

Series: **“Being the Church in a World Gone Wild”**

CDOBC – beginning on 1/28/18

Today’s Title: **“Christ was Raised”**

November 4, 2018 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Objective: To help people realize the reality of bodily resurrection.

Opening prayer

Turn to: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

The question of resurrection...

The question of the afterlife is a frequent question - a common point of discussion in today’s world.

But it’s not a new question. Most scholars believe the book of Job was the earliest book written in the O.T. - and we read:

Job 14:14

“If a person dies, will they live again?”

This question is at least 3,500 - 4,000 years old!

The Bible’s teaching is very clear: Christianity is a religion of bodily resurrection.

There is no reincarnation...

No soul sleep...

No annihilation or some sort of extinction at death for the ungodly...

There is no spiritual ‘suspension’ or covering the shortcomings of grace in Purgatory...

There is no truth to the ancient and current Hindu or Buddhist belief of ‘absorption’ - where upon your death

your body goes out of existence and your soul - yourself...what makes you, you - gets absorbed back into the deity. This religious system believes you no longer exist when you die.

One of the foundational teachings - foundational truths of Christianity is in a physical, bodily resurrection - where dead bodies are raised to eternal life. This is not only a bodily resurrection of believers, but also of unbelievers who will be raised with a body suited to the punishment of hell.

Our culture has an increasingly difficult time taking this teaching / truth seriously due to our naturalistic view of life which denies all things supernatural.

Science is one of our culture's gods, and this teaching / belief is outside the experience and faith of science.

But the bible clearly teaches physical, bodily resurrection.

Daniel 12:2

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

Isaiah 53:9-11 (Messianic)

“And they made His grave with the wicked and with a rich man in His death, although He had done no violence, and there was no deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush Him; He has put Him to grief; when His soul makes an offering for guilt, He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

11 Out of the anguish of His soul He shall see and be satisfied...”

Psalm 16:10

“For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let Your holy one see corruption.”

Jesus believed and taught that resurrection was real.

John 5:21

“For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will.

John 5:24-25

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

25 “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.”

Jesus didn't just believe in the future resurrection of all humanity - He claimed to be the resurrection!

John 11:23-26

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live,

26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Revelation 20:11-15 (Great White Throne Judgement)

All throughout the Scriptures, bodily resurrection is taught. Our culture may question the reality of resurrection, but don't let that pull you away from the clear, continual, consistent teaching we see all throughout the Bible - that every single person will be resurrected - and given a new body which will be suited for their eternal destiny.

As Paul continues in his letter to the church in Corinth, he needs to address their lack of belief in the resurrection of Christ. Their weakening confidence in the resurrection which he boldly declared when he was with them.

Read vs. 1-4

The simple and deep gospel. *vs. 1-4*

He begins by going back to the basics - going back to what he first preached to them when he was in Corinth.

The faith of the Corinthians *vs. 1-2a*

Paul reminds them of the basis of their faith - the gospel he preached which he says they "received" - and "in which you stand" - and "by which you are being saved...". Notice the active, present activity of the Gospel! Your salvation is not just a point in your past - but a daily, ongoing work of God in your life! It is not your works which save you - but your faith in the risen Christ!

The doubt of the Corinthians *vs. 2b*

The believers in Corinth were doubting the foundation of their faith - the risen, resurrected Christ. You are not a Christian if you don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus!

Romans 10:9

“...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

The resurrection is one of the essential truths of Christianity.

Greek culture struggled...thought the very idea of resurrection was abhorrent, and some of the believers in Corinth were struggling with the competing belief systems of Christianity and the dominant culture.

Plato taught the body was a prison which your soul escaped from at death.

They saw the body as evil - Greek proverb: *“The body is a tomb. I am a poor soul shackled to a corpse.”*

The Greeks had a view of life - and the after-life - which was a philosophical dualism: soul/spirit = good, flesh/body = evil. They said the body can't be fixed, you just have to get rid of it. In the 2nd century, the Greek philosopher Celsus said the bodily resurrection of Christians was *“the hope of worms, for what soul of a man would long for a body*

that had rotted.” (John MacArthur sermon - The Reality of Resurrection, part 1 -

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-491/the-reality-of-resurrection-part-1>)

Acts 17:18; 32

“Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbling wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities” -- because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.”

32 “Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.”

The Greeks were not the only ones who didn't believe in bodily resurrection. The Jewish religious leaders in the 1st century - the Sadducees - denied there would be a resurrection. In **Matthew 22:29-32** we read of a conversation between the Sadducees and Jesus - and the Sadducees were trying to trick Jesus and get Him to say something which would discredit Him in the eyes of the people. In answer to their question: Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God:

32 ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”

The point is the present tense of the reference to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He didn't say, “*I was the God of...*” - He said, “I am the God of...”

But in vs. 3-5 we have the clearest, most simple presentation of the Gospel.

- Have you ever wanted to summarize the Gospel when talking with someone?
- How do you summarize what the essentials of the Gospel are to someone you're sharing the faith with? "of first importance" - meaning what is primary - essential. This is also what Paul had "received".

Galatians 1:11-12

"For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel.

12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

What is "of first importance"?

That "Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised..."

Each of these realities were foretold in the Scriptures.

