

**Series:** Receiving life by believing in God's Son (a Gospel of John study)

**Sermon Text:** 1 Corinthians 15; Selections from John 14-16

**Key Word:** Resurrection

(\*The accounts in chapters 14-17 are only found in John)

In Matthew 11:28-29 (NLT) Jesus said, *"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest...Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."* It's hard to believe we can find rest for our souls in a world that's broken and full of trouble, yet as we've learned over the past 3 weeks, it's not as farfetched as it seems. My aim today is to help you believe this...

**BIG IDEA:** Christ's death and resurrection made impossible things possible.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, it changed everything! Things previously impossible, were suddenly possible. **1 Corinthians 15** is a chapter that explains the importance of His resurrection and how it's an essential part of *the gospel* story. In *verses 1-2* the Apostle Paul wrote, ***I would remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. The gospel*** explains how God redeems and restores all things through Jesus. It's a story or message He wants us to *receive, stand in, be saved by, hold fast to*, and of course, share while rejecting false *gospels*.

The true *gospel* is described in *verses 3-4*, ***I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. Verses 5-13*** go on to say over 500 eyewitnesses saw Jesus after His resurrection, which lends massive credibility to the story. ***The gospel*** is about God's effort, not ours. It's about His promise in Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT) *"I will give you a new, tender, and responsive heart...and put my Spirit in you so you'll follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations."* Until God changes what we love (desire), we won't care about stuff like doctrine, morality, consequences, or next steps. So, ***the gospel*** isn't *"godliness by reinventing ourselves, self-improvement, or sin-management."* It's God handling our sin and making us new by grace through faith in Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 says, *"If you are in Christ, you're a new creation. The old has passed; the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."*

Now consider how vital the *resurrection* is to the *gospel* story. ***Verses 14-17*** say, ***if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith is in vain...and you are still in your sins.*** All human effort is futile if Jesus hasn't been *"handed over to die because of our sins and raised to life to*

*make us right with God*” (cf. Romans 4:25 NLT). If we remember this in troubling times, we’ll resist human solutions that only increase brokenness. Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection prove God is not playing “*hard to get*”; i.e., life isn’t a game of “*hide and seek*” or exhausting ourselves to attain and maintain relationship with God. The entire Bible affirms this! In the Old Testament storyline, God came down to dwell in Israel’s tabernacle and temple. In the New Testament storyline, God came to live with people in the body of His Son, Jesus. Clearly, God hasn’t been keeping His distance or hiding from our brokenness, rather He’s been moving toward us “*to make us right with Himself.*”

Our church has been working through John 13-17, a beautiful and game changing section where the disciples feared Jesus dying and going away, so He comforted them by revealing what God has been doing for centuries. Jesus detailed how He attaches Himself to us, how the trinity attaches to each other, and how we can participate in this holy attachment which He referred to as “*abiding.*” He established a meal that illustrates how God attaches to us by feeding us like parents feed their kids. Taking the Lord’s Supper reminds us not to swallow false gospels like our ancestors in the Garden of Eden. You’ll want to join us next week, as we begin a series of messages about attachment with God! We’ll learn more about how our relationship with Him is based on His love, not our behavior; and how growth and ministry to others occurs to the degree we grasp who God says we are in Christ.

As we wrap up, let’s consider what became possible by Christ’s death and resurrection. In John 16:7, Jesus told His disciples, “*It’s to your advantage that I go away, for if I don’t, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*” In John 14:16-23 He had promised “*the Father will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you...if anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*” There are 2 important truths I hope you’re hearing today. **Truth #1: God is pursuing you for relationship.** Our challenge is to believe that and reject other stories like “*I’ve done too many bad things to become a Christian*”, or “*I’ve got to fix things before God can love me*”, or “*God will leave me if I don’t behave.*” These false narratives are not the gospel! As we have just proven from Scripture, the resurrection guarantees God will make a permanent home with us if we’ll just repent of our sins and trust what Jesus has done. That’s **Truth #1: God is pursuing you for relationship.** Here’s **Truth #2: Peace is found when we rest in Jesus by grace through faith.** Jesus’ death and resurrection cleared the way for a holy God to live inside sinful people. It made impossible

things possible like what Jesus described in John 14:26-27, *“The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”* He doubled down on this promise in John 16:33, *“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”* Friends, our humble and gentle Savior is offering rest for our souls. Anyone want that? It comes as we stop swallowing false gospels and the world’s stories; and start embracing the story Jesus declared and lived out.

