

Sermon: 1 Corinthians 15:1-34

Who is Jesus? Resurrection

Intro: translation problems.
e.g. "...you look like a buffalo"

1 Corinthians 15 is part of the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth. In today's terms, this would be a bit like a letter from a Bishop to a local Church. And when Paul, the Bishop, writes this letter, there are a few problems at Corinth. One of them is that there are people teaching that there is no resurrection of the dead, and that Jesus didn't rise from the dead. And this is a problem.

A lot of the things Paul says need a bit of translation into today's language.
Let's start with verse 1:

1. Paul says: "I want to remind you of the gospel" – verse 1
Translation: "Church, you've forgotten some important things and you need to remember them!"

III – I depend on my phone these days. As I get older, I forget more things. So I have hundreds of phone numbers and addresses in my phone. I have my diary on my phone. My emails. I set reminders. I use a timer to remind me that something's in the oven. I set alarms to wake me up in the morning. Sometimes I set two or three alarms to remind me of something so I don't forget. And usually, I don't forget.

But sometimes we forget What really matters. We can forget what we actually believe in. And **who** we believe in.

For example: When we worry about our finances, we forget that God cares about us and promises to look after us. When things go wrong, in our life, it's easy to forget that God is **in** control, even though we feel out of control.

The Corinthian Church has forgotten some basics. And so Paul reminds them.

What does he remind them? From verse 3:

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance:

2. The gospel

a. First, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.

Translation: Don't forget, Paul says, that Jesus died! And he died FOR YOU. And the Scriptures - the Old Testament - said that he would! Don't forget that he died **for you** and that this was God's plan all along!

b. Second, don't forget that Christ was buried.

Translation: Yes, he really did die! He was buried. Buried. Wrapped up in cloths and laid in a cave. He didn't NEARLY die. He REALLY died! They buried him! Remember, Paul is speaking to people who KNEW some of the eyewitnesses of this event!

c. Third: Christ rose on the third day *according to the Scriptures*

Translation: He didn't STAY dead. He rose. According to the Scriptures – the Old Testament – just like God said! He rose as part of God's plan.

- d. And finally, Jesus Christ appeared to many: Cephas (Peter), then to the 12 apostles, then to over 500 people, then to James, ten to ALL the apostles, and then to Paul himself.

Translation: People **saw** him! There were eyewitnesses! Don't forget that! Again, remember that Paul is speaking to people who KNEW some of the eyewitnesses of this event! He died. Buried. Rose. Then people SAW him! Hundreds of people SAW him!

Paul is simply saying: don't forget the basics of what we believe: Jesus died. Was buried. Rose. And was SEEN by people.

Then Paul goes on to address the BIG problem in the Corinthian Church: the resurrection.

3. The truth, Paul says, is that Christ HAS been raised – v20 – Christ is the first fruits.

Translation: Jesus is the first of many to be resurrected. That's what firstfruits means – the first of many. There will be MORE resurrections!

And finally, my favourite part – Paul points us to the future. The REASON we need to remember the basics is because they point us to the future.

III – You know, I've spent 22 years of my life at school. That's WAY more than half! Kindergarten to year 12. Bachelor of Arts Degree. Bachelor of Divinity Degree. 22 years. I have to be honest – I don't really LIKE studying. But the only way I can do it is by focusing on the **future**. I focus on WHY I'm doing it. I'm studying to pursue a career that I love. What we learn is equipping us for the future.

The Gospel is the **ultimate** learning for the **ultimate** future. What we learn in the gospel is that Jesus died, was buried, and rose – and THOSE FACTS are all about our future.

4. The future.

Turn with me to verses 23-28.

We've been reminded of the gospel. But why? Because it tells us what our future is. Christ has been raised. Now what happens?

- a. Verse 23: He will come again.

- b. Then, when he returns, he will raise "those who belong to him".

In other words, Jesus' resurrection means OUR resurrection. Remembering that Jesus died, was buried, and rose, and that people saw him because it really happened – is a reminder for us that this is OUR future too! Paul is saying: "If you forget about the resurrection, if you forget that it's true, that it really happened, you're forgetting about your future!"

III – Resurrection is our superannuation! Currently there is about \$___ billion in unclaimed superannuation. People have this money from their pay go into a superannuation fund every month, and then they change jobs and they can lose track of their super. One person recently reclaimed \$___ of superannuation they had lost. Imagine that. Imagine saving up for retirement and then forgetting where you put all your money!

Imagine putting your faith in Jesus, getting the gift of eternal life, and then forgetting about it, even forgetting where it came from!

What Paul is really saying to the Corinthians is "What are you thinking?!" How can you forget that the resurrection is real? It's your future! It's your hope! It's your guarantee! If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, you won't either! And everything you believe is pointless! Verse 14:

14 *And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.*

Remember the gospel because it is your superannuation! It's your future!

But there's more.

Jesus rose. And he will return. And all who believe in him will be raised to live with him in heaven. And that's the end of the world.

Verse 24: the end will come. Jesus will destroy all dominion, authority and power.

Translation: There will be NO other power then, except God. God will have ALL authority over EVERY part of creation. No other rulers.

And finally he will destroy the last enemy. Death.

On that final day, when Jesus returns, that's the end of death. Again, a reminder like Romans 5 last week – death is not permanent. Don't forget – we believe in the resurrection. First Jesus. Then us.

And if we want some more detail on this, let's have a look at just one other passage. Turn with me to page ____ , 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

In his letter to another church, Thessalonica, Paul gives us more important details about our future:

1. Jesus will come on a particular day. One day. Resurrection day. One day of judgement and salvation.
2. It will be the end of death for ALL people. Resurrection day will happen for EVERYONE.
3. He will be glorified by those who have believed in him. They will become his people forever. In heaven. Eternal life.
4. He will also raise, and punish, those who do not believe the gospel. The words he uses are: "everlasting destruction".

Everlasting LIFE, heaven, for those who believe his gospel. Everlasting destruction, hell, for those who do not believe the gospel.

Until that final day, death is still here. People will die. And when they die they will sleep. For ten thousand years, for a thousand years, for a few days... until that day when Jesus comes from heaven in blazing fire. THAT is resurrection day. Some raised to everlasting life in heaven. Others raised to everlasting destruction in hell. All raised. To either heaven or hell.

Why is this important?

Because the resurrection of Jesus is not just about the future for believers. It's also about the future for **unbelievers**. The resurrection is a reminder that we have a GREAT future ahead of us, trusting in Jesus. But we also have a GREAT NEED to share the gospel with others – because death is not the end for anyone.

Without the resurrection, there is no future for anyone. And our faith is useless. Pointless. Meaningless. But WITH the resurrection, there is a future for EVERYONE. And so Paul wants us to remember: Jesus DID die. Jesus WAS buried. Jesus DID rise from the dead. People DID see Jesus alive. The resurrection DID happen. And the DAY of resurrection WILL happen for all of us when Jesus returns. Like it or not, it is a reality. For all people. It is a guarantee.

If we forget this gospel, we forget our future. If we forget our future, we forget our purpose, our reason, for living. And we might as well *"eat and drink for tomorrow we die."*

This gospel is our guarantee.

15 **1** Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. **6** After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. **7** Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, **8** and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. **15** More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. **19** If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. **23** But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. **24** Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. **25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

27 For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. **28** When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? **30** And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? **31** I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. **32** If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”[d]

33 Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”[e] **34** Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.