“If there be no Resurrection”



(WHAT IF CHRIST NEVER AROSE?)
I Corinthians 15:12-23
4-17-2022

INTRODUCTION: (v. 1-11)

***We should greatly appreciate the resurrection of Christ!**

We will gain a greater appreciation for His resurrection
when we consider what our life would be like if He never arose.

If Christ never arose, there would be:

I. No Substance to Our Faith (v. 14)

II. No Truth to Our Message (v. 15)

III. No Forgiveness of Our Sins (v. 17)

IV. No Hope for Our Future (v. 18)

V. No Purpose to Our Life (v. 19)

CONCLUSION: (v. 20-23 & I Corinthians 15:58)

Because Jesus is alive, we should realize that our labors for Him are not in vain!
1 Cor. 15:58 – “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

"If there be no Resurrection"



(WHAT IF CHRIST NEVER AROSE?)
I Corinthians 15:12-23
4-17-2022

INTRODUCTION: (v. 1-11)

***We should greatly appreciate the resurrection of Christ!**

We will gain a greater appreciation for His resurrection
when we consider what our life would be like if He never arose.

If Christ never arose, there would be:

I. No _____ to Our Faith (v. 14)

II. No _____ to Our Message (v. 15)

III. No _____ of Our Sins (v. 17)

IV. No _____ for Our Future (v. 18)

V. No _____ to Our Life (v. 19)

CONCLUSION: (v. 20-23 & I Corinthians 15:58)

Because Jesus is alive, we should realize that our labors for Him are not in vain!
1 Cor. 15:58 – "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

“If there be no Resurrection”

(WHAT IF CHRIST NEVER AROSE?)
I Corinthians 15:12-23
4-17-2022

INTRODUCTION: (v. 1-11)

V. 12
The occasion which sparked Paul's defense of the Resurrection in I Cor. 15 was not that the Corinthians were denying Christ's resurrection, but that some at Corinth were denying the reality of a resurrection, period (i.e. the reality of the possibility of resurrection itself).

They, living in Corinth - a Greek city, were swallowing the liberal Hellenistic (Greek) philosophy (cp. v. 33) that there was no such thing as the resurrection of the dead (cp. Athens - Acts 17:32).

After Paul gave three factual proofs validating the authenticity of Christ's resurrection (#1 - their salvation (v. 1-2); #2 - the O.T. Scriptures (v. 3-4); #3 - the many witnesses (v. 5-11)) (cp. Wiersbe, p. 617), he now proceeds to answer the unthinkable question: "What if Christ never arose?"

Can you imagine what would be altered for the Christian if Christ never arose? Can you imagine the effect this would have on our beliefs, practices, and hopes for the future?

***We should greatly appreciate the resurrection of Christ!**

We will gain a greater appreciation for His resurrection when we consider what our life would be like if He never arose.

If Christ never arose, there would be:

I. No Substance to Our Faith (v. 14)

"Preaching" (Kerygma) does not refer to oral technique, but rather to the words of the proclamation (Gromacki, p. 186).

"Vain" - hollow, empty, void of real substance.

Faith is always based on fact. You do not trust a blind faith - a faith with no reality.

If no resurrection, our faith would be like a shell without the kernel, like husk without the corn, just full of hot air.

"Empty" = "Take out the resurrection, and there is nothing left" to Christianity.

II. No Truth to Our Message (v. 15)

To be a "false witness" is among the most serious of crimes. It is a breach of the ninth commandment - "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Ex. 21:16).

If being a false witness about another human being is bad, can you imagine how bad it is to be a false witness about God!

If telling a lie about man is wicked, the most hideous sin would be saying that God said something He did not say.

"There is a subtle difference between a liar and a false witness. A liar tells as true what he knows is false. A false witness tells as true what he believes is true, when really it is false" (Gromacki, p. 186).

Note of interest:

"God . . . raised up Christ."

The Bible declares that the entire Trinity was involved in the resurrection:

1. The Father - Ro. 10:9; Acts 2:24
2. The Spirit - I Pet. 3:18
3. The Son - Jn. 10:17, 18

"Vain" - a different word than in v. 14. This word means "useless," "futile," "purposeless," "fruitless."

"A dead Christ cannot do anything for anyone" (Gromacki, p. 187).

A dead Savior is no Savior at all!

III. No Forgiveness of Our Sins (v. 17)

"Ye are yet in our sins" -

Not only does God say "All have sinned" - i.e. that sin is in us, but that all are born in sin (Ps. 51:5).

Sin is that which not only infects the core of unregenerate man's inmost being, but he is overwhelmed by it. It surrounds his whole life. Sin, like quicksand, has man trapped.

Apart from the resurrection of Christ, no one would have life, but would be abiding in the sphere of death.

(NOTE: how our new resurrection life is contrasted with being dead in sin - SEE Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13)

One is either "in Christ" or "in sin and death".

If Christ did not arise, then no one could be joined to His life; hence, all would still be shackled to sin and death.

Christ's resurrection is what justifies (Rom. 4:25 - "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.")

