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Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for your blessings and your goodness. And we thank you for how great of a God that you really are. Father, we ask that as we come together tonight that you will protect us from the distractions around us, protect us from the outside world and allow us to focus on you today.

Father, I pray that as we hear from your word today that we will be conformed to you, that we will glorify you. And Father, I pray that this time will be beneficial for us. Father, I pray that you will help me today to preach your word in Jesus name. Amen.

Good evening everyone and welcome back to Church of the Bible. It's been a long couple weeks and I know we've had some cancelled services with things going on. So next week everything will be back to normal. We'll meet Wednesday at 6:30, we'll continue our study through Luke chapter 5 and then Friday at 1:30 we will resume our meetings in Cedar, so everything's back to normal. With that said, we're going to Continue Tonight in First Corinthians we'll be in chapter 15.

I'm going to try to finish the entire chapter today, but it's big so we may not. As we get started though, I want to set the background for chapter 15. As we come to the end of the book, Paul will turn his attention to the resurrection. Now, we need to remember, in the overall scheme of this book, the overall point of it is correction. Everything we've read.

Paul is correcting the church in Corinth, correcting them on how to behave, correcting them on how to love, correcting them on lawsuits, correcting them on marriage, correcting them on all sorts of things. One of those things is the resurrection. The church in Corinth had a belief that there was no resurrection in Corinth. They didn't teach that, but they instead believed that they did not believe in a body that would come after this. And it was an issue that Paul had to address.

So this chapter is broken up into several different sections. He will begin with why there is a resurrection, beginning with the fact that Jesus did rise from the dead. He would then correct issues that they have in the church regarding baptism in correlation to resurrection. He will then talk about what the resurrection will be like. And none of us have been resurrected, including Paul.

So he uses. He will use analogies and objects to try and describe the resurrection. And then he will discuss why the resurrection is necessary. Not not only that Christ resurrected, but why we need to be resurrected, why it's necessary for us. So let's begin.

And we're just going to read verses one through eight here at the start. Paul says, now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I passed on to you as most important, what I also received. That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the 12. Then he appeared to over 500 brothers and sisters at one time.

Most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to the apostles, last of all, as to whom born at the wrong time. He also appeared to me. This is a really important passage. We've read it before.

In fact, we read it last in April when we discussed, or March this year. Actually, March was Easter this year. It was the last time we read it. And so I talked about this passage a little more in depth then. So I will discuss it briefly and move on so we can get to parts we've not discussed.

But this is really important. First, the Gospel of Jesus is broken down right here in the first four verses. If you ask people what the gospel is, you'll get several answers, one of them being, I don't know. If you are a Christian, you should know the gospel and I don't know. If you don't know it, how are you saved?

How are you a Christian? The Gospel is the foundation of what we believe. But then you. And you'll get other answers ranging from all sorts of different theological perspectives. Some with a pre existence, some with penance, some with purgatory, some with all sorts of things.

And the Gospel is none of that. The Gospel is very simple and it stems from a word which means the good news. That's what the Gospel means. And the gospel is this in verse four, that Jesus was. Or sorry, starting in verse three, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, right?

So his death was according to scripture. Not just that it happened, that the scriptures and the prophets predicted that it would happen. They prophesied it and it was necessary that he was buried and that he raised on the third day according to the scriptures. That's the Gospel. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That's the good news, is he has paid our sin. He's ransomed us. Now the rest of this chapter is the evidence for it, which we talked evidence really, really, really deep back in March. But the evidence here that he presents, and we'll keep simple, is he appeared to Cephas. Someone saw him alive.

The basis is not that the grave was empty, alone. An empty grave is a good basis. But that alone is not enough evidence to prove the resurrection. But then he was seen by someone. He was seen by Cephas, right?

Then he was seen by the 12. Then he appeared, it says to 500 brothers and sisters at one time. If someone wants to say that Peter or the others or Mary and Mary had wanted it so bad that they hallucinated it. How do you explain away 500 people at one time? And then look what he says.

He says this for a reason. Most of them are still alive. One of the biggest key pieces to this is this could not be folklore, right? A lot of people today will claim that the resurrection of Christ is a legend, right? The biggest thing that makes a legend a legend is it's based first on history.

It's based on a real story. That's the first thing about a legend. All of the legends we have today, King Arthur than the knights at their own table. All of our legends are based on historically accurate facts. But the events that did happen.

But then as you move further and further away from the historical events, they get built upon and they get bigger and better. Right there they're exaggerated. So what went from a realistic, impossible event turns into this supernatural, unhuman event, right? Like King Arthur and his sword. And so that's what makes it a legend, is it starts as truth.

