

Dead Men Save No Souls

1 Corinthians 15:12-19; Coast Community Church; 2-25-2024

Introduction

“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance, the only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” — C.S. Lewis

What if Jesus wasn't raised from the dead?

1. Christianity is empty. (12-14)

If Jesus wasn't raised, then there is nothing to what we say or believe.

*Our **preaching** is vain. (14) 'Preaching' = an announcement from a herald; like Jonah (Matthew 12:41)*

*Our faith is **vain**. (14) 'Vain' = empty, without basis (support), without content (substance); like the slave sent to the vine-growers (Mark 12:3)*

Jesus was either a lunatic or a liar or the Lord and the resurrection is necessary for this determination! (Mark 3:20-27) But if Jesus was raised from the dead, preaching is gloriously appropriate. And if Jesus was raised from the dead, our faith is fully vindicated. (1 Peter 1:17-21)

2. Christianity is a lie. (15)

If Jesus wasn't raised, then what we say is actually lying about God and what He has done.

*We are **false witnesses** of God. (15) 'False witness' = pseudo-martyrs = giving a false witness or testimony (deceiving by lies); like those at the trial of Jesus (Matthew 26:60)*

God takes very seriously what we say about Him and what we say He says! (Job 42:7-9) But if Jesus was raised from the dead, then we are witnesses to God's own testimony. We are testifying to what God has done. (Acts 5:33-39)

3. Christianity is worthless. (16-18)

If Jesus wasn't raised, we are unforgiven, without the hope of heaven (at best) and on our way to hell (at worst).

*Your faith is **worthless**. (16-17) 'Worthless' = empty, fruitless (futile; unprofitable); as in Titus 3:9*

*We are still **in our sins**. (17) 'In our sins' = in the realm of sinners under the condemnation of God*

*Those who have died believing have **perished**. (18) 'Perished' = to lose, destroy, perish (John 10:10; 3:16; 6:39; 10:28)*

The Bible reveals that people can expect one thing (without any basis) and receive the opposite! (Luke 16:19-31) But if Jesus was raised from the dead, then our faith is priceless. And if Jesus was raised from the dead, then we are forgiven and accepted by God. We are delivered from our sins and will be satisfied in God. And if Jesus was raised from the dead, then those believers who have died are in paradise today and will be resurrected one day. (John 14:1-6)

4. Christianity is just sad. (19)

If Jesus wasn't raised, our foolish trust in a dead man should cause people to feel sorry for us.

*We are to be **pitied**. (19) 'Pitied' = miserable; pitiable (to feel sorry for someone in a miserable condition, especially when they don't even know it); like those in Laodicea (Revelation 3:17)*

To put all our hope in something or someone and to be terribly wrong is a pitiable thing. (Luke 24:13-27) But if Jesus was raised from the dead, then we have every reason to believe and to even suffer and die believing. We have no reason for pity or shame. (Micah 7:7-9)

Application

- Be careful of the ideas you embrace.** Ideas have (logical and real) consequences, so check your sources. (13) (John 8:31-32; Luke 6:39)
- Be careful to speak the truth about God.** What we say about God can betray men, so watch your language, so to speak. (15) (Psalm 73:12-17)
- Make sure that what you believe in has meaning beyond this life.** Christianity is primarily about the life to come, so fix your eyes on that. (19) (1 Peter 1:13-16)

Conclusion

Without the reality of the resurrection of Jesus and therefore, the resurrection of believers, Christians are simply like the Emperor who thought and acted like he was clothed beautifully when he was really naked (*The Emperor's New Clothes*). For us as sinners to stand before a holy God, naked and without a covering for our sin, we are exposed to a righteous wrath. But the good news is that all who trust the resurrected Lord Jesus will be covered by His blood and His righteousness and can stand unashamed and without fear in the presence of God! And will enjoy the pleasures of eternal life in a resurrected body! The resurrection of Jesus testifies to this!