

Slide 1

Christ's Resurrection Makes All The Difference

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Introduction

1. What drives your faith?
2. What is it that keeps you pressing toward the goal for that which Paul described as "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus?" (Philippians 3:14).
3. Why, as a Christian would you want to be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord?" (1 Corinthians 15:58).
4. I think the reason can be summed up in a hymn written just 51 years ago by Bill and Gloria Gaither. Here are the lyrics:

God sent His son, they called Him, Jesus;
He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives!

How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance:
This child can face uncertain days because He Lives!

And then one day, I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain;
And then, as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives!

Chorus

**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!**

5. The fact that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, that He lives, makes all the difference in the world.
6. It is a fact disputed by some who lived in the city of Corinth in the middle of the first century, but a fact which the apostle Paul defended.
7. Tonight, I would like for us to examine the arguments which Paul makes to the Corinthians in order to see the difference the resurrection makes for us.

Slide 2

I. Because Jesus Has Risen From the Dead . . .

A. OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN

“and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” (v. 17)

1. Every human being of accountable age who has ever walked this planet is guilty of sin (Romans 3:10, 23).

“There is none righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10).

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

2. Our sin stands as a barrier between ourselves and a holy God.
3. Those sins destine us to face the wrath of God.

“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,” (Colossians 3:5–6, NASB95).

4. The foundation of every other blessing from God is that God no longer holds our sins against us — everything is dependent upon our forgiveness.
5. Paul states that if the resurrection of Jesus never took place then we still carry around the guilt and consequences of our sin.
6. If the death of Jesus on the cross is what takes away our sin, if he “died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3), then how is His resurrection connected to our forgiveness?
7. In Romans 4:25, Paul tells us not only was Jesus “delivered over because of our transgressions,” but He was also “raised for (for the sake of) our justification.”
8. Or as he writes in Romans 5:10, “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”
9. God raised Jesus from the dead to declare our forgiveness valid and to vindicate His Son’s righteousness and to celebrate His work of justification.
10. Those of us who are here tonight need God’s forgiveness — we long for it.
11. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we are no longer in our sins.

Slide 3**B. OUR FAITH IS VICTORIOUS**

“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain” (v. 14).

1. What does Paul mean when he says our faith is vain?
2. He means it is worthless, futile, useless, foolish — it has no real value.
3. None of us want to put our faith in something or someone and then find that it is worthless or futile.
4. We all want someone we can trust, but all of us, at one time or another, have most likely been let down by someone we trusted.
5. I believe that all of us long for someone we can count on in the thick and

thin of our lives.

- a. Someone who is absolutely trustworthy.
- b. Someone who won't let us down.
- c. Someone, in whom if we put our faith, we will not later learn that it wasn't in vain.

7. Jesus Christ is that someone.

- a. His death proves that He loves us.

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39).

- b. His resurrection proves His power over every enemy of life.

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

8. Paul said, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

9. The apostle John wrote, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith” (1 John 5:4).

- Your faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not vain, it is victorious.

Slide 4

C. THE APOSTLES ARE FAITHFUL WITNESSES OF GOD

“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.” (v. 15)

- 1. What does the term “false witness,” reveal to you?
- 2. It lets me know that I have been misled by someone who has declared

something to be true when it is false or false when it is true.

3. On the evening following our Lord's resurrection, Luke tells us that Jesus appeared to the apostles and spoke the words which we find in chapter 24, verses 46-48:

"Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24:46-48, NASB95)

4. As these same apostles spoke to others, they declared themselves to be witnesses:

- a. Peter to the crowd at the temple following the healing of the lame man in Acts 3:

"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses." (Acts 3:13-15)

- b. Peter and the apostles to the Jewish Sanhedrin in Acts 5:

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." (Acts 5:30-32)

- c. Peter to Cornelius and those assembled in his house in Caesarea (Acts 10):

"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the

Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead." (Acts 10:38–41, NASB95)

5. False witnesses are not generally willing to die for a lie, especially not twelve of them.
6. Each of the apostles, except for the apostle John, died for those things to which they bore witness.
7. Have you ever asked . . .
 - a. A doctor, "who would you have do the surgery if it were you?"
 - b. An investment counselor, "where do you have your money?"
8. Because of their truthful witness concerning the resurrection of Jesus, we too have a confident hope in our own resurrection.

Slide 5

D. WE ARE TO BE ENVIED

"If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied." (v. 19)

1. It is true — if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then all of our self-denial, our righteous living and the good we do toward those around us is for this life only — there is nothing beyond the grave.
2. If the body of Christ still lies somewhere in a tomb then everything we have done to this point is based upon a delusion, and as Paul said, "we are of all men most to be pitied."
3. However, because He lives and reigns as Lord and King at the right hand of our heavenly Father, our lives have new meaning and value and

significance.

4. We are to be envied because as Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, any “momentary, light affliction” we are facing in this world “is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17).
5. I believe that all of us in this room tonight long to know that when we reach the end of our journey our lives will have been well spent.
 - a. We want to know that our lives have counted for something, that they have been significant and useful.
 - b. We don't want to come to the final day of our life and say, “it was all in vain, empty, pointless.”
6. I also believe that this is why Paul ends this chapter on the resurrection with his exhortation, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Slide 6

E. THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP IN CHRIST ARE ALIVE

“Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (v. 18).

1. Because Jesus lives, we too shall live, even after we die.
2. When Jesus arrived with His disciples at the little town of Bethany following the death of Lazarus, Martha, his sister, was the first to come out to meet Jesus.
3. She said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You” (John 11:21-22).
4. Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again” (John 11:23).
5. Martha then said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day” (John 11:24).

3. Jesus then responded to her with these words, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).
4. Those who have "fallen asleep in Christ" who have died as Christians are alive — they will live forever.

Conclusion

1. Jesus Christ lives! Because He lives . . .
 - a. My sins are forgiven.
 - b. I live a victorious faith which overcomes this world.
 - c. I know the things I read in Scripture are true.
 - d. I live a life that is truly enviable.
 - e. I will be alive even after I die.
2. Because He lives . . .
 - a. I can face tomorrow.
 - b. All fear is gone.
 - c. I know that He holds my future.
 - d. Life is truly worth living, just because He lives!
3. What about you, do you have a life which is worth living?
4. Will you reach the end of your life and be able to say I have lived a full, significant life — one of great worth?
5. If not, why not come to Jesus Christ right now?