**Let’s pray:** Father, we need eyes of faith to believe the miraculous revelations we’ve heard today. It hurts me that so many preachers, books, podcasts, and church people distort the gospel by urging us to pursue human remedies rather than relying on the finished work of Christ and His methods. False gospels only increase our guilt and shame by burdening us to fill gaps only God can and to wrongly believe lasting change and righting wrongs is solely on our shoulders. False gospels turn God into a last resort where we forget God is with us even when we sin because Jesus promised to never leave nor forsake us. God, help us believe Your gospel, which declares we can trust what Jesus has already accomplished, that things are already better than we realize, and that Your kingdom is advancing on this world to a final victory. Give us eyes of faith to believe Your miraculous revelation. May we be people who receive the gospel of Christ, stand in the gospel of Christ, are saved by the gospel of Christ, hold fast to the gospel of Christ, and of course, share the gospel of Christ. Amen.

**Let’s sing:** If you’re able, stand with us and sing about how Jesus is our “All in All.”

So, what’s your NEXT STEP?

- Remember, our next step always begins with faith in Christ. Either placing faith in Him for the first time or exercising faith to repent, change, and grow. Either way, His Spirit will help you.

**Quotes related to this passage:**

- **The Helper:** “The Greek term can also be translated ‘advocate,’ ‘encourager,’ or even ‘coach.’ In modern terms, the word carries the idea of a trainer running alongside someone in a race providing counsel, correction, hope, comfort, and positive perspective. A paraklētos helps another toward excellence.” Pastor Chuck Swindoll
- **Another like Jesus:** “Perhaps the most important consideration is that expressed in verse 16: ...give you ANOTHER (my emphasis) Counsellor. The Spirit will fulfil a role parallel to the role Jesus had fulfilled to this point.” Pastor Bruce Milne
- **Unprecedented unity:** “Here is Jesus’ deepest reassurance to hearts troubled by his departure—he will not in fact leave them! Jesus himself will come to them through the Holy Spirit in an experience which a world confined within naturalistic categories can neither discern nor measure (17). They will not be bereft orphans: I will come to you ... you are in me, and I am in you (18, 20). Jesus speaks here of an intimacy which is without precedent or parallel. Even ‘the

disciple whom Jesus loved', leaning on his breast at the supper, could not make such a claim. The key to it is expressed in these terms: because I live, you also will live (19). Thus 'Jesus comes at Easter to be reunited with his disciples and to lift to a new plane his relationship with them, for which that in the ministry could be only a preparation.' ... the Spirit will also unite the disciples with the Father, who will make his home with them (23). The gulf separating Creator from creature, the Holy One from sinners, will be bridged. The fruit of the going away of Jesus will be the reconciling of those who believe with the living God, producing a life which fulfils the ancient divine purpose, 'I will dwell among [them] and be their God.'" Pastor Bruce Milne

