**Easter 2023**

**Resurrection Hope**

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Why have you come this morning? If you have come doubting Jesus’ resurrection, you’re in the right place. 1 Corinthians 15 addresses the historical reality of the resurrection. If you have come believing in Jesus’ resurrection but are not sure what to do with that you too are in the right place. In every one of us exists a longing for eternity. Ecclesiastes 3 tells us God put eternity in our hearts and none of us will be satisfied without eternal life. Tragically, some go to great lengths to seek eternal life but ignore Jesus’ resurrection. The body of Ted Williams, the baseball Hall of Famer, lays frozen in Arizona with the hope that technology might bring him back to life. We are hard-wired to live and to live forever. And if you have come hoping for help in dealing with the brokenness of your life, you too are in the right place. 1 Corinthians 15 describes the power of the resurrection in believing the gospel. 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 makes three statements that give us reason to celebrate Easter this morning. First, there is a reminder of the gospel (1-2), then he unpacks the reliability of the gospel (3-8), and finally he describes the power of the gospel to transform a life (9-11). As we will see, the gospel is not a fairy tale but the power to make all things new, to fix everything broken in your life and in the world. And this all hinges on the reality of the resurrection. So, my Easter message is Resurrection Hope from 1 Corinthians 15:1–11. Let’s listen and follow along as 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 is read for us. My big idea is that Jesus’ resurrection promises a new life and a new power for living.

1. **The Gospel Reminder (vs. 1-2)**

The apostle Paul reminds us of the resurrection (1-2). Without the resurrection, the gospel is meaningless and there is no hope (13-14). The Corinthians had received the gospel, were standing on the gospel, and were being saved by the gospel. The bible sees the gospel as a solid foundation necessary for the integrity of the structure it supports. The gospel is the only sure foundation upon which to build your life; any other foundation, belief system, is a faulty one that will eventually crumble (2). But the gospel is a solid foundation only for those who hold fast to the gospel. Faith is like gripping the bars on a merry go round so that you are not thrown off as it spins. Are you holding fast, living in daily depending upon the gospel.

We are reminded of the gospel because we easily forget it. I forget the gospel when, as a task oriented person, I feel good about myself when I accomplish all the tasks I wanted to accomplish in a day. A moralistic person forgets the gospel when they compare themselves to others and think they are better than them. One forgets the gospel when they respond to it, but drift away and thus believed in vain. Faith is holding onto the gospel like one holds onto the bars of the merry go round as it spins round and round. Hold onto the gospel, come back to the gospel. We are called to remember the gospel, then he describes the reliability of the gospel.

1. **The Gospel is Reliable (vs. 3-8)**

Paul summarizes the gospel with four verbs, action words: Christ died, was buried, was raised, and appeared (3-4). Christ died for our sins reminds us that the world is broken. Every one of us are tainted by sin, this intrinsic propensity toward sin. It twists everything good, warping our moral compass. G.K. Chesterton[[1]](#footnote-1) said it well “Original sin is the only doctrine that’s been empirically validated by 2,000 years of human history.” Sin alienates us from God, the source of life. Most of us know what it is like to be alienated from someone. Someone hurts you or acts badly toward you, the offense is so great that you are alienated from them. Sin is treason against God and so the alienation is great. The gospel is Jesus Christ died as our substitute to overcome this alienation, to provide forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Jn 3:16 The resurrection tells us that God vindicated Christ as having defeated sin and death. If Christ had not been raised, it would have proven that he was guilty of sin and condemned. But his resurrection demonstrates he is the Savior of the world and able to pay for sin. And his resurrection was no private affair. He appeared to Peter, the other disciples, and then to five hundred and James and finally to Paul (5-8). And most of the five hundred witnesses were still alive at the time of this letter. They saw him and his scars. The resurrection is a historical reality.[[2]](#footnote-2)

He rose according to the Scriptures (3, 4). Christ’s death and resurrection on the third day are anticipated by the Old Testament. God had established a principle of substitution of an innocent animal dying in the place of guilty humanity. And that a suffering servant who would die in the place of sinners (Isa 53:10).

1. **The Gospel Transforms (vs. 9-11)**

The resurrection promises that we are not powerless to sin. When we believe the gospel, we become connected to the source of Life, God, and the power of sin over us is broken and one day be completely removed. It is like that out of tune piano has been tune so that your life is playing a sweet and beautiful melody like it was created to do. Paul describes this transformation in verses 9-11. Paul points to his own life as an example of resurrection power that transforms a life. He went from hating the church and the gospel to loving the church and dying for the gospel. This labor that God’s grace worked in and through is his apostleship, proclaiming the gospel. He lived and died to make Jesus Christ known in the gospel. Paul calls this power to transform his life, the grace of God (10), God’s empowering presence in his life to overcome his brokenness and sin. Whatever your brokenness is, whatever struggle you face, the resurrection promises God’s grace to change those desires and impulses that you cannot.

**Responding to God’s Word . . .**

* Do you need to be reminded of the gospel?
* Do you know God’s love found in the gospel?
* Do you know the resurrection power of Christ in the gospel?

**Life Group questions:**

**Ice Breaker:**

Tell us your name and one truth about Easter you appreciate?

**Head**:

1. In your own words, describe the gospel?
2. Have you ever doubted the truthfulness of the gospel? Tell us about it.
3. What does it mean to hold fast to the gospel? Why is that contrasted to believing in vain?
4. Why do you think Paul points to so many different people who saw Jesus after his resurrection?

**Heart**

1. If the resurrection promises power to change us, why do we still struggle with sin?
2. What are some struggles you are facing presently in your life?
3. How does the gospel give us hope in the midst of our struggles?
4. Do you ever take the gospel for granted? Why?
5. Are there ways we can change that attitude? If so, how?
6. What is most encouraging about 1 Corinthians 15:1-11?

**Hands**

1. How does this passage encourage you to pursue Jesus?
2. What is one thing I can do to experience more of the power of the resurrection?
3. How is God speaking to me form this passage/message?
1. British journalist, literary and art critic as well as a philosopher and apologist who created the fictional priest-detective character Father Brown [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Former sceptic and Christian apologist, Josh McDowell says, “After more than 700 hours of studying this subject, and thoroughly investigating its foundation, I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the ‘most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, or it is the most fantastic fact of history.’” Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Arrowhead Springs, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1972), 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)