

April 12 **The Truth of the Resurrection** Bible Studies for Life Senior Adult Lesson

Our next 2 lessons will be about the Resurrection. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the truth of Christianity. Jesus lived on earth as a human, died on the cross to take away our sin, and then resurrected from the dead that we can believe in Him and spend eternal life in Heaven forever.

When have you been an eyewitness to an exciting event?

- someone accepted Christ
- watched the moon landing in 1969
- watched the Rose Parade
- saw the queen of England in a parade
- watched the Super Bowl
- saw a hole in one at golf

Some of us may have witnessed these events. If so, we have a story to share with others. Perhaps we have pictures. We get excited and we want to tell every detail. Others get to learn by hearing of our experiences.

But there is one event that none of us were able to attend ... the resurrection of Christ.

- Even though we weren't there it is an historical fact.
- There were eyewitnesses and they shared what they saw.

The details of the Resurrection are recorded in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20. Today's lesson is from Corinthians as Paul speaks to the people about what Christians should believe about the resurrection. It is believed that this letter was written around AD 54 which would have been around 20 - 25 years after Jesus' death. This shows us that the early reports about Jesus were written by eyewitnesses who recorded the elements of His death.

1 Corinthians 15:1-3 (NIV) 1 Now, brothers, 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.

What is the theme of I Corinthians 15? Because Christ was raised, we will be too. Apparently, the Corinthians had started to doubt the testimony of the believers. Here Paul is reminding them of the gospel.

What important message did Paul remind the Corinthians of in these scriptures?

I preached the gospel to you
 You received the gospel
 You took a stand (believed)
 You were saved
 Hold firmly to the Truth

Paul had already shared his message to them before. In verse 3, Paul said, “I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Paul refers to the prophecies from the Old Testament – Isaiah 53:5 – 9, Psalm 22:16

Jesus was buried. He was raised on the third day. He appeared to people. He appeared to Peter. He appeared to the other apostles. He appeared to James. He appeared to Paul.

According to Paul, why is it important to “hold firmly to the word”?

- otherwise you believe in vain
- we must have faith in the Word of God in order to have salvation
- our salvation is an ongoing relationship with Jesus

What do you think it *means* for us to “hold firmly to the word”?

- to know the basic concepts of your faith
- to realize what is necessary and sufficient for salvation
- to be able to tell others about your salvation
- to regularly talk to the Lord and thank Him for what He has done for you

Why did Paul pass on what he had received?

- God had given him the task and responsibility of preaching the Gospel
- it is Good News that by its very nature must be shared
- it is so great that we must not keep it to ourselves
- Jesus gave the Church the Great Commission to take the Truth of Salvation to the whole world

In the next verses, we will see the heart of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:4 (NIV) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Paul states that Jesus was buried and that He was raised on the third day. In ancient Jewish culture, it was important to quickly bury the dead. This usually took place within 24 hours of the death. According to the Gospels, Jesus’ body was made ready for burial with spices, and he was wrapped in a linen cloth. Tombs were usually caves hewn out in the side of hills or dug out of the ground. The well-off families had tombs for their dead. Jesus was placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Jewish council who was a secret follower of Jesus.

The death of Jesus is one major element of the gospel, but what is the second?

- He rose from death on the third day
- He came back to life
- His soul was reunited with His body
- This had been prophesied over thousands of years before Jesus was born.
- There are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus. Here are just a few:

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- Isaiah 9:6 - 7, Isaiah 53:10, Psalm 22:16, Isaiah 53:9, Psalm 68:18, Daniel 7:13 – 14
- There are many scriptures in the New Testament that tell about Jesus' death. Here are a few:
- John 2:19 -22, Mark 8:31, 9:31, Jonah 1:17, Matthew 12:39 – 40, Luke 11:29 -30

Paul taught us three important truths about Jesus.

1. He died.
2. He was buried.
3. He was raised on the third day and is alive today!

Why would it be disastrous for a person to believe only some of what is in verses 3 & 4?

- Each of the facts there is necessary
- Any one of them left out makes Christ's work ineffective
- He had to die a real death to receive God's judgment (which we deserved)
- He had to be buried – showed an actual death, showed an actual resurrection
- He *had* to be resurrected from the dead – to defeat death, to give us new life

Why do you think Paul had to remind people of these truths?

- people's minds are focused on many other things – such as self, their wants, the pandemic
- some people just choose not to believe and accept the Truth of the gospel message
- some spiritual truths are not easily understood – we need to hear them again

How can we respond to someone who *rejects* the truth of Christ's resurrection?

- Explain that there were many eyewitnesses who saw Him
- Share your own personal experience and how it has changed your life
- Share the peace, joy, and encouragement you feel through the Holy Spirit indwelling in your life.
- Explain the assurance you have of knowing you will go to Heaven to spend eternity with God.

Next, we will see the many people who were eyewitnesses of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:5-8 (NIV) 5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers 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.

Who are the eyewitnesses that Paul mentions?

- Cephas (Peter), the Twelve, 500 followers, James, apostles, Paul

An eyewitness is someone who has personally seen something happen and so they can give a first-hand description of it. Sometimes it is hard to believe something unless we see it ourselves. They were there to give a first hand account of the events.

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What's the importance of an eyewitness testimony?

- It's not hearsay testimony
- These were *many* people who had seen, heard, some had partaken of a meal with the risen Christ
- Many were still living at the time Paul wrote this letter
- Firsthand experience is important

Note the choice of these eyewitnesses ...

- Peter who had been a follower of Jesus, leader among the Disciples, Jesus named "The Rock"
- The Twelve – these were people who had known Him best – the Disciples,
- Many of those who *saw* and interacted with Jesus were not necessarily expecting to see Him, the appearances were to different people at different places at different times
- James – not a follower of his half-brother during Jesus' ministry – became a believer after Jesus' death, became a prominent leader in the Jerusalem church
- Apostles – people who had a direct calling from the Resurrected Christ
- Paul – a post ascension appearance, Jesus appeared to Paul on the Damascus Road, He became a zealous preacher and the founder of many churches

How does Christ appear or make Himself known to us today?

Through healing

Through prayer

Revealed in His works

Revealed in His Word

Through events that we see, hear or experience

Certainly, we have seen Christ at work during this past month. Many are sharing, giving and caring for others in a way that we have never seen in our lifetime. We cannot see Christ face to face, but we can see the good works of His believers.

Digging Deeper

Jesus' Post Resurrection Appearances

To Mary Magdalene (John 20:11- 18)

To the other women (Matthew 28:8-10)

To Cleopas and friend on the Emmaus Road (Luke 24:13-32)

To ten disciples excluding Thomas (John 20:19-23)

To eleven disciples with Thomas (John 20:26-30)

To eleven disciples again (Luke 24:33-39)

To seven disciples (John 21: 1-14)

To the disciples before ascension (Matthew 28:16-20)

To Simon Peter and the other disciples (1 Corinthians 15:5)

To the 500 (1 Corinthians 15:6)

To James (1 Corinthians 15:7)

To the disciples at His ascension (Acts 1:4-9)

To Paul (1Corinthians 15:8)

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