

**A WALK TO THE CROSS (and Beyond)  
Resurrection...The Foundation of the Christian Faith  
Luke 24:1-12; I Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-19  
Easter 2017**

Christianity ultimately has *only one priority*...with *grace*...to share *the Gospel* of Jesus Christ with the *unsaved*. And the Gospel involves the *death* and *resurrection* of Christ.

Put simply, *without the physical resurrection* of the Lord Jesus, *there is no Christianity*. Others have died a *martyr's death* for what they believed, but none have come back to life. As Paul said...*if Christ is not risen, then our faith is futile...pointless...useless...hopeless*.

**There is no salvation...there is no eternal life...without the physical resurrection of Christ, and one cannot be saved without believing and trusting in it. Romans 10** states...

*“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation...for ‘Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved’.”*

~Romans 10:9-10, 13

Only the Lord's *victory over death*, proven by His *resurrection*, can *guarantee* us our *heavenly inheritance*.

The *resurrection* was the focal point of *every truth* that Christ *taught* and *spoke*.

*“And He began to teach them (the disciples) that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”*

~Mark 8:31

*“For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, ‘The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later’.”*

~Mark 9:31

He boldly declared and emphatically promised *eternal life*.

*“Jesus said to her (Martha...after the death of her brother Lazarus), ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies’...She said to Him, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of God...’”*

~John 11:25, 27

Peter's first two sermons preached after **Pentecost**, both *centered upon* the Lord's *resurrection* (**Acts 2:14-36** and **Acts 3:12-26**). It was the reality of this event which so *radically transformed* these broken-hearted followers of Jesus...from *shrinking cowards* a few days earlier...into *bold-as-a-lion witnesses* who were gladly willing to suffer *excruciating deaths* as *martyrs* to spread the truth of the Gospel though out the *Roman Empire* and *beyond* in only a few short years.

The *resurrection* is *foundational* to the Christian *faith*!  
Because of the *resurrection*...

**I. THE DEITY OF CHRIST IS AFFIRMED: (vs. 13, 16)**

**But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised...For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised (vs. 13, 16)**

*“(Jesus Christ)...was declared the Son of God, with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness...Jesus Christ our Lord...”*

~Romans 1:4

*This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”*

~Acts 2:23-24

## II. THE GOSPEL BECOMES POWERFUL: (vs. 14-15)

If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised (vs. 14-15)...

Paul emphasized how Jesus' *death* and *resurrection* is the *heart of the Gospel message*. Literally, the Gospel in *two verses...verses 3-4*.

*“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

~I Corinthians 15:3-4

Without the *resurrection*, Christ *could not...and did not...* conquer the *three enemies of man...sin, death, and hell*. And God's Word says *all are sinners, the wages of that sin is death*, and therefore, *everyone* is condemned to *hell*. Unless Jesus was *victorious* over these *three things*...there is no *Good News* to proclaim!

*“As it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’.”*

~Romans 3:10-11, 23

*“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”*

~Isaiah 53:6

*“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”*

~Romans 5:8, 12

It is therefore impossible to be truly *born again*, and not believe in the *resurrection* of the Lord Jesus Christ! *Salvation* could not have been purchased without the *resurrection*, and without belief in the *resurrection*, *salvation* cannot be received.

*“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

~Romans 10:9

**Don't ever underestimate the power of the Gospel!**

- **To save:**

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”*

~Romans 1:16

- **To forgive:**

*“Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the*

*nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things’.*”

~Luke 24:45-48

- **To give victory over death:**

*“...Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

~I Corinthians 15:54-57

### III. FAITH AND HOPE ARE ESTABLISHED: (vs. 14, 17, 19)

If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain...And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins ...If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied (vs. 14, 17, 19)...

If Jesus did not live past the grave, none of us who trust in Him can hope to do so either! Our *faith* would be in a *false gospel* and it would be *worthless*...it would be *in vain*.

In vain...Gk. *kenos*, literally *means empty, fruitless, void of effect, to no purpose*. A dead Savior cannot give life. If Jesus did not rise...we will not rise. But...

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”*

~I Peter 1:3-4

That is why Paul...expressing *hope* and *faith*, said...

*“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

~Philippians 3:10-11

There is nothing a lost person can do on his own to save himself. This is what’s unique about Christianity. We *don’t earn* or *deserve* anything but judgment.

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

~Ephesians 2:8-9

*“For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds (good works) are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”*

~Isaiah 64:6

To be saved, a sinner must *believe God’s Word, repent*, and *by faith* trust God to *forgive* him.

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”*

~John 5:24

*“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...”*

~Acts 16:31

If there were *no resurrection*...*Faith’s Hall of Fame* in Hebrews 11 would really be...*The Hall of Vain...the Hall of the Foolish*. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab, David, the prophets and all the others would have had *faith in nothing*. The *ridicule, rejection, pain and suffering* they endured was *for nothing*.

Every believer throughout the ages will have *believed* for nothing, *lived* for nothing, and *died* for nothing!

#### IV. ATONEMENT FOR OUR SIN IS COMPLETE: (vs. 17)

**And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins (vs. 17)...**

The very purpose of trusting Christ is for *forgiveness of our sins* (**Acts 10:43; Ephesians 1:7**). If Jesus *was not raised*, then He brought *no victory over sin* and therefore *...no forgiveness of sins*. That means *no salvation...no reconciliation or spiritual life*...for now and eternity.

Christ was *born, crucified, and resurrected to save lost people from their sin*.

*“He was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.”*

~Romans 4:25

*“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.”*

~I Timothy 1:15

*“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”*

~I Peter 1:18-21

His resurrection *set us free* from both the *power and penalty* of sin. Sin no longer has to have control over the one who's faith and trust is in Him.

#### V. ETERNAL LIFE IS OFFERED AS A FREE GIFT: (vs. 18)

**Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished (vs. 18)...**

Every believer of every age would *spend eternity in torment* without God...and *without hope*, if there was no *resurrection*.

*“When this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

~I Corinthians 15:54-57

*“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

~John 3:16

#### LESSONS WE MUST LEARN:

Verse 20 emphatically and triumphantly declares...

*“But now Christ has been raised from the dead...”*

~I Corinthians 15:20

**Because of the resurrection...because He is risen...**

- The Gospel is **TRUE** and **TRANSFORMING**.
- The believer's **FAITH** is rightly placed in Christ...and Christ alone.

- The believer has been given the **FREE GIFT** of eternal life.
- Those who have died **IN CHRIST** are in His glorious presence even now.
- We live in **CONFIDENT ANTICIPATION** (hope)...both now and for all eternity.

The resurrection isn't mere *speculation*...it's grounded in the *authority* and *power* of God, Himself...it is the **Gospel!**

**The question is**...Are you going to keep this Gospel for yourself or are you going to be an ambassador for the King of kings and Lord of lords, and take this Gospel of reconciliation to people (individuals...family...friends...neighbors...people you work with)...people that are in desperate need of being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

*“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

~II Corinthians 5:18-21

## Luke 24:1-12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; 5 and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? 6 He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, 7 saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” 8 And they remembered His words, 9 and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. 11 But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he \*saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.

## I Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-19

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

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, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.