

Title: Grave Mistake: If Christ Didn't Rise

Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:1-9, 12-19, 32-34

Summary:

I. Question: How has Jesus risen from the dead?

1. Because of the testimony of the Scriptures
2. Because of the testimony of eyewitnesses of His appearances.

II. Question: What if you don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus and what if Jesus hasn't resurrected?

1. Our preaching would be in vain.
2. Our faith would be futile
3. Christ's followers would be deemed as liars and deceivers.
4. We are still in our sins.
5. There is no hope of eternal life
6. There is no reason to live a holy life.

III. Question: Do you know where you are going?

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
- How is the resurrection of Jesus the crux of Christianity?
- How does the past fulfillment of many prophecies about Jesus bolster your faith today in who God is and His promises?
- James 1:22 admonishes us to be “doers of the Word.” What next steps will you take in response to the truths you have been exposed to?

Introduction

Every person in history has died except for one: Jesus Christ.

- What's the difference His resurrection. His tomb is empty.

Jesus' resurrection

- the crux of Christianity.
- Without the resurrection, Christianity is merely a philosophy like any other.
- It is not possible to be a Christian who doesn't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Passage:

1 Corinthians 15:1-9

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

1 Corinthians 15:32-34

What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

EXPOSITION

I. Question: How has Jesus risen from the dead?

1. Because of the testimony of the Scriptures

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

- the Old Testament - all the prophecies spoke of Jesus' resurrection.
 - Written over a span of 1,000 years.

Psalms 16:10

For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

Isaiah 53:10

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.

Hosea 6:3

- Proof of the resurrection is found in 100+ fulfilled prophecies.
 - Contrast: trying to fulfill even just 8 prophecies: chance of 1 x 10 to 17th power.

2. Because of the testimony of eyewitnesses of His appearances.

1 Corinthians 15:5-8

and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

- After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to many
 - Many of these eye witnesses were still alive at the time these letters were written by Paul.
- List in passage:
 - Peter
 - 500
 - James
 - Jesus' half-brother
 - Apostles
 - Paul
 - Was a Pharisee, who was a religious leader who knew all the Scriptures and had previously followed them legalistically.

Arguments against the resurrection:

- these eyewitnesses saw hallucinations or were furthering a deception created by them.
- BUT:
 - The disciples were not the kind of people to defeat Roman soldiers and steal Jesus' body.
 - They were scared and merely commoners.
 - Where was the Roman garrison? (if they slept, would be punishable by death)
 - Many others believed in Jesus
 - Why would the disciples be willing to leave their Jewish customs for new customs of Christianity?

II: Question: What if you don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus and what if Jesus hasn't resurrected?

1. Our preaching would be in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:14

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

2. Our faith would be futile

1 Corinthians 15:17

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

- Faith is no better than its object.
 - If Jesus was dead, then our faith would be of no value.

Romans 1:4

and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

3. Christ's followers would be deemed as liars and deceivers.

1 Corinthians 15:19

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

- But the disciples were willing to die for Christ (and many did).
- Compare: all the other religious leaders of the world did not die for their faith.
 - Many other religious leaders died because people were trying to kill them. But not for their beliefs.

4. We are still in our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:17

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

- With no resurrection, then there is no Savior, then we are still in our sins.
- Our sins deserve nothing but judgment.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 4:25

who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

- the death of Christ is a reminder that He forgave us.
- the resurrection of Christ is a reminder that the sacrifice given was accepted by God.

5. There is no hope of eternal life

1 Corinthians 15:18

Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

- Without resurrection, then there is no hope after death.
- With Christ's resurrection, there is hope.
 - Biblical Hope = certain fact (not wishful thinking)

6. There is no reason to live a holy life.

1 Corinthians 15:32

What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

- If Jesus had not resurrected, then we are the most foolish people in the world.
 - If Jesus is not alive, then He cannot help us now.
- But Jesus has walked out of the grave! His promises are sure!

III. Question for you: Do you know where you are going?

- Have you made Jesus Lord and Savior of your life?
 - Do you believe that Jesus has resurrected and He is alive?