

## Is Christianity A House of Cards?

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Brandon Phillips / General Adult

Resurrection Day / Death; Cross; Resurrection / 1 Corinthians 15:9–15

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## Pre-sermon Comments

### Introduction to our Text

Just as the heart pumps life-giving blood to every part of the body, so the truth of the resurrection gives life to every other area of gospel truth. The resurrection is the pivot on which all of Christianity turns and without which none of the other truths would much matter. Without the resurrection, Christianity would be so much wishful thinking, taking its place alongside all other human philosophy and religious speculation. ~ John MacArthur

## The Context of [1 Corinthians 15](#)

### The Biblical Context of [1 Cor 15](#)

#### **Exodus 3:13–15 LSB**

<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am about to come to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ And they will say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” <sup>14</sup> And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” <sup>15</sup> And God furthermore said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name from generation to generation.

#### **Matthew 22:23–30 LSB**

<sup>23</sup> On that day *some* Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and asked Him a question, <sup>24</sup> saying, “Teacher, Moses said, ‘IF A MAN DIES HAVING NO CHILDREN, HIS BROTHER AS NEXT OF KIN SHALL MARRY HIS WIFE AND RAISE UP A SEED FOR HIS BROTHER.’” <sup>25</sup> “Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no seed, he left his wife to his brother; <sup>26</sup> so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. <sup>27</sup> “And last of all, the woman died. <sup>28</sup> “In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had *married* her.” <sup>29</sup> But Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. <sup>30</sup> “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

#### **Matthew 22:31–32 LSB**

<sup>31</sup> “But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, <sup>32</sup> ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

### **The resurrection of Christ was a basic theme of the Apostles’ teaching**

#### **Acts 2:22–28 LSB**

<sup>22</sup> “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— <sup>23</sup> this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put *Him* to death. <sup>24</sup> “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.” <sup>25</sup> “For David says of Him, ‘I SAW THE LORD CONTINUALLY BEFORE ME; BECAUSE HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.’ <sup>26</sup> “THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;” <sup>27</sup> BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT FORSAKE MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR GIVE YOUR HOLY ONE OVER TO SEE CORRUPTION.” <sup>28</sup> ‘YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.’”

#### **Acts 3:1 LSB**

<sup>1</sup> Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth *hour*, the hour of prayer.

#### **Acts 4:1-3 LSB**

<sup>1</sup> Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple *guard* and the Sadducees came up to them, <sup>2</sup> being greatly agitated because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. <sup>3</sup> And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.

#### **Acts 17:30-31 LSB**

<sup>30</sup> “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now commanding men that everyone everywhere should repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He determined, having furnished proof to all by raising Him from the dead.”

#### **Acts 17:32 LSB**

<sup>32</sup> Now when they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some *began to* sneer, but others said, “We shall hear you again concerning this.”

#### **1 Corinthians 15:1-2 LSB**

<sup>1</sup> Now I make known to you, brothers, the gospel which I proclaimed as good news to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup> by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I proclaimed to you as good news, unless you believed for nothing.

### Five proofs of the resurrection from [1 Cor 15:1-2](#)

#### *The Presence of the church ([1 Cor 15:1-2](#))*

#### **Matthew 16:18 LSB**

<sup>18</sup> “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

#### **Matthew 16:21 LSB**

<sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

*The Proof of the Scriptures ([1 Cor 15:3-4](#))*

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4 LSB**

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

*The Testimony of the Eyewitnesses ([1 Cor 15:5-8](#))*

**1 Corinthians 15:5-8 LSB**

<sup>5</sup> and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> After that, He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, <sup>8</sup> and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

*Paul was an Uncommon Messenger ([1 Cor 15:8-10](#))*

**1 Corinthians 15:8-10 LSB**

<sup>8</sup> and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

*The Apostles and Paul had Duplicate Messages ([1 Cor 15:8-11](#))*

**1 Corinthians 15:8-10 LSB**

<sup>8</sup> and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

**1 Corinthians 15:11 LSB**

<sup>11</sup> Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

"We have often asserted, and we affirm it yet again, that no fact in history is better attested than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It must not be denied, by any who are willing to pay the slightest respect to the testimony of their fellow-men, that Jesus, who died upon the cross, and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, did literally rise again from the dead." ~ Charles Spurgeon