- **The Spirit's work:** "The imparting to these first chosen witnesses of a special insight and recollection concerning the words and works of Jesus ensured their preservation for the church in every generation. The fruit of that ministry is the New Testament. The Spirit's ministry in this respect was not to bring qualitatively new revelation, but to complete, to fill out, the revelation brought by Jesus himself." Pastor Bruce Milne
- **Peace in the world:** "When Jesus, in John's gospel, speaks of 'the world', it is more in the second sense. Think back to the Prologue (1.10): he was in the world, the world was made by him, but the world didn't know him. What is 'the world' here? It is the whole created order; but it's also the people who inhabit it, and who have rebelled against their creator. Jesus has, however, come 'into the world' (1.9), because 'God loved the world so much' (3.16) that he sent his son 'to rescue the world'. Confused? You might well be. But the confusion isn't John's fault. It comes from the way in which human wickedness has distorted everything. God's proper answer to this is both that he rejects wickedness and remains totally opposed to it, and that he loves the world, and the people, that he made, despite that wickedness. Jesus' coming into the world, as we have seen all along, brings both of these divine answers onto the stage of human history. He comes as the light of the world, so that people can have the light of life; but many prefer the darkness. There is, then, a sharp distinction between the followers of Jesus and 'the world'. Only when that is recognized can the next word be heard, which is another spectacular promise. Those who hold fast to Jesus, and refuse to settle for a second-best, compromised discipleship, will find that his peace comes to them as a gift--a peace of a kind that 'the world' can never give (verse 27). This peace will assure them of his presence and support, gladdening them with the knowledge that the Jesus they know and love, is indeed one with the father. The way to this peace, however, is through the sharp conflict that is about to come. 'The ruler of this world' is on his way, even now, coming to arrest Jesus." Professor NT Wright
- **The ruler of this world:** "Who is this 'ruler'? At one level, it is Caesar, whose soldiers will take Jesus to his death not many hours hence. At another level, it is the dark power that stands behind even Caesar, the spiritual force of wickedness named so briefly in the previous chapter, now using Judas as a poor, willing accomplice. Their courage and confidence is to be sustained by remembering what Jesus had done. He did what he did so that 'the world' might know that he loved the father. Called to follow him, we are to act in such a way that 'the world' will know that we love him." Professor NT Wright
- **Departure and return:** "But the themes of 'departure and return' are more complex than we might imagine. Jesus' departure refers to his glorification (that mix of subjects that begins with the arrest and concludes with his ascension). His return is likewise complex: In 14:18–19

Jesus' return seems to describe his 'Easter return,' when his disciples will see him. But in 14:21 we learn that another "coming" of Jesus to his disciples will result in his indwelling them spiritually (14:23). In each case—Jesus leaving, Jesus returning—the Holy Spirit plays a vital role in comforting, empowering, and reassuring the followers of Christ.” Pastor Bruce Milne

### Quotes related to the larger context:

- **The bigger picture:** *Chapters 13-17* form a unit, which is often called His “*Farewell Address*.” **13:1** begins, “*Jesus knew his hour had come to depart out of this world*”, and **17:1** begins, “*Father, the hour has come*”. The middle 3 chapters (**14-16**) are about another Comforter. The bullseye of this unit is the parable of the true vine, making it the central theme of the entire unit (**13-17**) “*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me*” (John 15:4). Why such a huge section on comfort and abiding in Christ? Well, because the disciples were becoming uneasy as Jesus ramped up the cryptic talk about His departure and death. Anxiety is evident in their questions (**13:36, 14:5, 8, 22**), and Jesus affirms His purpose for this address in **chapter 16:1**, “*I’ve said all these things to keep you from falling away*”; **16:6**, “*Because I’ve said these things, sorrow has filled your heart*”; **16:25**, “*I’ve said these things in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father*”; and **16:33**, “*I’ve said these things, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*” This unit of Scripture gives the church her marching orders (i.e., *to glorify God by loving one another like Jesus loves us*) and is filled with comfort for when the world wears us down and we lose sight of the goal.
- **Farewell Addresses:** “Academic studies have compared Jesus’ Farewell Discourse with those of dying teachers and leaders in antiquity. Jacob’s last words in Genesis 49 are typical of this form, as is Moses’ farewell in Deuteronomy 31–34. Not only does Moses identify his successor, but he gives teachings that must be recorded and a final blessing. Apocryphal Jewish literature from Jesus’ day offers more tantalizing parallels. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs each of the twelve sons of Jacob give farewell instructions, blessings, and prayers. In the Testament of Moses, we overhear Moses’ final words to Israel and Joshua. We even possess ‘testaments’ of Solomon, Job, Isaac, and Adam<sup>30</sup>—fictionalized farewells imagined by Jewish authors between 100 B.C. and A.D. 200. Jewish testaments imagine the dying (or departing) person surrounded by his most intimate friends and family. Standard literary elements generally appear. For instance, they always show a concern for the comfort and encouragement of those left behind. Often there is an exhortation to obey the law, and a deposit of writings is left behind.<sup>31</sup> In some cases, the departing person passes his ‘spirit’ to his followers or successor. Moses and Elijah do this respectively for Joshua and Elisha (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9; 2 Kings 2:9–14). In the farewell of Jesus many of these elements appear. He encourages his disciples and comforts them (John 14:1). He also urges them to be obedient (13:34; 15:12), and from John’s perspective the ‘literary deposit’ Jesus leaves behind is the Fourth Gospel itself. Moreover, Jesus promises that his Spirit will indwell and empower his followers following his death (14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:3, 13). In other words, we have in John 13–17 all of the elements of a Jewish farewell.” Professor Gary Burge

