

Life Link

Title: "Because He Lives"

Big Idea: We are here today not because of our love just gather together. Or our need to fellowship with others, We are not here today to hear someone speak or to tell us that we are sinners and we are all going to spend eternity separated from God because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve or our own disobedience. We are here today "Because He Lives" and "Because He Lives" we can face not only tomorrow but face eternity because of our redemption from the bondage of sin. Jesus paid it all and to Him we owe. This morning let's see the "Revelation of Resurrection" and "Reality of the Resurrection", and "Relevance of the Resurrection".

Read Sermon Text:

1 **Corinthians 15:12-20** <The Risen Christ, Our Hope>

(cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18)

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? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. 20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. NKJV

1. Revelation of Resurrection

1 Cor 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? NKJV

Jesus said to His disciples on several occasions that He was to die and would be raised from the dead and Paul used this as a way to illustrate to the Corinthians and to us that if Jesus had not risen from the grave then the Corinthians and all those who believed that Jesus was and is the Messiah was nothing more than a man who died on a cross, buried in a barrowed tomb and who's remains are still there. Our preaching if Christ is did not risen then our preaching, our faith, out hope is wasted and we are still in out sin and the grave is the only expectation. But, the Revelation of the Resurrection is the reality of all that Jesus had taught.

Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. NKJV

John 10:17-18 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." NKJV

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. NKJV

Acts 2:24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. NKJV

Acts 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. NKJV

Acts 3:15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. NKJV

Acts 3:26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." NKJV

Romans 4:24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, NKJV

Romans 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. NKJV

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, NKJV

1 Corinthians 15:12 <The Risen Christ, Our Hope>
(cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18) 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? NKJV

Colossians 2:12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. NKJV

1 Peter 3:18 <Christ's Suffering and Ours> 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, NKJV

Text Illustration:

John 14:6 – "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'"

This is so hard for prideful people to accept.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer had a different perspective: "The fact that Jesus Christ died is more important than the fact that I shall die, and the fact that Jesus Christ rose from

the dead is the sole ground of my hope that I, too, shall be raised on the Last Day. Our salvation is “external to us.” I find no salvation in my life history, but only in the history of Jesus Christ. Only he who allows himself to be found in Jesus Christ, in his incarnation, his cross, and his resurrection, is with God and God with him” (Life Together). Here he articulates the orthodox Christian perspective: we cannot save ourselves; salvation lies outside ourselves, in events that have happened in history, particularly the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2. Reality of the Resurrection

Illustration: Chuck Colson answers those who suggest that the disciples lied about the resurrection, “I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world — and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible. (Source: The Herald Journal)

1 Corinthians 15:1-10 <The Risen Christ, Faith's Reality>

(cf. Mark 16:9-20)

15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. NKJV

1 Cor 15:14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. NKJV

Acts 10:41 not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. NKJV

Text Illustration: RAVI ZACHARIAS: CHANGED LIVES SHOW THE TRUTH OF CHRIST

In his book *Has Christianity Failed You?* Ravi Zacharias points to one of the greatest proofs for the truth of Christ and the reality of his resurrection: the changed lives of Christians. He writes:

"During the course of nearly 40 years, I have traveled to virtually every continent and seen or heard some of the most amazing testimonies of God's intervention in the most extreme circumstances. I have seen hardened criminals touched by the message of Jesus Christ and their hearts turned toward good in a way that no amount of rehabilitation could have accomplished. I have seen ardent followers of radical belief systems turned from being violent, brutal terrorists to becoming mild, tenderhearted followers of Jesus Christ. I have seen nations where the gospel, banned and silenced by governments, has nevertheless conquered the ethos and mind-set of an entire culture."

Then in his own words, Zacharias lists examples of Christ's power to transform lives:

"In the middle of the twentieth century, after destroying all of the Christian seminary libraries in the country, Chairman Mao declared that...Christianity had been permanently removed from China, never to make a return. On Easter Sunday in 2009, [however] the leading English language newspaper in Hong Kong published a picture of Tiananmen Square on page 1, with Jesus replacing Chairman Mao's picture on the gigantic banner, and the words "Christ is Risen" below it.

"I have also been in the Middle East and marveled at the commitment of young people who have risked their lives to attend a Bible study...I have talked to CEOs of large companies in Islamic nations who testify to seeing Jesus in visions and dreams and wonder what it all means. The British author A. N. Wilson, who only a few years ago was known for his scathing attacks on Christianity...celebrated Easter [in 2009] at a church with a group of other church members, proclaiming that that the story of the Jesus of the Gospels is the only story that makes sense out of life and its challenges. [Wilson said], 'My own return to faith has surprised none more than myself...My belief has come about in large measure because of the lives and examples of people I have known—not the famous, not saints, but friends and relations who have lived, and faced death, in light of the resurrection story, or in the quiet acceptance that they have a future after they die.'

"Matthew Parris [a British atheist who visited Malawi in 2008] wrote an article titled "As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God." [Parris wrote], 'I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa...I used to avoid this truth...but Christians black and white, working in Africa, do heal the sick, do teach people to read and write; and only the severest kind of secularist could see a mission hospital or school and say the world would be better without it."

[Ravi Zacharias, Has Christianity Failed You? (Zondervan, 2010), pp. 105-107. From a sermon by Michael McCartney, Experience the Spirit in the Resurrection, 5/11/2011]

3. Relevance of the Resurrection

1 Cor 15:20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. NKJV

Text Illustration: ALL THE DIFFERENCE

- All but four of the major world religions are based on mere philosophical propositions. Of the four that are based on personalities rather than philosophies, only Christianity claims an empty tomb for its founder.
- In 1900 B.C. Judaism's Father Abraham died.

- In 483 B.C. Buddhist writings say Buddha died “with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind.”
- June 6, 632 A.D. Mohammed died.
- In 33 A.D. Jesus died but came back to life appearing to 500 people over a period of 40 days.

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.” (I Corinthians, 15:14). Source: SermonCentral staff. Citation: McDowell, Josh. Evidence that Demands a Verdict. Page 180. San Bernadino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1979

Conclusion: It was not the Religious leaders that crucified Jesus, nor the Romans, or the angry mob crying for His death. It was not the nails that held Him to the old rugged cross or the ropes that tied Him to that tree. It was not the crown of thorns that took His life, or the nails in His hands and feet, or the spear that pierced His side nor the loss of blood. It was our sin that caused the death of Jesus, it was His love for us that kept Him on the cross and it was God's mercy that forgave us in order that we could have fellowship with our creator, our heavenly Father. It was the Resurrection from the dead that gives us hope "Because He Lives".