The resurrection is a fact better attested than any event recorded in any history, whether ancient or modern. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

### **1 Corinthians 15:12 LSB**

<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

## Sermon Text

### **1 Corinthians 15:13–20 LSB**

<sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. <sup>15</sup> Moreover we are even found *to be* false witnesses of God, because we bore witness against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. <sup>20</sup> But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

## Proposition and Outline

**In [1 Cor 15:13-19](#), the Apostle Paul warns of six disastrous consequences if there is no bodily resurrection for believers. If there is no bodily resurrection for believers, then:**

**Jesus has not been Raised ([1 Cor 15:13](#))**

**All Biblical Preaching is Vain ([1 Cor 15:14a](#))**

**Your Faith is Vain ([1 Cor 15:14b](#))**

**The Gospel Message is a Lie ([1 Cor 15:15–16](#))**

**You are Slaves to Sin, not Christ ([1 Cor 15:17](#))**

**There is no Eternal life in Christ([1 Cor 15:18–19](#))**

## **Jesus has not been Raised ([1 Cor 15:13](#))**

### **1 Corinthians 15:13 LSB**

<sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised.

### **Acts 2:22–24 LSB**

<sup>22</sup> “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— <sup>23</sup> this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put *Him* to death. <sup>24</sup> “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

### **Acts 2:25–31 LSB**

<sup>25</sup> “For David says of Him, ‘I SAW THE LORD CONTINUALLY BEFORE ME; BECAUSE HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN. <sup>26</sup> ‘THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE; <sup>27</sup> BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT FORSAKE MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR GIVE YOUR HOLY ONE OVER TO SEE CORRUPTION. <sup>28</sup> ‘YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.’ <sup>29</sup> “Men, brothers, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup> “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SET *one* OF THE FRUIT OF HIS BODY ON HIS

THRONE,<sup>31</sup> he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER FORSAKEN TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SEE CORRUPTION.

#### **Romans 10:9 LSB**

<sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

The resurrection of our divine Lord from the dead is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine. Perhaps I might more accurately call it the keystone of the arch of Christianity, for if that fact could be disproved, the whole fabric of the gospel would fall to the ground. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

#### **Hebrews 11:1 LSB**

<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

## **Our Preaching is Ineffective ([1 Cor 15:14a](#))**

#### **1 Corinthians 15:14 LSB**

<sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

#### **1 Thessalonians 1:5 LSB**

<sup>5</sup> for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full assurance; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

#### **1 Thessalonians 1:6 LSB**

<sup>6</sup> You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

#### **1 Thessalonians 1:9 LSB**

<sup>9</sup> For they themselves report about us what kind of an entrance we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

## Our Faith is Empty ([1 Cor 15:14b](#))

### 1 Corinthians 15:14 LSB

<sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

### 1 Thessalonians 2:1 LSB

<sup>1</sup> For you yourselves know, brothers, that our entrance to you was not in vain,

"The resurrection is not merely important to the historic Christian faith; without it, there would be no Christianity. It is the singular doctrine that elevates Christianity above all other world religions." ~ Adrian Rogers

## The Gospel message is a lie ([1 Cor 15:15-16](#))

### 1 Corinthians 15:15-16 LSB

<sup>15</sup> Moreover we are even found *to be* false witnesses of God, because we bore witness against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible. ~ Charles Colson

"The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is more powerful than anything else we believe. By His resurrection Jesus proved He is who He says He is. Be confident in this truth. Stand on the Holy Word of God. Don't sell the world a false bill of goods. Preach the word. Defend the faith. Live the faith." ~ Charles Colson

## You are Slaves to Sin ([1 Cor 15:17](#))

### 1 Corinthians 15:17 LSB



<sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

**Genesis 2:16–17 LSB**

<sup>16</sup> And Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may surely eat; <sup>17</sup> but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

**Romans 6:23 LSB**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**James 1:15 LSB**

<sup>15</sup> Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully matured, it brings forth death.