IV. No Hope for Our Future (v. 18)

"Fallen asleep" = a euphemism for being dead; a softer way of referring to death (cp. v. 6).

When someone dies, they have the appearance of being asleep. God only uses the euphemism of "sleep" in reference to believers, never the lost. The reason is: the believer never dies (Jn. 11:26 - "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die").

Death is not the end, but the beginning; it is a mere departure; a transfer of residence; a promotion!

"Asleep in Christ" - SEE I Thess. 4:15, 16

The resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the believer cannot be separated.

To Paul, "they were Siamese twins or two sides of the same coin" (Gromacki, p. 185).

If Christ didn't arise from the dead, we would never see our loved ones again.

V. No Purpose to Our Life (v. 19)

"Most miserable" = most to be pitied.

If there was no resurrection, the world should feel sorry for us, because we sacrificed, served, witnessed, attended church, prayed, read our bibles, lived pure lives . . . all for nothing!

We would have believed in Christ and hoped for a future eternal life of bliss, only to find it to be a mirage or illusionary "pipe dream."

"The conclusion is obvious: why be a Christian if we have only suffering (and a false hope) in this life, and no future glory to anticipate?" (Wiersbe, p. 618).

(SEE Paul's mention of suffering in vv. 29-32).

Paul and his associates gave up "everything (position in life, including prestige, conveniences, and status) to travel all over the Roman world proclaiming a falsehood. They had gambled everything on Him and had lost!" (Gromacki, p. 187).

If Christ never arose, then Easter would be the most meaningless holiday of the year.

CONCLUSION: (v. 20-23)

NOTE: the parallel between the Jewish celebration of firstfruits and the resurrection of Christ as firstfruits (SEE Lev. 23:9-14).

The celebration of firstfruits began on Sunday, 7 days after Passover (typifying His blood shed and death) and unleavened bread (symbolizing how Christ's body did not undergo decay [corruption] in the tomb).

v. 20

"Firstfruits" - referred to the first ripe crops, etc., that were given to God with a promise of a greater harvest yet to follow (Prov. 3:9-10).

Christ being the firstfruits of the dead (cp. Rev. 1:5) is the first portion, first installment, pledge, or guarantee of resurrections yet to come (SEE: I Cor. 15:23).

v. 22

The resurrection is vitally important because Christ does not merely give us life, He is our life!

(Col. 3:4; cp. Gal. 2:20 - "Christ liveth in me.")

Jesus said: "I am the . . . life" (Jn. 14:6).

He proclaimed, "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn. 11:25).

John testified, "In Him was life (Jn. 1:4); "...We are in him that is true, even in His son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." (I Jn. 5:20).

The resurrection of Christ "is like the backbone of the body, for not only is it needed, but it is an absolute essential" (Welsh, "Conduct Becoming Saints" - RBP, p. 102)

If Christ never arose, there would be:

No substance to our faith

No truth to our message

No forgiveness of our sins

No hope for our future

No purpose to our life

"IT'S WORTH IT!"

I Corinthians 15:58

In adversity, trials etc. are you ever tempted to just give up? Quit? Has this thought ever entered your mind: "Living the Christian life - its just not worth it" Or you may ask yourself "does my labor for Christ really matter?" "Is it worth the effort I put into it?"

Context of I Cor.15:58: The Church at Corinth was listening to false teaching. Teaching that denied the resurrection. Not just the resurrection of Christ, but the concept of the resurrection itself. (The Greeks viewed the body as evil and therefore a resurrection of such a literal body was viewed as the most ungodly thing imaginable)

The result of such a Satanically inspired false doctrine would be to quit (give up). Verse 33

- Wrong friends lead to wrong beliefs, & wrong beliefs end in wrong actions.

After all, if Christ did not rise from the dead our preaching would be vain, and our faith would be vain (v.14). We would still be in our sins (v.17).

If Christ did not rise again - what right would you have to think you would? (we would have no living savior, no deliverer from sin & Hell).

What proof would we ever have that Jesus Christ was who He said he was (God incarnate)?

Read - I Cor.15:51-57: We have victory over death!
(v.57 - "giving" = present tense, emphasizing certainty)

Verse 58: "therefore" giving the conclusion; "because we have the victory over death and corruption....."

* YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT **YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD!**

THE LORD'S WORK IS WORTH EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY YOU PUT INTO IT!

"labor" = That which leads to exertion and results in fatigue & exhaustion.
cp. I Cor.15:15,16 "fellow laborers with Paul"
cp. I Tim. 5:17 "to labor in preaching & teaching"
cp. I Th. 1:3 "labor of love"

Paul said that he did not run in vain or toil in vain. Phil.2:16

"The Lord's chosen ones shall not toil in vain" (Is.65:23)

"vain" = Empty, without content, without result or profit, fruitless, ineffective.

ex. Giving a cup of cold water in Christ's name will bring with it a reward.

