

Resurrection is the Lynchpin of The Gospel

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On Sunday, the Spirit led us to examine the vital importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, even as part of the Gospel.

To overlook or doubt resurrection is really to doubt salvation itself.

If we think about it, wasn't the whole purpose of Christ's sacrifice to bring new life?

Wasn't it to set man free from his bondage to sin, so that He could live at peace with God forever?

If there is no resurrection, there is no eternal life,... and we could argue that eternal life is the very reason Christ died in our stead.

Tonight, the Spirit wants us to revisit parts of our main passage from Sunday, and as we do He has some branches for us to take, as a wonderful reminder of our great hope of resurrection in Jesus Christ.

And first, I'd like to share a passage I read this morning in Psalms, as part of my Bible reading.

It says so much, and includes the hope of resurrection by faith in our Lord...

Ps 73:21-26 *When my heart was embittered
And I was pierced within,
22 Then I was senseless and ignorant;
I was like a beast before You.
23 Nevertheless I am continually with You;
You have taken hold of my right hand.
24 With Your counsel You will guide me,
And afterward receive me to glory.*

*25 Whom have I in heaven but You?
And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.
26 My flesh and my heart may fail,
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Let that encourage you today!

God knows our weakness, and as we fail in flesh and heart, our faithful God holds us up. Our Heavenly Father is always there with us, and HE is our strength!

But, of what value would this be without the hope of resurrection to eternal life one day?

1Co 15:1 *Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,
1Co 15:2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.*

“in vain” - to Paul, Christ’s resurrection was fundamental to the faith; he was saying that if Christ **wasn’t** resurrected, then our faith is worthless.

As we saw on Sunday, this theme is carried throughout this entire chapter.

1Co 15:3 *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures**,*
1Co 15:4 *and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day **according to the Scriptures**,*

We must never forget,... the sacrifice of our Lord, and His resurrection, were predicted for us throughout the Old Testament!

The idea of resurrection, for example, should not have been doubted.

It should not have been a surprise to the Jews, who knew the Old Testament...

... although, it apparently was doubted by some of the Gentile believers in Corinth, who possibly didn't know the Old Testament scriptures.

John 8:56 *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”*

When Jesus appeared to a couple of the disciples right after His resurrection, it was on the road to Emmaus. And even though He walked right up to them and spoke with them, they didn't know it was Him.

What did the risen Lord teach them on this walk? - **That all the things that happened to Him were prophesied in Holy Scripture!**

Luke 24:25-32 And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. 29 But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. 30 When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

There we see support of Paul's point in 1Co 15; all these things happened according to the OT scriptures.

It's certainly possible that one of the scriptures Jesus reminded them of was when Abraham was tested by God to sacrifice his only son Isaac.

There is no greater "type" in the scriptures, foreshadowing the way God would give up His own Son one day, as the Savior of the world.

In Gen 22, we see several allusions to Jesus and His sacrifice, and even to Abraham's hope in the resurrection.

And for those of you who are new to the Word of God, remember the book of Genesis was written around 1500 B.C.!

Gen 22:1-14 *Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*

4 On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. 5 Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you."

6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son (here we see the son carrying the wood for his own sacrifice, sound like Jesus carrying His own cross to his sacrifice?), and he

took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.

7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

*9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. (here we see Abraham's **willingness in his heart** to follow through on this... in his mind he had already given him up... so what did God do? - in a way, He gave him his son back from the dead)*

11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

By the way, can't we now confidently say the following?...

"Dear God, now I know that You love me, because You have not withheld your Son, your only Son, from me!!"

If God could conclude this from Abraham's actions, we can conclude this from God's actions!! (what greater proof is there of God's love for us?!)

12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.

(notice the ram was caught by his horns in a thicket, which means he was crowned with thorns on his head; another picture of what the Messiah would endure one day)

14 Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the Lord it will be provided."

Abraham trusted God.

Abraham knew God's promises, and he knew God would find a way to give him the generations promised to come from Isaac, **maybe even by resurrection!**

It's odd that some Jews don't believe in the resurrection, when even "the father of their faith", Abraham, did.

And this was confirmed to be Abraham's hope in the book of Hebrews.

Heb 11:17-19 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered that God*

is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

There we see Isaac was a "type" of our resurrected Lord.

And to not believe in the resurrection of Christ defeats the whole purpose of a sacrifice being made!

As our title to this lesson states, and as came out on Sunday, resurrection is the lynchpin to the Gospel, even.

If there were no life after death, then what value would such a great sacrifice be?!

But because life does NOT end after this life, and there IS a judgment with God to come, God did something drastic and lovely to save us.

It was all for the resurrection to eternal life.

Again:

1Co 15:3 *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures**,*
[OT prophesied it]

1Co 15:4 *and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day **according to the Scriptures**,*

On the road to Emmaus, maybe Jesus also reminded the two disciples of what David said in the Psalms:

Ps 16:10 *For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.*

Or maybe He reminded them about Jonah being in the belly of the fish 3 days, before being given new life, so to speak.

Jonah 1:17 *And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.*

Back to our main passage:

1Co 15:5 *and that He appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve.*

1Co 15:6 *After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;*

1Co 15:7 *then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;*

1Co 15:8 *and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*

So Paul goes on to say, if there is even a Christ, and even all these eyewitnesses to His resurrection, how do some of you deny it?

Look at vs. 12:

1Co 15:12 *Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

There were clearly lies being spread in the church of Corinth, making some people doubt the resurrection.

But Paul is reminding them that the Resurrection is the very lynchpin of the Gospel!

Ro 4:25 *He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.*

As the Spirit reminded us on Sunday, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was proof that God had accepted His sacrifice, and therefore, God would be just in justifying the ungodly!

