12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.
 As the opening verses of chapter 15 reflect on the historic salvation taught by the Apostles, we can’t help but wonder why Paul is bringing it up toward the end of the letter? The answer is now given to us in these verses. Verse 12 begins by reaffirming what was just stated, the Gospel includes raising Jesus from the dead.
 Despite this being part of the foundational teachings of the Gospel, there are those in Corinth who are arguing that there is no resurrection of the dead. Before we go too far some may wonder how there could be some in Corinth teaching this. There are a number of possible answers. One, it could be their view of spirituality vs physicality. We know certain pagan philosophers held a high view of the spiritual realm as being true and good whereas the physical realm was seen as bad and in need of being broken from.
 Whether this stems from Plato or Epicurius or some other Greek philosopher is a debate for the philosophers. One can imagine though that such individuals are incorporating such ideas into the Christian faith, and in doing this they would believe that to raise a corpse would be gruesome at best. Again, the physical world is what we are to escape.
 It is also possible that this is a reflection of the ultra spiritualists who believe that they had already made it, so to speak. Early in the letter Paul reflected on some who believed the Kingdom had come and they were now living in it. Paul argued, however, that the kingdom has dawned but not been consummated yet. As such there is still a ways to go. Still, assuming there were such ultra spiritualists they too would see the physical as a negative rather than positive.
 Whatever their reason the simple truth is there are those who are denying an essential proponent of the Gospel itself.
 Thus Paul continues using reason and logic in order to argue against them. When we formulate logical thoughts we often utilize two forms of argument which are “if then” statements. The first is Modus Ponens which affirms the if and then statement. So, If the sky is blue then there will is no rain. The sky is blue therefore there is no rain. If A then B. A therefore B.
 The other way we use logic is by Modus Tollens in which case the “if” statement is negated by the “then” statement. Said another way, if A then Be. Not B therefore not A. If we use the analogy above it would be something like this. If the sky is blue then there is no rain. There is rain, therefore the sky is not blue.
 There are a number of other logical principles, but when it comes to most of life we utilize these methods most of the time. Let’s say you are working on a car, you will use both modus ponens and modus tollens as you work on it. You replace one part thinking, “If I replace this part then the car will run.” You replaced the part, therefore the car is running. Conversely if the car is not running then we know the part was not replaced, or further, or you will know that the part was not the problem! In other words, these words are just what it is called to do something you’ve been doing for your whole life, using logic to solve problems.
 Anyway, in this case, Paul utilizes modus ponens in order to follow the logical conclusion of the argument the dead are not raised. If the dead are not raised, then Jesus Himself has not been raised. Indeed this is the logical consequence to the belief that the dead are not raised. It is then false to believe in the resurrection of Jesus because He was raised from the dead.
 This then leads to verse 14. If there is no resurrection of the dead not only does it mean that Christ Himself was not raised, but it also means that whatever the Apostles are preaching has no value. The proclamations mean nothing, the preaching means nothing. Likewise, any faith that they have in Christ is also valueless. Because the resurrection is one of the foundational principles of the faith, without it the rest of it collapses as well.
 This then leads to verse 15 where Paul focuses on the Apostles themselves. These individuals who have gone out proclaiming this Gospel to others have done so claiming that God Himself has done something in this world. If, however, the Gospel is not true then their proclamations are a lie. In which case they are falsely claiming God has accomplished something He has not actually done. As such, the Apostles would be nothing more than liars and charlatans.
 Paul reiterates the point in verse 16. All of these things would be true out of necessity if what some in Corinth are believing that the dead are not raised. Most importantly, Jesus Himself is not raised. If Jesus Himself has not been raised.
 Paul then brings it all together. If Christ has not been raised, then their faith is, again futile, it has no value. Why is this? Because it ultimately means that their still in their sins. Their sins are not forgiven, they are still guilty before God, and will face judgment for their sins. There is no salvation to be found in Christ if He has not been raised from the dead.
 This is true not only for them, but also for those who have believed and died. They believed that through Jesus they too would experience a resurrection. If it is true that the dead are not raised, and it is true that Jesus has not been raised, then it is also true that there is no hope for those who have died. Indeed, Paul will often use the term “fall asleep” to describe the faithful who have passed. But he cannot say they “fall asleep” but must conclude that they have truly perished, should the resurrection be false.
 Paul makes the final concluding remarks. If there is no hope in a future resurrection, then anyone who believes in Christ should be pitied rather than listened to. All of the apostles at this point have experienced persecution. They have experienced their friends dying. They have experienced wave after wave of attack spiritually and physically. They have lost much, and some have lost everything in this life.
