

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-20

Theme: Of First Importance

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Epistle lesson of Saint Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth, chapter fifteen verses one though twenty.

Ladies and gentlemen, I pray that you are doing well today. Let's say you are making a list of your favorite things, what would be on your list? You might put your mom and dad, your cats and dogs or horses, I am sure your brothers and sisters or grandparents would be on that list. Where would you put the Gospel? Jesus and His death and resurrection on that list? According to Saint Paul, it should be number one on our list before everything else. Why is that? How does Jesus' death and resurrection still impact us today? Ponder these questions as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

If you were making a list, where would the Gospel be on your list? I am sure that we could make a long list. We would add Christmas, the Nativity of our Lord, His Baptism, Bible Studies. Even worldly things can be on our list: sports teams (after all how many of us have bets on who will win the game today?), our favorite bands or music artists, our favorite friends or places to eat. Saint Paul says what he would place first and foremost. He would place Gospel of first importance, number one on his list no matter what. Why? After all Pastor, it's not even Easter, why talk about Jesus' resurrection?

Need JC Resurrection for our Lives today, otherwise still dead in sins

Because of how vital it is for our lives today. It is the very basis of our faith that we have been granted. The very hope that we have as Christians. Paul does not mention but rather implies Jesus' death upon the cross, shedding His precious blood as payment for our sins, our faults and failures that we still commit now and today. After all, in order to rise from the dead, you must first be dead. But without Jesus' resurrection, His death means nothing. Many good men die noble deaths, without the resurrection, Jesus is merely another good man dying another noble death. This would do us no good whatsoever Jesus' resurrection is proof that our sins are forgiven, that our souls are saved. It is the Father's "Yes" to the Son's cry of "It is Finished." So, what impact does that have on us today?

Many people would say that it does not make any difference. Jesus died over two-thousand years ago. How can an executed Galilean make a difference in our lives today? Some even go so far as to say that there is no resurrection of the dead. They say that we die and that is it. Or if we do rise, we rise only in a spiritual type of way. Some even go so far as to say that Jesus did not really die and rise again, or even live at all. Without the new life that Christ gives to us by His resurrection from the dead, our sinful nature still has full and complete control over us. As Saint Paul writes "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.¹" Still in our sins, even today. We lie, we cheat, we steal. We sleep in on Sunday mornings and not go to church. We are mean to our moms and dads. We disrespect those in authority over us. We put everything else first on our list other than God and the Gospel that He has given to us. This is a very sobering fact. If

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (1 Co 15:17). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

Christ has not been raised, if He is still dead in the tomb, that means that there is no payment for our sins. We are still under the full wrath of God for all of our sins. We are damned to the fires of hell forever and there is nothing that we can do about it. There is no mercy and grace to be had. God justly has condemned us because of our many great and grievous sins.

Need JC Resurrection for our Future lives (Hope that we have, BC JC Raised so too us, Resurrection is first fruits (implies other fruits to come)

If Jesus had not been raised, we are of people most to be pitied. Because the very basis of our Christian faith and hope is the resurrection. If we have hope in Christ only in this life, if there is no resurrection to the bliss of heaven, we have made a sad choice. We have denied ourselves, we have sacrificed, we have suffered, always hoping that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy of being compared with eternal bliss and glory.

That hope proves to be an idle dream if the words at the close of the creed, “the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting,” were never true—what a miserable end to a great hope and a dedicated life! No wonder Paul says, “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.” What fools to have counted on that hope if there is no resurrection!²

But the fact is that the empty tomb and the living body of Jesus Christ prove that there is a resurrection. It proves that we are not condemned because of our sins before God. But there is a resurrection! Christ has arisen as the first fruits of them that sleep. The fact of the resurrection is based on the eye witness

² Toppe, C. (1987). [1 Corinthians](#) (p. 146). Northwestern Pub. House.

accounts of those who were there. See what Saint Paul says, “He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ³You do not believe me, talk with Peter or the other Apostles, talk with the over five hundred many of whom are still alive! In fact, the resurrection is essential to the faith and hope that we hold as Christians.

Our suffering, pain, and troubles in this life are worth it because they do not compare with the glory that is to come for us in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. The loved ones that we have buried, our friends, moms, dads, grandparents, we bury into the ground, mourning their loss but knowing that we will see them again. All who have died and gone to our Lord’s nearer presence, will indeed rise again to life everlasting. How do we know this? Because Christ Himself rose! The tomb is empty. The dead will rise because Christ Himself has arisen! Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, all of your sins are indeed forgiven. You are no longer under the full wrath and judgement of God. All of the condemnation has been removed. Your condemnation, your shame, your guilt, has been removed from you forever because it was laid on Jesus Christ who bore it in your stead. You are no longer damned to the fires of hell forever but have been united with God as His dear and beloved child.

Is there anything greater than this? No! This beautiful Gospel is indeed of first importance.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (1 Co 15:5–8). (2016). Crossway Bibles.