

## Bad Idea #5 Resurrection Is Optional

**Text:** 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

**Big Idea:** If Christ is not raised, our faith collapses... but because He is raised, everything changes.

### Introduction: A Spiritual Idea That Empties Everything

- Review of the series: a good church letting in bad ideas
  - Division around personalities
  - Tolerating what Jesus condemns
  - Flaunting freedom instead of loving people
  - Chasing impressiveness over faithfulness
- Underneath all of it: denial of the resurrection
- Corinthian belief likely sounded:
  - Thoughtful
  - Philosophical
  - Spiritually mature
- Paul's verdict: this is not a minor error but a catastrophic one
- **Bad Idea:** You can have Christianity without resurrection

### Exposition: (1 Corinthians 15:12-20)

#### 1. The Problem: Denying Resurrection (v. 12)

- Paul's question: *How can you proclaim Christ raised while denying resurrection?*
- Greco-Roman worldview:
  - Body viewed as a problem
  - Death seen as freedom for the soul
  - Resurrection considered crude or unnecessary
- The issue is not rejecting Jesus but **reinterpreting Him**
- Cultural pressure to "update" Christianity
- Desire to keep Jesus while removing bodily resurrection

#### 2. The Domino Effect: Logical Consequences (vv. 13-15)

- Paul stacks the consequences:
  - No resurrection → Christ not raised
  - Christ not raised → preaching is useless
  - Faith becomes empty and disconnected from reality
- Christianity is grounded in **historical events**, not abstract ideas
- Apostles become false witnesses

- **Conclusion:** No resurrection = no gospel

### 3. The Personal Consequences: Sin and Death (vv. 16-18)

- “You are still in your sins”
- Cross and resurrection are one unified saving act
  - Cross condemns sin
  - Resurrection breaks sin’s dominion
- Without resurrection:
  - Forgiveness has no proof
  - Victory has no power
- Those who have died in Christ are lost
- Death wins; hope collapses into memory and nostalgia

### 4. The Ultimate Consequence: Christianity Becomes Pitiful (v. 19)

- “We are of all people most to be pitied”
- Paul’s suffering makes sense only if resurrection is real
- Without resurrection:
  - Worship becomes pretend
  - Baptism becomes symbolism
  - Communion becomes nostalgia
  - Preaching becomes theater
- Christianity reduced to positive thinking with religious language
- Resurrection defends not just a doctrine, but a **way of life**
- Bodily resurrection leads to embodied discipleship:
  - Bodies matter
  - Work matters
  - Meals, justice, faithfulness matter
- New creation has begun now, not just in the future

### 5. The Turning Point: “But in Fact...” (v. 20)

- The theological hinge of the passage
- Jesus as **firstfruits**
  - Old Testament harvest imagery
  - First portion guarantees the rest
- Jesus is not an example, but the beginning of resurrection
- Resurrection promises bodily restoration and new creation
- **The resurrection is not a footnote; it is the source from which everything else flows**

## Main Points

## **1. Without the Resurrection, the Gospel Loses Its Power**

- The cross defeats sin
- The resurrection reveals that victory
- Without resurrection:
  - Forgiveness has no proof
  - Faith has no foundation
  - Preaching has no purpose
- Resurrection publicly declares Jesus as Lord
- Gospel truth: Jesus lives and that changes everything

## **2. The Resurrection Is Not Just Past History, but Present Reality**

- Ties back to every issue in Corinth:
  - Division
  - Moral compromise
  - Self-centered freedom
  - Obsession with impressiveness
- All make sense only if Jesus is remembered, not reigning
- Resurrection shapes who we are now
- Christian life = participation in new creation

## **3. The Resurrection Gives Us Unshakable Hope**

- Because Christ is raised:
  - Death does not have the final word
  - Sin does not have the final word
  - Suffering does not have the final word
- Grief and endurance shaped by hope
- Resurrection outlasts pain and loss
- What is broken will be restored
- What feels unfinished will be made whole

## **Application**

### **For the Church**

- Keep resurrection central in belief and practice
- The church is not maintaining an institution
- The church embodies new creation
- Resurrection shapes:
  - Unity
  - Holiness
  - Love

- Faithfulness
- A resurrection-shaped church:
  - Makes hope visible
  - Honors embodied faith
  - Treats ordinary faithfulness as sacred

## For Individuals

- Live like resurrection is real
- Let it shape:
  - Fear
  - Temptation
  - Suffering
  - Work
  - Forgiveness
  - Hope for the future
- “Your labor in the Lord is not in vain”
- Easter is not a once-a-year event, but a daily reality

## Conclusion

- Corinth tried to make Christianity culturally palatable
- In doing so, they emptied it of power
- When resurrection becomes optional:
  - Unity becomes optional
  - Holiness becomes optional
  - Love becomes optional
  - Faithfulness becomes optional
- Paul’s declaration stands:
  - “But in fact Christ has been raised”
- Because He is raised:
  - Sin is forgiven
  - Death is defeated
  - Hope is secure
- **If Christ is alive, the church must live like it**