And then the further away you get, the more exaggerated the story gets. That did not happen with the Resurrection. The Resurrection was a basic story that the further removed from Christ you got, right, the further away from witnesses, the bigger the story got. But the story started big and it stayed big. And it's never changed.

For 2000 years it's the same story. However, back to the. The whole matter of why he says that they are still alive. If you doubt that he raised from the grave at this time, if you doubt that people saw him, you could go and ask.

That's why he mentions it. These people are still alive. You don't believe in the Resurrection, Go ask them.

They saw him, they talked to him, they touched him.

Then he appeared to James, the brother of Christ, the half brother of Christ. And then he says, last of all, he appeared to Paul.

Verses nine through 11, he says, I am the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them. Yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me, whether then it is I or they.

So we proclaim. And so you have believed. Very simple passage here. Paul sets an example of humility in the way he views himself. Today we tend to as a church, tend to view Paul as one of the greatest apostles.

But look at his attitude toward himself. He says, I'm the least. He says I'm not worthy. This example of humility is praiseworthy for Paul, but also something we should seek to realize ourselves. We are probably not the greatest.

And one thing all the great people have in common is they don't. They don't think that they're great. The greatest, they set themselves low.

So we should not boast ourselves up, be puffed up with conceit, and think that we are what we not. In fact, Paul said that earlier here in the book. But also we are not worthy, right? Paul recognizes he is not worthy to have the grace or the apostleship that he has. I think a lot of people would think, well, I'm worthy.

I've done this I've done that. Look at all these people I helped. Look at these good deeds. We are not worthy because the mountain of sin that we have, it far outweighs the good that we've done. But look what Paul specifically says.

He says, I persecuted the church of God. The reason this is important is what one, this comes up in the letter when it does intentionally. We're talking about the resurrection and we are talking about a group of people who do not believe in the resurrection. So if the. If.

If cephas and the 12 and the 500 and James, all who saw Christ are not enough, then Paul the apostle who persecuted the church of God, who murdered Christians, who separated and tore apart families simply because they proclaimed the resurrection of Christ, should be enough. He is known. He was known throughout the entire region for being the persecutor. So much so that when he got saved people and he started preaching, people thought it was an act to find the Christians, to persecute them.

This story is outlined in the book of Acts.

But number two, the reason this is important so one, is the resurrection and the evidence for it, the fact that persecutor turned believer. But number two, it shows that we are not too far gone to be saved, right? We can even be persecutors of the Church of God. And by his grace we can be saved. We can be murderers and we can become saved.

God can rescue us no matter where we are in life because of his grace, right? He even says that because of the grace of God, I am what I am. Moving on, let's read verses 12 through 19. He says, now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain. And so is your faith. Moreover, we are found

to be false witnesses about God because we have testified wrongly about God, that he raised up Christ, whom he did not raise up. If in fact, the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless. You are still in your sins. Those then who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone. Okay, a lot of stuff here.

So first he poses this. If Christ really has been resurrected, really has been saved, seen by more than 500 people, then how can you say there's no resurrection of the dead.

It's a simple question, but it's profound in its implication. If he has risen, how can you proclaim he is not? Now he moves on into this hypothetical and teaches us a few things. First, if Christ does not resist, then we are still in our sin. That's a problem.

No other world religion has offered a solution for our sin, except for Christianity. And if Christ did not in fact raise, then he had not paid the debt of our sin, right. That resurrection, the raising of Christ, is a receipt, as it were, is the evidence that God accepts, accepted his payment for us, the ransom. Second, because of that, he says in verse 19, if we have put our hope in Christ and he is not risen, then we should be pitied more than anyone because we are the only group of people who have a solution for sin. We live our lives according to that solution and dedicated to someone.

If we dedicate our lives to someone, someone who had not in fact paid for our sins, then he said we should be pitied.

And then number three, he teaches us, if Christ had not been raised from the dead, then we find ourselves to be liars because we teach something that had not happened. Paul taught the resurrection. Peter taught the resurrection. James taught the resurrection. Barnabas taught the resurrection.

All of the church fathers taught the resurrection of Christ. And he says, we will be found liars if he had not risen from the dead and not just they. And that's important for Paul at the time to say, if this has not happened, then I have been found a false witness. Because Paul established the church in Corinth. So he's saying, if he had not risen and I'm a false witness, why are you following my teachings?