 Indeed, to be pitied is the best of circumstances for such individuals who have given everything in this life to follow Jesus. There is no reward, no future peace, no hope in the future. It is literally people sacrificing themselves for nothing. For a promise that will be left unfulfilled. Meanwhile, if right now is the only life there is, then the only thing we can do is eat, drink, for tomorrow we die. A sad conclusion for the Apostles, but also for the whole world.

Main Point: The main points of these verses are for Paul to utilize logic in order to see the ramifications of a belief that certain Corinthians have. They believe that there is no resurrection of the dead, but in claiming this they must also claim that Jesus hasn’t been raised, and if this has not happened, then there is no good news in the Gospel on any front. Their sins are still unforgiven, and whatever sacrifices they have made are for nothing. If this is the only life there is, then they, of all people, should be most pitied.

Application Points
1). If Not True: I find these verses to be incredibly interesting when it comes to the Christian faith. Paul has begun a logical argument concerning the resurrection of Jesus. Oftentimes we believe that logic and reason are far from the ideal of absolute faith. Yet, what do we find? We find Paul utilizing logic and reason to make his argument concerning the resurrection of the dead.
 I wanted to point this out because of our often misunderstanding about what faith is. We often believe that faith is completely blind trust. This, however, is not the case when it comes to the Scriptures. Throughout the Scriptures we see God doing incredible things, showing His power, His wisdom, His mercy, and His love. He is not a God who demands blind trust, but has continued to prove to us all that He is worthy of that trust.
 When it comes to the Gospel itself we see this to be the case. He does not expect anyone to simply believe. Instead, He sent His Son in time space history and flesh who was encountered by many individuals, and to which his life, death, and resurrection was attested to by many who both believed in Him before and after these events took place. What He accomplished through Jesus allowed belief itself to flow, faith to flourish, in a reasonable and logical framework of redemption.
 This redemption does not just lead to the saving of our souls. It leads to our entire life experience being redeemed. Our soul, absolutely, but also our reason, our affections and emotions, and our physical bodies. The whole of human experience is redeemed by this work of Christ, and as such we can and should continue to glorify God by seeking to honor Him with the gift of a fully redeemed life.
 I say all this for the purpose that we would not think little of using reason in order to work through important issues. Our God is a reasonable God. He is all knowing and has utilized wisdom, according to Scripture, from the beginning when it comes to the creation of the world. Indeed, we see how even in creation He does not place fish on land and land animals in the sea. He places them exactly where they need to be in order for them to flourish in this system He has created. This requires wisdom, to know where to place, what to place, and in what manner in order for the blessings of existence to grow.
 As such, it is good for us to utilize our reason when it comes to understanding who God is and what He has accomplished. It is good for us to consider His ways and what He does in order to better understand His holy character. In order for us to wade through the often difficult unknowns in our own time, knowing what God has accomplished can help us wade through the decisions of our own beliefs and stand on firm ground when it comes to this life.
 So, when we see Paul utilizing reason and logic here it should not cause us to be groan with the concepts. Instead, we should learn from the apostles example and utilize our own reason when it comes to this world around us. In order to make clear and rational arguments for the sake of the Gospel is no small thing, it is just as important as any other ways in which can glorify God in this life.
 Thankfully, the time of logic and reason did not end with Paul. Throughout the past 2000 years of Church history we have seen many of the faithful utilize logic and reason in order to provide light during dark times of doubt and uncertainties. We should rejoice in those who came before us whom God used to show the concreteness of His plan of redemption and salvation, rejoicing that our God is not a God of chaos, but of order of the highest kind.
 One such individual I can think of who has been used by God in such a way is Blaise Pascal. Pascal lived from June 16th 1623 to August 19th 1662, dying at the age of 39. He was a writer, physicist, mathematician. He even invented the first barometer. Indeed when it came to probability, especially, Pascal was brilliant. He was not always a completely faithful individual, but eventually had an experience which solidified his faith leading him to use his rational mind for the sake of God and His glory.
 One of my favorite quotations from Pascal comes from his book Pensées, published after his death and which means “thoughts.” At one point he says, “"When I see the blindness, the wretchedness of man, when I regard the whole silent universe, and man without light, left to himself, and, as it were, lost in this corner of the universe, without knowing who has put him there, what he has come to do, what will become of him at death, and incapable of all knowledge, I become terrified, like a man who should be carried in his sleep to a dreadful desert island, and should awake without knowing where he is, and without means of escape. And thereupon, I wonder how people in a condition so wretched do not fall into despair. I see other persons around me of a like nature. I ask them if they are better informed than I am. They tell me that they are not. And thereupon these wretched and lost beings, having looked around them, and seen some pleasing objects, have given and attached themselves to them. For my own part, I have not been able to attach myself to them, and, considering how strongly it appears that there is something else than what I see, I have examined whether this God has not left some sign of Himself." -Blaise Pascal, Pensées, Section XI: The Prophecies, 692.
