

Title: WHAT IF?

Resurrection Day- April 16, 2017

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church, Hong Kong

Pastor S.C. Brown

Why do we gather together to worship God in this church on Sunday? Why not Saturday, which was the Jewish day of rest? Why not Friday, as Muslims do? We worship on Sunday morning every week because that is the day that Jesus rose from the dead. So, every Sunday is a celebration of the Resurrection. But this day is even more special. The most holy day of the year. But what's the significance? What does the Resurrection really mean? Did it even happen?

Turn in your Bibles to **1st Corinthians 15**. We are simply going to walk through this chapter of the Bible a bit and take it apart in order to find out about the Resurrection.

The context of this chapter is there are some who say that when people die, they aren't raised to life or don't go anywhere. Paul is going to refute that.

Is there evidence that the Resurrection actually took place? Did Jesus actually die and then rise from the dead?

First, the old testament scriptures testified that Jesus [the messiah] would die and rise again. **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** says, “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....”

Isaiah 53 and **Psalms 16** both speak of God’s holy one not “experiencing corruption” and after he gives himself as an offering for sin and guilt, he will live.

Secondly, there were eyewitnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus. Look in **1 Corinthians 15:5-8**, “He **appeared** to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve. Then he **appeared** to more than 500 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.”

Paul uses the word “appeared” 4 times here. He wants the Corinthians (and us) to know....that people SAW him. When he wrote this, these people were still alive. “Go and talk to them.” “They’re still alive.” “Go ask them.”

500 people at the same time!!! **500!**

Either Jesus is alive or all of these people are fakes and liars.

Paul says there are two things that testify that Jesus is alive:

Scripture said it would happen.

People saw him alive. *They were eye-witnesses.

So, how can some people say that people aren't raised to life or don't go anywhere after they die? Because Jesus was raised.

What if Jesus didn't rise again? Then what?

- [verse.14] **People's preaching is in vain**. We are going around wasting our breath telling people that if they believe in a dead guy, they'll have eternal life. Ha. We are chasing after the wind, *if Jesus isn't raised*.
- [verse.14] **People's faith is in vain & futile** [v.17] Those who daily pray and trust in God, who cry out to him in faith are wasting their time. Their living in a dream world, *if Jesus isn't raised*.
- [verse.15] **Christians are misrepresenting God**. We are leading people astray. The blind leading the blind —off an eternal cliff! Telling people lies about God, *if Jesus isn't raised*.
- [verse.17] **People are still in their sins**. People think they are clean, but their not. Still under the wrath of God, still guilty, still dirty, and still unable to change...*if Jesus isn't raised*.

- [v.18] **Those who have died believing in Christ have perished.** My dad. Your friend...who died with their eyes on Christ...gone. Not in heaven. Not with Christ. Perished....*if Jesus isn't raised.*
- [v.19] **Christians are most to be pitied.** Christians are the most pathetic people on the planet. Staying pure till marriage! Wasting their only day off going to church! Missing some pretty good movies! Being faithful to only one woman! Getting up early to read the Bible! Expecting to go to heaven when they die! Ridiculous life we live....*if Jesus isn't raised.*

In verse 32, Paul says that, “If the dead are not raised {and if Christ isn't raised}, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’”

[v.20] “**BUT, in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.**”

- Our preaching is not in vain— —but is **powerful and used by God to save souls.** (Romans 1:16)
- Our faith is not in vain or futile—-but **faith is the assurance of things hoped for. Evidence of things not seen.** (Hebrews 11:1)
- We are not mis-representing God, but **we are Christ's ambassadors. God is making his appeal through us.** (2 Corinthians 5:20)

- We are not still in our sins but **our sins are forgiven**. We are white as snow. As far as the east is from the west..he has removed them from us. (Acts 10:43) (Psalm 103:12)
- Those who have died have not perished, but **have everlasting life with God in heaven**. (John 3:16)
- And we are not to be pitied. **We are most to be envied!** We have sins removed, guilt removed, peace with God, he makes us new people, we get eternal life and a glorious inheritance.

Paul says Christ is the Firstfruits.

What does he mean by that?

Wayne Grudem says, **“The first fruit or the first taste of the ripening crop shows what the rest of the harvest will be like for that crop, so Christ as the first fruits shows what our resurrected bodies will be like, when in God’s final harvest, he raises us from the dead and brings us into his presence.”**

The first of many.

What happened to him will happen to all who believe.

[v.51] “Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we shall be changed**. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass 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 the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus died and rose again.

The scriptures predicted that he would.

A lot of people saw him with their own eyes.

It is true.

‘Christ triumphed over sin and death by being physically resurrected, so that all who trust in him are raised to new life in this world and to everlasting life in the world to come.’ New City Catechism 50

In closing, you may be here today and this may sound like good news to you.

“I can be forgiven of my sin?”

“Jesus paid for my sins?”

“I can have a new life and eternal life with God?”

Yes, you can.

Turn away from your sinful life and turn to Jesus and believe. Believe what the Bible says about him and that he's alive.

If you're a Christian, you may have come here hoping for some practical advice and all I have done is tell you that Jesus is alive. You came here looking for encouragement and got something you already know.

Well, look in **[verse 56]**.

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain.”

So, after all of this talk about the Resurrection, Paul talks about this....Therefore....

Your labor is not in vain because Jesus is alive.

Keep on brother.

Keep on sister.

Jesus is alive and he'll come back and get you.

And we shall all be changed.