The Significance of The Resurrection

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**Foundational Scripture:** 1 Cor. 15:12-19

**Intro**:

* The first letter to the Corinthians is almost always associated with problems, contentions and heresies. Paul patiently devotes 16 chapters to these brethren in order to admonish them to repent, get better and follow the one who died for their sins. Some of these issues are issues so many churches still struggle with today and have a hard time overcoming. But one of the issues Paul wrote to them about and likely the most important one was concerning the Resurrection.
* He devotes an entire lengthy discourse to the topic (1) because it was so vital that they understood the nature of it and (2) that they understood what it meant for their faith, their community and their future. It seems that the spirit of the Sadducees had crept in the church and there were some among them circulating the idea that there was no such thing as the resurrection. Christians, supposed believers, were saying this! Notice the importance of addressing this situation and what Paul says about all this in 1 Cor. 15:12-19. This lesson tonight deals with the **Significance of the Resurrection**:

**If Christ did not Rise:**

1. **The Bible is a Lie and Non-Authoritative**
   1. After discussing the mess that the Corinthians made of the spiritual gifts, Paul transitions to yet another debacle, far worse than the previous one. 1 Cor. 15 begins with a slew of evidence and eyewitness testimony which we will come back to in a later lesson. But why?
   2. Evidently some of the Corinthian brethren were going around and saying that there was no such thing as the resurrection of the dead (v. 12). One would imagine that Christians would recognize the importance of the resurrection to faith, religion and everything for that matter.
   3. Some of the Corinthians did not understand how significant the resurrection was to their very livelihood (spiritual and physical). The fact that they were still showing up for services demonstrates a complete breakdown in the understanding of the resurrection and its meaning to Christianity.
   4. This is exactly why Paul took the time out in 8 verses or so, to explain why the resurrection matters and why it’s the adhesive that holds everything together. In these verses, Paul does what apparently they failed to do or were not willing to do: **He connects the dots.**
   5. If there is no such thing as the resurrection, then not even Christ was raised (v. 13). There is no exception. The first thing Paul says this would negate, if it be true, is their preaching! And if the apostles’ preaching is invalid, then so would the entire bible (vv. 14-15).
   6. The teaching of the apostles was based on the teaching of Jesus, the prophets and the entire OT (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:1-8; 2:42; Eph. 2:20). If there is no resurrection and Christ did not rise, then the entire bible is a lie and it’s absolutely non-authoritative
   7. And if the bible is a lie, they are all liars and false witnesses (v. 15). What Paul was telling them wouldn’t matter anymore than what the pagan teacher across the street was saying. They could not be trusted nor held in esteem. And Paul and all his compatriots would have suffered for nothing!
   8. If there is no resurrection not only is the bible a lie but that means God is a liar and no longer God. The God of the bible would be no more than any other god or idol of the bible. The only thing, without a doubt, we could declare about the bible is that is a great work of fiction. But the truth is, not even that characteristic would gain respect because of what it is claiming to be!
2. **Our Faith is Vain**
   1. Paul focuses more so in these verses on the reality that if there is no resurrection and if Christ didn’t rise from the dead, then everything is worthless. Religion, their coming together, their future etc. It’s all a farce and a great shame without the resurrection.
   2. Concerning the significance of the resurrection, in his book entitled: “***The Son Rises: The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus,”*** philosopher William Lane Craig says this:
      1. *“It is quite clear that without the belief in the resurrection the Christian faith could not have come into being. The disciples would have remained crushed and defeated men. Even had they continued to remember Jesus as their believed teacher, His crucifixion would have forever silenced any hopes of His being the Messiah. The cross could have remained the sad and shameful end to His career. The origin of Christianity therefore hinges on the belief of the early disciples that God had raised Jesus from the dead”* (Craig, *SRHERJ*).
   3. Lane’s statement captures the essence of what Paul is saying to the Corinthians. There is no such thing as Christianity if Jesus is still dead and their faith as well as ours is vain, futile, worthless.
   4. If there is no Christianity and no one true religion why show up? Why go to worship? This is what the Corinthians didn’t seem to understand since they were apparently still worshipping and making a habit to go to services to commune with one another. If Christ did not rise, the reality is that they were still in their sins (vv. 16-17).
   5. Paul would even take it a step further in saying that all those who had died in Christ have perished. There is no hope, no happiness, no comfort and no future. And if there is no future then not only does that mean the future is lost, but the past and present are a counted as a loss as well. *“We are of all men most to be pitied”* (vv. 18-19).
   6. If there is no resurrection and Christ did not rise, NT Theology is defeated and we are wasting our time in being here and putting time and effort in Christianity. Subjects like these, just to name a few, would be false since they all hinge on the resurrection of Christ:
      1. The Coming of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26; Acts 2:33)
      2. Forgiveness of sins/conversion of sinners; Salvation (Acts 2:36-41; 4:11-12)
      3. Our own resurrection (1 Thess. 4:15-17)
      4. Jesus’ Second Coming/Judgment (Acts 1:11; 17:31; 1 Thess. 4:16)
      5. Eternal Life/Punishment (Matt. 25:31-46)
   7. The argument laid out in these verses to the Corinthians is strikingly clear. Everything in Christianity and everything about Christianity hinges on the reality of the resurrection and more importantly, the resurrection of Jesus! Without that, we have no hope and nothing for which to hope!

**Sources:**

Craig, William Lane. *The Son Rises: The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000.

McDowell, J. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999.