 Thus, Pascal searched and continued to find the evidence of this Designer, of this God. One of the most interesting things Pascal then created is what is called “Pascals wager.” This is not an argument for whether or not God exists, but whether even taking the time to search and or believe is worth it.
 The wager goes like this. There are two options before us. Either God does not exist, or He does exist. Each has two potential outcomes. If he does not exist and you do not believe in Him you lose nothing and you also gain nothing. Conversely, if you do believe He exists you lose some worldly pleasure and joy in this life, you refrain from certain vices that could cause pleasure, but like the one who does not believe you gain nothing in the end.
 Conversely, if God does exist the same two options are provided, but are radically different when it comes to conclusions. If God does exist and you do not believe that you gain a little pleasure here in this life, but lose an infinite amount of pleasure in the life to come. Likewise, if you believe in God you lose a little pleasure in this life, but gain an infinite amount of pleasure in the life to come.
 Now, this, again, is not a proof of God’s existence, but any rational person would have to take seriously whether or not God exists based upon the potential outcomes. Indeed, logically, the best potential outcome is that God exists and you believe. In fact, when we consider the possibilities of all that we see and experience, this is the most logical conclusion we should come to, and we should believe just based upon the logic of it. For even a potential for an infinite amount of joy is worth any limited joy sacrificed in this life.
 So the point has been on logic and how Paul utilizes logic and reason to make his points thus far. So let’s not forget this when it comes to the Christian faith, it is not just blind faith, but a reasonable faith.
 Still this now makes us wonder why he has utilized such logic? The answer is to show the absurdity of the view that the dead are not raised. His main point being that if the dead are not raised, then Jesus Himself is not raised. If Jesus is not raised, then the whole of the Gospel falls apart. Instead, it is continues the theme of death found throughout the Scriptures since the Garden.
 With Christ, however, the theme of death is overcome because of the resurrection. That Jesus died for our sins according to the Scripture, that he was dead, buried, and raised according to the Scriptures, is all the truth of the Gospel. Take away any piece, and the whole of it collapses. A rejection of the physical resurrection is thus a rejection of the Gospel itself.
 This comes with it a particular danger even in our times. We often highly prize the “spiritual” rather than the “physical.” We often believe that in death there will be a sweet release. Yet, throughout the Scriptures death is always the enemy. Why? What occurs at death? Why is it an enemy?
 Because it goes against what we are made to be. Two times in the scriptures it specifies that death is a separation of body and soul. The first is when Rachel dies in Genesis, “16 Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor, and she had hard labor. 17 And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for you have another son.” 18 And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. 19 So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), 20 and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. It is the pillar of Rachel’s tomb, which is there to this day. 21 Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.” Genesis 35:16-21.
 Here we clearly see that the separation of Rachel’s body and soul is associated with death.
 The second is with Jesus. We read, “28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” 29 A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” John 19:28-30.
 In both of these situations we see that the separation of body and soul is what death is. This is the enemy. This is not at all what God had planned from the beginning. Indeed, when He created humanity it was as a physical being with a soul. The separation of this, the decomposition of the body, the returning to the earth, is the judgment of God against humanity for sinfulness. The soul persists, the body decays, but originally it was meant that both should continue together.
 For there to be no physical resurrection would mean that death had not been conquered. If death is not conquered, then our hope and our faith is in vain. There is no hope for a future, because death simply persists. If Christ Himself has not been raised, then there is no hope for anyone, or anything, in this world.
 We, then, the Apostles, and all believers, are most to be pitied. For it means sacrifice here and now. It means letting go, and following Christ, here and now. It means that all that we live for, the glory of God through obedience to Christ, is annulled and meaningless.
 Let us not, then, forget the greatness that is the resurrection of the physical body. It is not something that should be discouraged or rejected. Instead, it is part of the whole. It is part of the foundation on which we stand. Without the physical resurrection, all is lost, but if there is a physical resurrection, then redemption has come through Jesus, the first fruits to be raised from death, and all that we have heard and proclaimed concerning the witness of Christ is true.
 As such, let us hold firm to the reality of who we are as human beings. We are physical, we are spiritual, and the great enemy of death separates the two. The physical resurrection which is claimed by Jesus is one which we rejoice in, and one which we seek to hold to knowing our hope is in Him forevermore. If not true, then we are most to be pitied, if it is true, then we are the least to be pitied.