- **Change of focus in Chapter 13:** “This section signals a change of focus as Jesus turns to ‘his own’ and shows them his love...In the end there is no explanation of the cross other than the love of God. There can be no other, for we certainly do not deserve it and can never earn it.” Pastor Bruce Milne
- **The heart of God:** “Here, in five chapters (13-17), in only 155 verses, and in less than four thousand words we are given what the Puritan writer Thomas Goodwin called “‘a window into Christ’s heart.’” Professor Sinclair Ferguson
- **Book Context:** The Gospel of the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee, provides a clearly stated purpose. *John 20:30-31* says, “*Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*” Some people demand to have all their questions satisfied before bowing to Jesus, yet John claimed his limited account was enough to bring anyone to faith. As we read it, our Savior and friend emerges from the pages as a real person in the real world. Jesus shows us what we could become, if we too would rely on His infinite Father who will gladly supply whatever we need.
- **Life in his name:** Life is the Greek word, “zōē”, which means “Life, Living, Lifetime, Life-Giving” and is where we get the word, “zoology” in English. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says it's “used in the NT of life as a principle, life in the absolute sense, life as God has it, that which the Father has in Himself, and which He gave to the Incarnate Son to have in Himself, Jhn 5:26, and which the Son manifested in the world, 1Jo 1:2. From this life man has become alienated in consequence of the Fall, Eph 4:18, and of this life men become partakers through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Jhn 3:15, who becomes its Author to all such as trust in Him, Act 3:15, and who is therefore said to be 'the life' of the believer, Col 3:4, for the life that He gives He maintains, Jhn 6:35, 63. Eternal life is the present actual possession of the believer because of his relationship with Christ, Jhn 5:24; 1Jo 3:14, and that it will one day extend its domain to the sphere of the body is assured by the Resurrection of Christ, 2Cr 5:4; 2Ti 1:10. This life is not merely a principle of power and mobility, however, for it has moral associations which are inseparable from it, as of holiness and righteousness. Death and sin, life and holiness, are frequently contrasted in the Scriptures.”

## Other Articles/Songs/Videos:

### Direction for discussion leaders:

1. Keep circling back to the big idea and main points of the passage to stay on track.
2. Keep the discussion around 30mins. Go for a single, not a home run.
3. Keep the group small for deeper sharing. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.
4. Keep these simple questions in your back pocket: What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

### Preparation questions for our Easter sermon.

- Encourage yourself by soaking up the through found in 1 Corinthians 15. For an added bonus, read John 14-16 to discover what Jesus said his death and resurrection made possible.

### Application questions from our Easter sermon.

- By reading Ezekiel 36:26-27 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, we begin to see how the gospel is not godliness by reinventing ourselves, self-improvement, or sin-management. What must occur before stuff like doctrine, morality, consequences, or next steps will become useful? What does this imply about how we share the gospel message and embody the gospel story?
- All human effort is pointless if Jesus hasn't been "*handed over to die because of our sins and raised to life to make us right with God*" (cf. Romans 4:25 NLT). Where are you struggling to come to grips with the new person God says you are, and how might embracing this newness help you bring reconciliation to others?
- The peace Jesus left with us came through the conflict of the cross and is backed up by the supernatural power that raised Jesus from the dead. How can faith in the gospel story make us more peaceful, merciful, graceful, etc. when trouble comes? Galatians 5:22-26 lists fruit that the Spirit cultivates in us by grace through faith. As you review this list, share which of these have been hard for you to embrace and why.

### **Here are some great resources for digging deeper into community group life...**

How life together looks <http://austinstone.org/stories/film/item/140-missional-community-lukes-story>

Rethinking what we do [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvWnXYSELF4&feature=player\\_embedded](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvWnXYSELF4&feature=player_embedded)

Numerous articles to provoke thought <http://toddengstrom.com/archives/>

What groups of 2-3 might look like <http://toddengstrom.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LTG-Overview.pdf>