- Serving Christ's children is serving Christ Himself (Read Mt.25:31-46; *v.40,45.)
- Mary's anointing of Jesus with a years wages worth of perfume was not in vain. (Mt. 26:6-13).
  (Note: the disciples' response: "Why this waste?" and Jesus' answer)
- Israel who did not want to rebuild God's temple after the Babylonian captivity. They lived for self-interest (which proved to be vain; ex. "putting wages in bags with holes) The prophet Haggai calls on them to "consider your ways" (See Hag.1:2-8).

If you believe that your labor is not vain in the Lord you will make 3 resolutions regarding

your service for Jesus Christ:

I. I WILL NOT <u>QUIT</u> in my service for Christ!
("Steadfast")

Steadfast = settled, solid, permanent stable, persistent.
An ability to withstand assault.
This word is translated "settled" (Col.1:23) and "steadfast" (I Cor.7:37) in describing a strong determination in the heart. And the noun form is translated "ground" in I Tim.3:15 describing the Local Church as the pillar and ground (secure protector) of the truth.

We often use the expression to our children when they are fidgety: "Stay right where your are and don't move"; This is the idea Paul has in mind when commanding us to be steadfast, and unmovable.

BECAUSE WE SERVE A LIVING, RESURRECTED SAVIOR OUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN! THEREFORE <u>HANG IN THERE!</u> <u>STICK TO IT!</u> <u>DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!</u> <u>DON'T QUIT!</u> "Be not weary in well doing...we shall reap..."

How does one receive the ability to remain steadfast (to have such determination?) Does it come by ones own strength? No!

When King David trusted in his own self-sufficiency he wrongly said in his prosperity "I shall never be moved" (Ps. 30:6)
He later admitted "He (God) only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved" (Ps.62:2) Again in verse 6 he states "**I shall not be moved**". He said in Ps.13:4 that his enemies would rejoice if he was moved. (Ps.13:4)

II. I WILL NOT <u>MOVE</u> from my service for Christ!

("unmovable")

"unmovable" = to not change direction, or go from one place to another, to flee (Is.22:3), or to remove - ex. removing the ancient landmarks (Dt.19:14).

Today we a living in a society that thrives on change (everything needs to be new or different) The media is pumping into our minds one word - dissatisfaction (ex. with yourself "you need to buy this product to really be glamorous, masculine etc.) The grass is described as being greener on the other side of the fence, and dissatisfaction is the result - either with ones wife, job, parents, standards, etc.)

Some things do need changing. And some things must never change. You must never be distracted (even with good things) from your service to Christ.

You must lay your all on the altar and leave it there!

"The only problem with "living Sacrifices" (Rom.12:1,2) is that they keep crawling off the alter." - Dr. Joseph Aldrich

Don't detour off of the straight and narrow road to serving Christ! "Someone is reported to have asked a concert violinist in New York's Carnegie Hall how she became so skilled. She said that it was by `planned neglect'. She planned to neglect everything that was not related to her goal." - John MacArthur

One test of a man's character is determined by what it will take to move him from what he believes and practices.

When faithfulness is most difficult, it is most necessary.

III. I WILL NOT BECOME COMPLACENT in my service for Christ
("Always abounding")

"**Always abounding** in the work of the Lord"

To "abound" = To do more than enough. To excel, to exceed profusely, beyond measure, surplus, overflowing, to overflow the boundaries.

ex. Just as Paul was exceedingly zealous in the persecution of the church (Acts 26:11) and the traditions of the Law (Gal.1:14), he pursued with the same zeal the saving work of Christ in the building up and sanctification of the churches (Phil.1:9,26; I Th.3:12; 4:1,10).

The churches of Macedonia and how they overflowed in giving (II Cor.8:2,8; 9:8).

The widow in giving her last mite, gave all she possessed, while others gave out of their abundance (Lk.12:15).

We ought to give more than enough to Christ since He has given more than enough to us! He not only gave us eternal life - He gave us abundant life! (Jn.10:10).
He taught the Disciples this lesson by multiplying the loaves & fish & having much (12 Baskets life over (same word).

If we have ever done more for Christ than we are presently doing, then we are backslidden. We should be doing more for God this year than last year.

Another reason we ought to "abound" in our service for Christ is because it is not our work, it is the "work of the Lord". He is our master, our boss. Ill. of workers who while on the job look for opportunities to goof off - waste time - look for ways to just get by.

Conclusion:

If we could ask Noah: "was it in vain to build the Ark?"
If we could ask Moses: "was it in vain to lead Israel?"
If we could ask Daniel: "was it in vain to stand up for God?"
If we could ask Paul: "was it in vain to plant over 100 churches?"
They would all respond **no!** It was worth every ounce of energy I invested in it!

No one will ever waste His time, energy, money etc. while involved in the work of the Lord!
(Note: it is His work, not ours; for ex. this is not my church it is His-I Pet.5)

Vain pursuits in life: living for self, pleasure, fame, money, career. They will all come to a screeching halt one day! You need to invest in that which will last for eternity!

* There are no regrets from those who are faithful to the Lord!

Because Jesus lives, my labor is not in vain!
He is coming back! And His "reward is with Him"

Ex. the song: "I wonder if I've done my best for Jesus..."

Personal testimony