But even today we would be found to be liars if Christ had not risen from the grave. So the summary of Christian faith is our faith is dependent upon the resurrection of Christ Christ, and so is all of Christianity. If the resurrection of Christ is true, then so is everything else Christianity teaches. But if the resurrection of Christ is false, then Christianity falls apart. There is no Christianity without the resurrection.

Verses 20, 28 he says, but as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive. But each in his own order. Christ the first fruits afterward at his coming, those who belong to Christ.

Then comes the end when he hands over the kingdom of God to the Father, when he abolishes all rule and all authority and all power. For he must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death. For God has put everything under his feet. Now, when it says everything is put under him, it is obvious that he who puts everything under his him is the exception.

When everything is subject to Christ, then the Son himself will also be subject to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

So the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of our resurrection. The fact that he could resurrect and has all things subjected to him guarantees that we can be resurrected. But it says this. There's an order in the resurrection. First Christ and then those who belong to Him.

However, if we look in the Book of Thessalonians, it will give us actually a little bit more depth to that order. So first Christ would be resurrected. Then those who are asleep in Christ, the dead who have already been buried will resurrect next. And. And then those of us who are alive in Christ will be resurrected.

It also teaches us this. It says, because death came through a man, that is an Adam, the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden is what brought sin and death into the world. So it says, so in Christ, we will all be made a way, right? God did it that way intentionally. In the Book of Romans, Paul refers to Christ as the second Adam, right?

We had the man who brought wickedness, so we have the man who brought righteousness. Through man came death. And through man, a man, right? Who's also God, but through a man came life.

Now it tells us something. After the resurrection will come the end, right? Paul is kind of fast forwarding at this point to the end of time. After the resurrection, the Rapture, we will have. The Book of Revelation will take place, right?

We'll have what we know as the Great Tribulation. At the end of the Great Tribulation, we will have a millennial reign of Christ. And then at the millennial reign of Christ, we will have that final judgment where the Book of Life and the Book of Death are opened up and God will finally judge everything. And at that point, God will put an end right? To.

He'll put an end to hell, he'll put an end to Satan, he'll put an end to those who are perishing. He will toss them into the lake of fire where they will stay forever and establish his kingdom. Now, it says here that if everything is put under Christ, it is obvious that the one who puts everything under him is the Acceptor, meaning that the Father is not submitted to Christ. It's obvious. If I have the authority to give all power to you, then I'm the exception to your power, right?

If I can give all power to you, you cannot exercise power over me because I am the one who extended it to you. So I can take it away as well. Same thing with the fog and with the Son. Here Jesus has submitted himself to the Father, even though he is equally God. Right, and has all the rights of God.

We see and we read this in Paul's letters. He submitted himself to the point of death. He became humble as a servant, became submissive to the will of God. So the Father and the Spirit are not subject to God, but all other things are subjected to him.

Verse 29. So it says this. Otherwise what will it they? What will they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them?

Why are we in danger every hour? I face death every day as surely as I may boast about you, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus as a mere man, what good did that do me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Do not be deceived.

Bad company corrupts good morals. Come to your sense and stop sinning. For some people are ignorant about God. And I say this to your shame.

I personally hate this passage. And the reason I hate it is this passage has been subjected to so much abuse and so much corruption, misinterpretation, twisting and taken out of context that it has misled millions of people to the gates of hell.

In particular, where we live here, there is a church who uses this verse right here. It says, what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? And they use this to support an act that they call baptism for the dead. Right? Surrogate baptism.

And I am guilty of having participated in that in times past. Right? Because here's the logic. If there is no baptism for the dead, then why does Paul reference baptism for the dead? In fact, you will notice that Paul never discourages baptism for the dead in this.

He never criticizes it. He never says anything negative about baptism for the dead. So if it's not a thing and not a teaching, why did Paul not criticize it? Surely this would be a great place to do it. So the logic goes in these churches that twist it, that take it out of context.

If Paul didn't criticize it, then it must be a thing. So the first question we have to ask then is, what does it mean to be baptizing for the dead? So in my study for this chapter, because I want you to make sure before I taught, I've had my own view and my own explanations. In the past, I wanted to be sure I understood it well enough to teach you. And I came to a realization.

Do you Note There are 36 different interpretations of this verse?

It's a lot of different interpretations, a lot of ideas of what it can mean.

And so to stand here today and say that I can tell you for a fact the meaning of this verse. I don't think anyone could do that. So many we don't have access to the earliest teachings regarding it. And with so many ideas of what it could mean and no real consensus, all we can do is speculate. However, there are two accepted ideas.

And when I say accepted, I mean if you take all of the 36 different interpretations of it, there are two that you see found a lot. And the first is that he is talking about surrogate baptism.

