

J.J.

WHAT IF JESUS DID NOT RISE FROM THE DEAD?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

ANNOUNCEMENTS :

- Pray for the facilities
- Baptism class May 05, 2013 (Baptism is an ordinance of Christ and is a picture of the resurrection)
- Summer Camp June 7,8,9

INTRODUCTION :

I will be resigning as a pastor. After studying the Bible for quite some time, I came to the conclusion that Jesus did not rise from the dead. APRIL FOOL'S DAY!!!!

William J. Bausch shares: "In the Greek Orthodox tradition, the day after Easter was devoted to telling jokes. . . .They felt they were imitating the cosmic joke that God pulled on Satan in the Resurrection. Satan thought he had won, and was smug in his victory, smiling to himself, having the last word. So he thought. Then God raised Jesus from the dead, and life and salvation became the last words."

Let's say :

HE IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! (Indeed means, you're sure it's true because you have proven it yourself)

But what if Jesus did not rise from the dead?

1 Corinthians 15: ¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Pray

When I was thinking about this Resurrection Sunday's sermon, I was contemplating on showing to you again the Biblical account of the resurrection and at the same time presenting hard evidences and arguments that prove that our Lord rose from the dead.

I chose to go the other route.

First, my past sermons on the resurrection have already covered the topic I was thinking about. **Second**, I'm assuming most of you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Third, if you are here and are skeptical about Jesus rising from the dead, may I humbly propose to you that you must provide evidences for your doubt. Because no one has ever provided indisputable evidence that Jesus did not rise from the dead. The skepticism of people regarding the resurrection shows more of their stubborn and unbelieving hearts.

On the contrary, the authenticity of the resurrection account has been very clear historically and philosophically.

Background :

Paul was reminding the Corinthian church regarding authenticity of the Gospel and to hold on to it firmly.

1 Corinthians 15 :1 Now, brothers and sisters, 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.

One of the crisis of faith some people go through even Christians regarding their faith, “Is this true?” “Is there really a God?” “What if I die and there’s really nothing beyond this world?” “What if Jesus is just a man who died on the cross and was venerated to become a God?”

These are the tough questions about our Christian faith that was blasted away BY THE FACT THAT OUR LORD JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD.

- **It is His resurrection that proves Jesus as the Son of God.**

Romans 1:2-4 The sacred writings contain preliminary reports by the prophets on God’s Son. His descent from David roots him in history; his unique identity as Son of God was shown by the Spirit when Jesus was raised from the dead, setting him apart as the Messiah, our Master.
(The Message)

- **It is His resurrection that proves that there is life beyond death. Our physical death is not the end of life.**

John 11: ²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”
(NIV)

- **It is His resurrection that assures us that God has forgiven our sins.**

True Story : There’s this pastor who was preaching about the Son of God being crucified and there was a Jew at the back listening and he interrupted the sermon and said something like this, “Jesus was a common criminal who was crucified on the cross.”

What if that was true? It means that only a man died for you and me. That’s not enough to pay for our sins because God demands a perfect sacrifice and substitute. We’ll talk about this later.

Romans 4: 25 He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God. (NLT)

***Quote** : The resurrection is God's "Amen!" to Christ's statement, "It is finished." – S. Lewis Johnson

• **It is His resurrection that assures us that He is present with us and intercedes for us.**
Matthew 28: 20 "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"

Romans 8:34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died –more than that, who was raised to life –is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us

• **It is His resurrection that assures us of the rapture and that He will come again to judge the world.**

1 Thessalonians 4:14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep"

Two Sundays ago, we have talked about the rapture and God giving us glorified bodies. It is the resurrection that assures us it will happen.

1 Corinthians 15: ¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

***Regarding Jesus coming back again to judge the world.**

Acts 17:31 "For he [God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead"

This is what Paul was trying to assure the Corinthians that Christ is going to raise us up from the dead (rapture) by assuring them again about the reality of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15 : ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters 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.

The reason why I highlighted "most of whom are still living" because Paul was saying to them like this "A lot of people have seen the resurrected Christ, you can go and ask them yourself." **By the way, no one who claimed to have seen the resurrected Christ have recanted/withdrawn their statement even under the threat of extreme persecution, trials and even death. Why?**

IT'S BECAUSE THEY HAVE REALLY SEEN WITH THEIR OWN EYES THE RESURRECTED CHRIST! HE IS RISEN!!! HE IS RISEN INDEED!!!

Now, the very reason the church gathers on a Sunday and calls it “The Lord’s Day” is because our Lord resurrected on a Sunday.

Now for the sake of argument,
WHAT IF JESUS DID NOT RISE FROM THE DEAD?

I. OUR FAITH IS A FAKE

¹⁴ *And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.*

In short, you’ve been ripped off.

Illustration : I’m a skeptical person. If you say something to me, I don’t immediately believe unless I see proof. Maybe it was brought about by a traumatic experience when I was in Prep 5 years old (now the incident is humorous to me) and my Nanay promised me that she will buy me Royal Tru-Orange (softdrink). I love Royal Tru-Orange! But we had a miscommunication. I thought she said she will buy me during recess but what she said, she will buy it for me after school. I was so excited to the thought of drinking this softdrink during recess that no one could wipe the smile off my face. Come recess time, I was about to go out of the school gate. My mom’s office was just across the school. The problem is I was 5 years old and there’s strict rule that no one goes out of the school gate during recess. I never knew that so when I ran past the guard, he grabbed me by the collar of my polo shirt and pulled me back. I cried, howled, pushed while he was carrying me back to the classroom. That was very traumatic. When I got to my Nanay after she picked me up from school, I told her the story and she was laughing but also sorry and we went to the canteen of her office and there was no Royal Tru-Orange. I had to content myself with 7-up.