You might be here this morning and you don't consider yourself a Christian. Maybe you're trying to get your mind around what it means to be a Christian - maybe you're trying to make sense of Jesus - make sense of all the varieties and denominations you see within

Christianity. These verses here boil down the Christian faith to the absolute essentials. Set aside all the other stuff which has a tendency to overshadow or distract.

These 3 things are the essence of what you must believe:

"Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised..."

In one sense, this makes the Gospel very simple - it takes all the complexity out.

In another sense, there is a depth here which cannot ever be grasped in all it's fullness.

"Christ died for our sins" - substitutionary atonement:

"...he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed." **Isaiah 53:5**

"He was buried" - trying to understand the final and absolute nature of Jesus' death - what happened during the time He was buried?

"He was raised" - the conquering of death - conquering of sin - what kind of body was He raised with - He is "the firstfruits of those who have died" - what happened in hell when Jesus was raised?

A simple gospel...yet at the same time, deep truth.

But there's more. Pretty simple to believe that Jesus was crucified and died as a result - and then since He was dead, they put him in a grave. But "raised" from the dead? How can you know this is true?

Multiple eyewitness testimony is undeniable. vs. 5-8

Read vs. 5-8

Saying someone has been raised is easy...but a dead person appearing in a living body - that brings this to a whole other level!

It's a popular belief that the disciples were so consumed by their devotion and belief in Jesus, that they made up the resurrection account. Their faith was so big - they had to create a story to fit their faith...their faith created the "fact". In fact, what is happening when this historical revision is suggested is the very thing they are accusing the disciples of doing. They are making up 'facts' which support their faith.

This is important for you to understand: Biblical Christianity - and the faith of Christians - is based in historical fact - not despite it.

The facts of Jesus come before our faith!

One of the great points of evidence which validates the bodily resurrection of Jesus are His many post-resurrection appearances.

1) "He appeared to Cephas" (Peter) - which was an act of grace after Peter's triple denial.

2) "then to the twelve" - even though there would have only been eleven, due to Judas' suicide, this was a common title given to Jesus' disciples.

3) "He appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep." - We've jumped from 11 eyewitnesses (Paul doesn't include Mary Magdalene in his eyewitness list) to 511+! Now we're clearly beyond the conspiracy and into public

experience which is verifiable. This is the reason Paul includes the detail “most of whom are still alive” - so any Corinthian doubters can go find them and talk with them - to hear the eyewitness account for themselves!

4) “He appeared to James” - likely the brother of Jesus who before the resurrection thought his brother was insane.

5) “then to all the apostles” - it’s difficult to identify this group since “the twelve” (vs. 5b) are also the Apostles - but this group was likely a larger group than “the twelve” - especially since the word “all” is included.

For 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus kept appearing over and over again.

6) “Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me.”

Paul was an eyewitness of the risen Christ. He is certainly referring to his conversion on the road to Damascus, but it’s very likely he had numerous appearances of the risen Christ when he was in Arabia and Damascus for 3 years after his conversion (**Galatians 1:16-19**). The phrase “as to one untimely born” refers to a premature birth - miscarriage - an abortion - or a stillborn baby. It has the idea of a birth at the wrong time and likely refers to Paul becoming an Apostle much later than all the other Apostles. It might also be a grammatical punch to the Corinthians who questioned Paul’s Apostolic authority, and due to his doctrine of

grace, they might have considered his teaching about being born again as a spiritual miscarriage - some sort of unusual spiritual birth.

Any court case is normally strengthened by an eyewitness. However, there are numerous instances where a single eyewitness incorrectly identifies a criminal.

So, if you have 3 eyewitnesses...you've increased the strength of your case.

11 eyewitnesses...how about 511+!

The numerous eyewitnesses make the bodily resurrection of Jesus undeniable for the thinking and reasonable person.

If you deny the resurrection, you're in essence saying that 2,000 years later, and in spite of more than 511 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus alive after He died and was buried, you have a better grasp of the facts - which if I can say this with all due respect - that is preposterous, ludicrous, silly and completely without reason or intellectual standing. You're letting your lack of faith create the facts / or ignore the facts.

Read vs. 9-11

What transformed the cowering disciples into bold witnesses of Christ - who were killed as martyrs for their claims?

What changed Paul from being the great persecutor of Christians (arresting them and affirming their killing) into the greatest missionary / church planter / theologian the world has ever seen?

The transforming power of the risen Christ. vs. 9-11

What caused the Corinthians to be totally changed?

1 Cor. 6:9-11

“Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, **10** nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you.”

The transforming power of Christianity is not found in God’s moral or ethical standards - it’s not found in personal determination - it’s found in the power available to us because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

When Jesus rose from the dead, he defeated death and sin (vs. 54-57), which gives us the ability in this life now, to transform our life into a reflection of the holiness of God.

Apply it...

“Hold fast” to the Gospel...not cultural belief(s).

Everyone will be resurrected...what will you be resurrected to? Judgement...or heaven?

“Do you believe this?” - John 11:26

Admit your sins

Believe in the resurrected Jesus as your Savior

Commit each day to Christ!

Live strong - you have resurrection power to transform your life!

Ephesians 1:19-20a

“I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead...”

Those who believe in Christ - who believe in His resurrection - have the ability to access the power of His resurrection. Your life can be transformed - because Christ was risen!

Close in prayer