I'm going to dismiss surrogate baptism right now, though, for one reason. If baptism is not required to enter the kingdom of God, right, It's a work. And we believe that we are saved by grace and not by works, then why would baptism for a dead even be a thing? Second, even if baptism were required, the fact that you did not choose to follow Christ before you died and get baptized, that would. That would be it.

That would terminate it, right? You cannot make a choice for me.

You cannot choose on my behalf after I'm dead to believe in God and be dunked and have it count for me. I have to choose for myself to follow God. Third and third, and there is a belief among some denominations that you do have to be baptized and that if you die before accepting God, accepting Christ and being baptized, that you weren't saved. And I say to that, first, what about the man on the cross, the man who confided in Jesus and acknowledged who he was in that final moment? And he said, you will be with me in paradise today.

What about him? They didn't pull him from the cross. They didn't baptize him. And what would that say about God? What would that say about God if in this moment I accepted him?

I accepted that gift he gave me. And then no ability on my own to control circumstances. I got hit by a bus. But you can see there's issues with that. All cases of not receiving baptism are not a case of disobedience.

It's One thing to disobey and say, I'm going to follow Christ and not get baptized. And it's another to say, lord Jesus, I realize who you are and I confess my sin to you, and I ask you to save me and get hit by a bus on my way to be baptized. So there's problems with this idea that the church in Corinth practice surrogate baptism. Now, another idea that I had, this was taught to me when I first got saved here, here in a Baptist church, was

that this is referring to the fact that if Jesus did not raise from the dead, then you were being baptized into a dead person. And what good does that do you?

The problem I have with this interpretation, and I accepted it for quite a while, it seemed to make sense. If Jesus is dead and you are being baptized into Jesus, then you are a dead person walking. And so what good does it do to baptize the dead, right? Referring to yourself as being dead. However, this idea and interpretation doesn't fit with this sentence, right?

If Paul left it as, why are you being baptized for the dead? Might accept that. Other than this, it says, if the dead do not rise at all, why are people baptized for them? Right? Now, the sentence baptized for them no longer gives the idea that they are a dead person, right?

Spiritually dead, being baptized into a dead person, but it almost gives this idea as if they are being baptized on behalf of someone else. But we just ruled out surrogate baptism. So if not surrogate baptism, then what? Well, another idea going around that scholars have. Have speculated about was a known practice not only in Corinth, but in.

In a large portion of the Middle east of the Was to be baptized as a memorial, right? And the concept was being baptized in anticipation of being reunited with my loved ones, particularly if on their deathbed, I became converted to Christianity.

And this is what Paul is talking about when he says being baptized for them, it's not on their behalf, but rather it's in anticipation of seeing them.

And this is a practice that was not only common then, but even happens today.

And so if this practice happened then and today, I find it very likely or at least appealing to suggest this is the practice that Paul is talking about. There are those in Corinth who do not believe in the resurrection, but are being baptized in anticipation of seeing their loved ones. And he's criticizing them for it for this reason. Baptism, by its very nature, speaks of the resurrection. Because what is baptism?

We read about it in Romans 6. In the first six verses, right? Paul tells us what baptism is baptism is we are symbolically dying to the world, dying to ourselves. We are being buried under the water. That's what happens when we go under the water is we are being buried, we're going to the grave, and then we rise out of it in newness of life.

We symbolically resurrect into a new life. So the very act of baptism says that there's a resurrection. And if this is the case, if the very act of baptism suggests a resurrection, then he says, if there's no resurrection, if they do not rise, then why are you being baptized in anticipation of seeing your family members who are dead? They don't rise. So this is less even about criticizing baptism.

He's not even criticizing baptism in anticipation of seeing your family. He's not taking up an issue with that. His issue here is the inconsistency in their teaching. It's inconsistent to say I do not believe in a resurrection and to also practice baptism.

So Paul is using, rather than bring it, introducing this new theological idea of surrogate baptism, which I cannot accept and we cannot see. Rather than introducing this theological idea, he is instead using a practice that Corinth has to show the hypocrisy in their belief. And then he says this to even. To even support baptism. Further, he says, if the dead don't raise at all, why are we in danger?

Now, what he means by this is they're not in danger because they rise or don't rise. But the very act, especially

back then, of baptism is public. And remember, this is at a time when people are still being beheaded and crucified and stoned and thrown off cliffs for professing the name of Christ, for saying they believe in him and follow him. So he says this. If the dead don't raise, if the resurrection isn't real, then why do we go through this act of being baptized publicly and putting our lives in danger?

