners can receive Christ who saves them.
- As the Apostle says in Romans 1:16, **“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”**
- It's not a foolish message! It's not a lie! It is the very power of God unto salvation for those who believe it!

So we do not declare Christ in vain!

- Our declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the

least vain, most important thing that we can possibly do!

- It is the only hope for sinners.
- And we are righteous, right, good, and kind to proclaim it to the lost.
- We are not liars. And we are not preaching in vain.

4. We are to be envied by the world.

- Our hope in Christ is not for this life only. It is for this life and the next.
- We have Christ now and we get Him later as well.
- We are friends of God in Him now. We have ever blessing in Christ. We have God as our Father. We have the comfort of the Spirit in every affliction. We have God now in Christ.
- And we get God more, so to speak, in the life to come.
- We will be face-to-face with our Lord and God. We will dwell with Him forever.
- We get Him now. And we get Him later as well.

Not only that, but our lives are not in vain.

- They are full of life and purpose and meaning!
- What a glorious thing to declare: My life is not a waste! I'm not here for no reason! My life has meaning!
- Why? Because Christ is alive! And all we do in His Name and in faith and obedience to Him has eternal ramifications.
- This is why the Apostle can go on to say in v58, "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."

Our lives matter. What we do actually matters, because it is in service of the risen King of kings and Lord of lords.

- We do not die like dogs, but there is a world to come for those who love Christ and are faithful to the end.

- Again, I say, our lives matter now. And what we do will echo through eternity. For Christ is risen!

5. Lastly, those who have died in Christ are alive and will be raised bodily.

- They have not perished.

- They died in hope and have received what they hoped for. They have received Christ and salvation in Him!

- They shut their eyes in death and opened them to the glorious face of the Risen Christ.

- They are in heaven with Him now. Their souls have departed their bodies and are with Christ now in splendor and glory.

- And they will be resurrected bodily on the Last Day when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead.

- Their souls will be returned to their bodies.

- They reign with Christ now in Heaven. They live in glory and perfection now.

- And they will one day live on this restored earth in glorified bodies that will never grow weary or wear out.

- This is the hope of every Christian! And every Christian will receive it!

- What is true for those who have fallen asleep in Christ, is true for us and every single person who trusts in the crucified, dead, and risen Lord Jesus.

We have hope for today.

- And we have even more hope for tomorrow.
- We have hope for the life to come.
- We have the forgiveness of sins, a well-founded faith, a true message to proclaim, we are the envy of the world, and we have a glorious life to come in Christ!
- Why? BECAUSE HE LIVES!
- There is an empty tomb that fills our hearts to the brim with every blessing we could've ever hoped for or even thought to ask!
- He is risen! And we are blessed in Him!

4.) Now, before I close this sermon, I want to give a word to (or about) the unbeliever.

- I want to warn you. I want you to see that this text speaks to you just as much as it speaks to the Christian.
- If you do not trust in Christ to save you; if you do not repent of your sins and believe that Christ lived, died and was raised in order to secure your salvation; if you have not yet come to Christ, then here is what is true for you:

Your unbelief is in vain.

- Because one day you will bow down at the feet of Jesus Christ and acknowledge that He is Lord.
- For He is coming again in glory and judgment at the end of the age.
- You are a fool to reject Him.
- You will one day see and acknowledge Him.

You are rejecting the truth of God.

- You are refusing to believe that God has done this

work in Christ.

- You are refusing to believe your need for Him.
- You are scorning God's offer of salvation through faith in Christ.
- You are calling God and His holy Apostles liars of the highest order.

You are still in your sins.

- You are not forgiven and will be damned unless you turn to Christ in faith.

You will not be raised to eternal life on the Last Day.

- But you will be raised.
- You will be raised to condemnation. Raised to a body that will never die, but will be able to undergo an eternity of condemnation and wrath from Almighty God.

You are of all men most to be pitied.

- You are living under a curse for your sin. And that curse will be handed out in full at your death.
- Life is generally hard for everyone in some way. But this life is all you have.
- Your death and eternity will be much worse than your life now because you reject the only way of salvation.
- And we pity you. Our desire is to see you reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

So I appeal to you: Turn from your sins and trust in Christ!

- He is your only hope!
- And He promises to save you. But you must repent

and believe on Him.

- Forsake yourself, your attempts to make yourself righteous with God by “being a good person,” forsake everything and cling only to Christ!

- You must repent or perish.

- But God offers you salvation through Jesus Christ today!

- Take His offer and believe!

And now I want to speak to the believer:

- Christian, rejoice!

- Every blessing is yours in Christ.

- Your Lord was dead. But behold, He is alive forevermore.

- And all the blessings of the resurrection belong to you in Him.

- Leave here today with joy and gladness in your hearts! For Jesus is alive!

May God make us all glad in His risen Son.

- Amen.