Etymology : useless; vain “kenos” useless, void, null, empty, meaningless, folly, no effect,

Remember that we come to faith through the preaching of God’s Word.

Romans 10: 13 for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

We believe in Jesus Christ because somebody, somewhere you have heard what Christ did for you on the cross and it is only through faith in Him and believing Him as Lord and Saviour that you will go to heaven.

What’s the proof that all of these “preaching” about Christ taking the punishment and wrath of God for you is true?

***HE IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!**

II. OUR LIFE IS A LIE

More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead.

Etymology : false witnesses “pseudomartyrs”

The reason why Christians live the kind of life they are living right now is because they know that Christ is alive “raised from the dead”

In order for you to be saved, you need to believe that Jesus is Lord and that He rose from the dead.

Romans 10: 9 If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Sidenote : To declare/confess means to have conviction about something.

Example : You know you are determined about something if you say it loudly like, “I’m going on a diet!”

Now, to declare that “Jesus is Lord” means that you are determined to follow Him! Now, how can you follow someone who is dead?

Illustration : Dr. Seamands tells of a Muslim who became a Christian in Africa. "Some of his friends asked him, 'Why have you become a Christian?' He answered, 'Well, its like this. Suppose you were going down the road and suddenly the road forked in two directions, and you didn't know which way to go, and there at the fork in the road were two men, one dead and one alive--which one would you ask which way to go?'"

That's why you really need to believe that Jesus is alive right now because He rose from the dead. And indeed, He is alive and that's why we call Him, “Lord”

Romans 14:9 Christ died and rose again for this very purpose--to be Lord both of the living and of the dead.

Now, I have told you that before “To live the Christian life is not hard, it is impossible.”

***We know to be a disciple of Christ means to follow Him. It will entail**

- a change of lifestyle (that is pleasing to God.)
- a change of loyalties (like your set of friends)
- a change of priorities (going to church, praying first, studying the Bible)

Why do we that? It's because we want to be good witnesses of Christ.

***Quote** : It is through our words and actions that show whom we follow.

Illustration : Paul was a murderer and persecutor of Christians before he got converted. **Why did he get converted? It's because he saw the risen Christ!!!** (Acts 9) His whole life has changed – his lifestyle, loyalties and priorities.

So if Jesus did not rise from the dead, He is not really “Lord”, so why do we need to change our lifestyle, loyalty and priority. WHO ARE YOU DOING IT FOR? In short, you are living a lie.

That's why Paul emphasized that in

1 Corinthians 15: ³²If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

In short, what am I suffering for if I will not rise from the dead? Why would I need to be persecuted? It's because I know the Lord rose from the dead that someday I will rise from the dead to meet Him face to face.

Illustration : One of the things that you know if a person is a Christian or not is if he has a personal relationship with Jesus. This relationship is shown and cultivated by praying. Just like you cultivate and show your friendship or relationship with someone by talking with them.

A book entitled “Letters to a Christian Nation” written by atheist Sam Harris says that praying is talking to an “imaginary friend”. Let me quote from the book of Ravi Zacharias quoting Harris

***Quote :** What was God doing while Katrina (strong typhoon) laid waste to New Orleans, he asks? “Didn't he hear the prayers of those who “fled the rising waters for the safety of their attics, only to be slowly drowned there”? These people, Harris insists, “died talking to an imaginary friend?”

Now, let me ask you, when you are praying, how would you know you are not just talking to an “imaginary friend”. Does it mean that you are just talking to the ceiling when God did not answer your request according to the way you wanted it?

So how would we really know that our CHANGE OF LIFESTYLE, OUR CHANGE OF LOYALTIES, OUR CHANGE OF PRIORITIES IS ALL WORTH IT? How would we know that God hears our prayers?

HE IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

III. OUR DESTINY IS A DISASTER

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Etymology : futile “mataios” no result, no purpose

How did we become saved?

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith --

We know that Jesus has carried our sins on His shoulders and He was punished by God in our behalf and by believing that, we are saved, we have eternal life.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then our faith in Christ has NO EFFECT. Why? It's because it proves that His death on the cross did not conquer anything. He remained dead.

Remember,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death;

So when you take away sin, you take away death.

Now,

Hebrews 9:27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

But since He rose from the dead, it means He already took away our sin which means he took away death which means we are not to face judgment anymore.

It means, we are not lost anymore, since we know where we are going. We have eternal life because we are not in our sin anymore. It's because

Romans 6:9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him.

Acts 2: 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

***That's the reason Paul added**

If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Etymology : pitied “eleinos” miserable

***Quote : If Christ did not rise from the dead then we will not rise from the dead, we are the most pathetic, most miserable people on earth because we are believing something that is not true, we are living a life that will not amount to anything and we are looking forward to nothing.**

But Paul says :

1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead

CONCLUSION :

As Christians we know that OUR FAITH IS REAL, OUR LIFE IS TRUE AND OUR DESTINY IS SURE and then let me add, our prayers are heard, we know Christ is in our midst to help us, we can have confidence that the words “I will never leave you nor forsake you “ is true because

HE IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

S.G.D.