What good does it do us if the dead don't rise? Let's not do this act that puts a death sentence on us.

So the two of his supporting arguments for the resurrection is the baptism speaks of the resurrection, and we shouldn't do it if we shouldn't be baptized and put our life in danger, if it's not real. And then he says this. Finally, he says, if the dead do not rise, if there's no resurrection, he already established that our faith is vain, right? Because Christianity, if the resurrection is false, Christianity falls apart. So look what he says.

Let's eat, let's drink, for tomorrow we die. Basically, if there's no resurrection. Go and do what you want.

Just go and do whatever because it doesn't matter. With no resurrection, there's no consequence.

But then look what he says. He says, don't be deceived. Right? There is a resurrection. And bad company corrupts good morals.

Right? Get a group of 20 people with 18 of them being no good doers and two of them being sensible people, and what do you think will happen? Are those 18 no good doers? Will they become better? Will they become like the two sensible people?

Or will those two sensible people become like the 18 no good doers?

I can guarantee 99% of the time those two people will become no good doers.

So bad company corrupts good morals. This tells us something. If we have bad company, we need to separate ourselves from them. It's one thing to die in a sinner. Christ died dying with a sinner.

It's one thing to invite them to gatherings.

You cannot convert someone. You cannot show someone the love of God if you reject them. However, being able to be around them, to show them love is different from having bad company, but it's different from surrounding yourself exclusively with. With people who are up to no good.

Right? We cannot surround ourselves with that. We also, and I'm going to say this more dogmatically, right. If there are people who are not sensible toward theology, who, who cannot be changed, we also have to realize bad company when it comes to theology can corrupt good theology as well. So something to be cautious about.

It's not just morals, but also theology. So Paul says in conclusion to this, we're going to end here tonight. He says, come to your senses and stop sinning.

Through the whole Book of Corinth, Paul has addressed sin after sin.

He's addressed sinful sexual relationships. He's addressed the sinful abuse of our rights and freedoms. He's addressed the sinful lawsuits between Christians in heathen courts. He's addressed the rejection of authority between women and their husbands. He's addressed sinful issues when it comes to modesty.

And he says, you live as if there's no resurrection, but come to your sense and stop sinning. And there's people today, they live like there's no resurrection.



But here's the reality. The reality is this. And, and we will talk about this in greater depth next week. You'll see this in the last half of this chapter. The reality is there is a creator God.

He's there. The reality is he has a holy law, and he will enforce that holy law and require a payment for that holy law or the violation of that holy law. And the reality is you are a violator of that holy law. So there's a problem. There's a God who has a law and requires a penalty for violating it.

And you have violated it.

So what's the solution? The solution all the way back to verse three, right? Three and four. He says this, that Christ died for our sins, was buried and raised the third day. And some of you live like Christ, did not die for you.

So come to your senses and stop sinning.

I have someone looking at me very, very weird right now.

Leave it at that. He says, don't be ignorant. And he says this to their shame because they've been taught this.

They know this.

And to drive the point home, because some people might say, well, I've not been taught this. I don't know this. Some of you might say that, right? Right. Now, Paul told in Romans 1, he says, the very nature of God, his invisible nature, his existence is made manifest to us through the visible creation.

We can't ignore it. We can't say we didn't know it.

And so I propose to you tonight, if you're hearing this and you are coming to your senses, I ask you to receive Jesus Christ. I ask you to admit right now that there is a God, that you are a sinner. And that either you have to pay the penalty for your sin or let Christ pay for it. And I ask you to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the God man who died, was buried and rose again. And I ask you to confess him as your Lord, your God and your King.

And if you do those things, he says that he will save you. He will save you from this sin, he will save you from the penalty, and he will guarantee your resurrection. And we'll talk about what that looks like next week. If you're ready to do that, I'll invite you to confess those things to God in our closing prayer with me. Immediately after, we'll partake of the Lord's Supper, his communion, as we recall and remember his death, burial and resurrection.

And then on Wednesday at 6:30 we will continue our study in Luke, chapter five. Let's pray. Father, I admit that I am a sinner, that I cannot save myself, that my ways are wrong and yours are right. And I believe, Jesus, that you are the God, man, creator of heaven and earth, who died for my sin and rose again, secure in that victory over death. And I confess you, Jesus, as my Lord, as my God and king, and I will submit myself to you and I ask you for this holy and precious gift.

Father, I pray that as we come to an end to tonight, that we will come to our senses, that we will not be ignorant about you. That we will, Father. That we will exemplify your life and walk in newness of life. And we thank you for what you have done for us. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.