

A Simple Guide to Big Words

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1–19

Topic: Resurrection

Big Idea: The resurrection of Christ proved victory over sin and death and began the restoration of all things.

Application Point: The believer can live a life marked by hope, not just a heavenly hope, but a “right now” hope. The resurrection doesn’t mean Christians get to check out, but instead they should be more committed to pursuing the good and worthy things that will last into eternity.

Talking Points:

1. In this passage, Paul reminds the reader of the gospel message. His message hasn’t changed. It is the same truth that saved them and the same truth that is sanctifying them (1 Corinthians 15:1–2). Christ died for our sins, as our atoning sacrifice, our propitiation (v. 3). He was buried and raised from the dead (v. 4). It was a bodily resurrection, and his risen body was witnessed by hundreds of people (vv. 5–7). Paul humbly acknowledges that God even revealed himself to Paul, who was an enemy of those who believed in Jesus. In spite of it, Paul was transformed by God’s grace and empowered by the Spirit to preach boldly as an apostle, leading many to salvation in Jesus (vv. 8–11). But some in the community were denying the resurrection. Paul is like, “Are you kidding me?” If there is no resurrection, then Christ didn’t rise, and everything we believe in is wrong (vv. 12–18). If Christ was not resurrected, then we remain in our sin (v. 17). If we only get as far as the crucifixion, we will fail to understand that it was the resurrection that ultimately proved God’s victory over sin and death.
2. Charles Spurgeon said, “If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, we are preaching a falsehood. If he did not rise from the dead, you are believing a falsehood, and our preaching and your believing are nothing but vanity. ... If Jesus Christ is not risen, he has done nothing for you; you are not saved, you are not pardoned, you are not renewed. It is all a myth, all a piece of deceit. If that fact be given up, that Christ rose from the dead, everything connected with salvation is also given up”. The resurrection is a foundational truth for all we believe.
3. Jesus’s resurrection and ours is not just a spiritual resurrection, in which we become some disembodied blob that floats around. Just as Jesus rose in redeemed bodily form from the grave, so will we. It is not impressive that Jesus died; everybody dies. It is a miracle that he was resurrected.
4. As believers, we don’t always know what to do with the resurrection. We understand the crucifixion, but the resurrection is so out of our normal life experience that it is hard to comprehend. The resurrection accomplished different things than the crucifixion. The crucifixion atoned for our sin, it proved Jesus was human, and it satisfied God’s wrath. The resurrection claimed the victory over sin, proved that Jesus was divine, and showed God’s power. The cross is focused on the sacrifice, and the resurrection magnifies the restoration. Without the resurrection, our healing and restoration would be incomplete. For every patient we watch be saved by the quick-thinking doctors of Grey’s Anatomy or even in the nonfiction world we live in, those fixes are only temporary. Those people still die, eventually. Every person will die someday. It’s not a feel-good story if we only view it through the lens of crucifixion. However, we know death isn’t the end of the story. Jesus’s work of salvation did not end with death. The final step in our transformation doesn’t end with the grave but with a resurrected life where all the good in this life is made better and all the bad is gone. That is the beauty and hope of resurrection.
5. There is a saying that one can become “so heavenly minded they are no earthly good.” There are believers who think that the ultimate end is heaven, and they just have to suffer through life on earth, but this mindset is caused by of a poor understanding of the resurrection. The goal of the believer is not to get to heaven but to be transformed by the Spirit to reflect Jesus. The end goal is not an otherworldly heaven, but a restored and redeemed humanity and earth. What you do with your body in the present matters because God has a great future in store for it. When Paul wrote his great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, he didn’t end by saying, ‘So let’s celebrate the great future life that awaits us.’ He ended by saying, ‘So get on with your work because you know that in the Lord it won’t go to waste.’ The resurrection should influence our lives not only for our eternal future, but in a way the changes how we live every day.