Rom 5:6-9 *For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*
(even the possibility of facing the wrath of God implies there is a resurrection after this life)

And there we also see, without Jesus' resurrection, there would be no justification of life to us!

What life? - Eternal life!

And the resurrection is the proof that God fully accepted Jesus' sacrifice for us.

It was good and perfect in God's eyes, so now whoever places their hope in Christ will share in His resurrection life!

Paul goes on to elaborate how hopeless life would be if there were no resurrection...

1Co 15:13 *But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;*

1Co 15:14 *and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is **vain**, your faith also is **vain**.*

1Co 15:15 *Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.*

1Co 15:16 *For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;*

1Co 15:17 *and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*

Man is still trapped in his sins if Jesus' sacrifice was not proven to be acceptable to God.

Man has no hope on his own, without Christ, the acceptable sacrifice.

Jn 8:24 *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, **you will die in your sins.**”*

Paul's argument is that we are wasting our time if there is no resurrection, because that means there is no hope, and nothing else to live for but this short life.

1Co 15:16 *For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;*

1Co 15:17 *and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*

1Co 15:19 *If we have hoped in Christ in this life **only**, we are of all men most to be pitied.*

“in this life only” - assuming there is no resurrection, we’d have nothing to look forward to (even Jesus would still be in the grave, not seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven)

It's actual quite foolish to consider all Christ did on the cross was for nothing of eternal value.

And then Paul declares boldly against these false presumptions...

1Co 15:20 *But now Christ **has been** raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.*

1Co 15:21 *For since by a man came death [Adam], by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.*

1Co 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*

Paul makes his argument beautifully in Rom 6...

Ro 6:3 *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?*

Ro 6:4 *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that **as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.***

Ro 6:5 *For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

Ro 6:6 *knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;*

Ro 6:7 *for he who has died is freed from sin.*

Ro 6:8 *Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,*

Ro 6:9 *knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.*

Ro 6:10 *For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

Ro 6:11 *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, **but alive to God in Christ Jesus.***

Believe in the Resurrection! That's kind of the whole point!

1Co 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*

1Co 15:23 *But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,*

1Co 15:24 *then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.*

1Co 15:25 *For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.*

1Co 15:26 *The last enemy that will be abolished is death.*

Therefore:

1Co 15:34 *Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have **no knowledge** of God. I speak this to your shame.*

1Co 15:35 *But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"*

1Co 15:36 *You fool! That which you sow (think of planting a seed in the ground; that's what sowing is) **does not come to life unless it dies;***

1Co 15:37 *and that which you sow, **you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.***

1Co 15:38 *But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.*

A new body is in store after death; a miraculous new form chosen by God for the fruit to come forth.

A seed going into the ground **actually dies first**, and then new life comes forth from it.

What a picture of the supernatural resurrection from the dead, by God's hand alone.

Jesus used this analogy as He was preparing Himself to face the cross, and embracing His Father's plan to bring new life.

John 12:23-24 *And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless*

a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Back to our main passage:

1Co 15:36 *You fool! That which you sow (think of planting a seed in the ground; that's what sowing is) does not come to life unless it dies;*

1Co 15:37 *and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.*

1Co 15:38 *But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.*

The new life in resurrection is given by God alone, in the new form that God ordains.

And it will be NEW, not like the old seed that died, but NEW life shall spring forth, and a new body.

1Co 15:39 *All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.*

1Co 15:40 *There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.*

1Co 15:41 *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.*

1Co 15:42 *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body;*

Our perishable body goes into the ground one day when we die, just like a seed is sown and buried.

And God raises us again, into an imperishable body forever and ever with Jesus.

1Co 15:43 *it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;*

1Co 15:44 *it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

1Co 15:45 *So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

1Co 15:46 *However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.*

1Co 15:47 *The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.*

1Co 15:48 *As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.*

1Co 15:49 *Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.*

1Co 15:50 *Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

This is why there must be a resurrection, and Jesus opened the gates for that for all of us.

1Co 15:51 *Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,*

1Co 15:52 *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

This is a reference to the Rapture of the Church, which one generation will get to experience uniquely.

But either way...

1Co 15:53 *For this perishable **must** put on the imperishable, and this mortal **must** put on immortality.*

1Co 15:54 *But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.*

Again, **that was the whole point for Jesus' sacrifice;** that through Him and His perfect, holy sacrifice, death would be defeated for all time, which means **eternal life for those who believe in Him.**

We have a hope that cannot be taken away, and **we've been given the proof to guarantee that hope.**

Peter called it a living hope... it's what gives us hope and courage each day we rise out of bed.

1Pe 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to **a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

1Pe 1:4 *to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

1Pe 1:5 *who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

1Pe 1:6 *In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,*

1Pe 1:7 *so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

1Pe 1:8 *and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,*

1Pe 1:9 *obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

If death has been defeated by Christ, that implies life goes on forever... right?

1Co 15:55 *“O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”*

1Co 15:56 *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;*

1Co 15:57 *but thanks be to God, who gives us the **victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1Co 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, (this is our motivation when we wake in the morning... BECAUSE of the resurrection we are motivated to...) be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is **not in vain** in the Lord.*

So Paul puts to rest the doubters and the haters.

And his passion is reserved for us in the scriptures, as the word of God inspired, **to remind us of why we live, and why we have no fear to die.**

For when we die, we die in the Lord's arms, with the Lord's power and eternal life granted to us by grace.

That's why we can rightly say, death is just a transition for us, from one place to the next, to His abode in heaven, because Christ defeated sin and death once for all.

And His resurrection proved that to the whole world, and especially to us who believe.

1 Tim 4:10 *For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.*