**Ecclesiastes 3:11 LSB**

<sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

## There is no Eternal life ([1 Cor 15:18–19](#))

**1 Corinthians 15:18–19 LSB**

<sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

**1 Corinthians 15:32 LSB**

<sup>32</sup> If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.

The resurrection is God’s “Amen!” to Christ’s statement, “It is finished.” ~ **S. Lewis Johnson**

**Romans 6:8–9 LSB**

<sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

## The Gospel

### **God**

#### **Created and owns everything**

[Gen 1:1](#)—*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*

[Psalms 24:1](#)—*The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.*

#### **Is Perfectly Holy**

[1 John 1:5](#)—*This is the message we heard from Him and announce to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

[Matt 5:48](#)—*Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

#### **Requires perfect obedience to His Law**

[James 2:10](#)—*for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

### **Man**

#### **Has broken God's law**

[Rom 3:10,23](#)—*there is none righteous, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

#### **Will pay the eternal penalty for his sin**

[Rom. 6:23](#)—*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

## **Cannot save himself by his good works**

[Titus 3:5](#)—He saved us not based on works which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

## **Christ**

### **Came to earth both as God and sinless man**

[Col 2:9](#)—For in Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form

### **Demonstrated God's love by dying on the cross to pay sin's penalty**

[Rom 5:8](#)—But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us

[2 Cor 5:21](#)—He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

### **Rose from the grave and is alive today**

[1 Cor 15:4](#)—And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

## **Sinners**

### **Must repent of all that dishonors God**

[Isa 55:7](#)—Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

[Luke 9:23](#)—if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

### **Must believe in Christ as Lord and Savior**

[Rom 10:9](#)—that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

## Will you repent and believe in Christ?

[Acts 17:30](#)—therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.

Don't hesitate to contact Pastor Brandon or Pastor Keith if you have any questions about this sermon or if you would like to know how to follow Christ.

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## Quotes About the Resurrection

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

The ascension placed Jesus Christ back in the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. The ascension, not the resurrection, is the completion of the transfiguration. ~ **Oswald Chambers (Lecturer and Missionary)**

*Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf of springtime.* ~ **Martin Luther (Founder of the German Reformation)**

In his life Christ is an example, showing us how to live; in his death he is a sacrifice, satisfying for our sin; in his resurrection, a conqueror; in his ascension, a king; in his intercession, a high priest. ~ **Martin Luther (Founder of the German Reformation)**

"The present age is Easter time. It begins with the resurrection of the Redeemer and ends with the resurrection of the redeemed. Between lies the spiritual resurrection of those called into life through Christ. So we live between two Easters, and in the power of the first Easter we go to meet the last Easter. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

The electric telegraph, though it be but an invention of man, would have been as hard to believe in a thousand years ago as the resurrection of the dead is now. Who in the days of pack-horses would have believed in flashing a message from England to America? Everything is full of wonder till we are used to it, and resurrection owes the incredible portion of its marvel to our never having come across it in our observation—that is all. After the resurrection we shall regard it as a divine display of power as familiar to us as creation and providence now are. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

The resurrection of our divine Lord from the dead is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine. Perhaps I might more accurately call it the keystone of the arch of Christianity, for if that fact could be disproved, the whole fabric of the gospel would fall to the ground. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

*Immanuel*—God with us in our nature, in our sorrow, in our daily work, in our punishment, in our death, and now with us, or rather we with Him, in resurrection, ascension, triumph and Second Advent splendor. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

The resurrection is a fact better attested than any event recorded in any history, whether ancient or modern. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

Perhaps the transformation of the disciples of Jesus is the greatest evidence of all for the resurrection. ~ **John Robert Walmsley Stott (English Preacher)**

The Christian church is helpless and hopeless if it is stripped of the reality and historicity of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. ~ **A. W. Tozer**

Oneness with Christ means to be identified with Christ, identified with Him in crucifixion. But we must go on to be identified with Him in resurrection as well, for beyond the cross is resurrection and the manifestation of His Presence. ~ **A. W. Tozer**