

Lighthouse Bible Church

April 5th, 2015 Easter Sunday

1st Corinthians 15: 1 – 11 *Scripture Reading: 1st Corinthians 15: 12 - 20*

‘The Resurrection Gospel’

Stand – Read – Pray

Chapter 15 of 1st Corinthians is one of the greatest chapters in all the Bible dealing with the resurrection, the raising of the dead, not only of Jesus Christ but the raising of all born again believers.

That is what we, as born again believers, celebrate today known as Easter or resurrection Sunday. We celebrate it on this day because, according to **24: 1** and other places, His resurrection occurred on a Sunday. But we celebrate His resurrection every day because that is the foundation on which Christianity is built. Without Jesus being raised from the grave, we have no present or future hope and we have no promise of being raised ourselves.

Jesus, as God in human form, was crucified, buried and then 3 days later rose from the grave, as we shall see in our passage, to eternal life and is the **only one** who can offer eternal life and the **only way** to eternal life. Jesus said in **John 11: 25 – 26** **I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me thought he may die, yet shall he live and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.** Then He said in **John 14: 6**, because He rose from the grave, **I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me.**

That is why for us, today and every day, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important, because if He did not rise from the grave and there is no resurrection after death then our life and message are hopeless and meaningless as was read earlier in Verses 12 – 20.

There were people in the time Paul, wrote this letter to the church at Corinth, and there are people in our day today that do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ or the resurrection of anyone who has died. They either don't believe in God **or** believe in reincarnation **or** believe that God is love and won't send anyone to hell **or** that everyone is going to heaven or that they are good enough to get to heaven **or** their religion and religious practices would get them to heaven **or** their own self-righteousness would get them to heaven, **or** they just don't know what to believe. If that is you here today, then please listen carefully because your eternal destiny is at stake.

Because there is overwhelming evidence both inside and outside of the Scriptures that prove that Jesus Christ did die, that He was buried, and that He rose from the grave 3 days later to provide eternal life to all who would call upon Him to be saved.

Think about this, if someone wanted to disprove the resurrection of Jesus Christ all they would have to do is produce His body. But when they went back to the place where He was buried, **John 20: 1 – 13**, **Luke 24: 1 – 2**, & **Matthew 28: 5 – 6** and other places said 'He was not there'.

Even the enemies of Jesus couldn't account for where His body was so, according to **Matthew 28: 11 – 15** they **bribed the soldiers**, who were watching over the tomb, **with a large sum of money to tell everyone that Jesus's disciples came and stole His body at night while they slept**. The problem with that is, as a Roman soldier you did not sleep or allow anyone to roll the stone away and not be able to account for the body, under threat of death.

Besides that, if the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus, what did they do with it? And if they had stolen the body of Jesus, they would be following a dead Savior just like every other religion and then every message preached would be empty, their faith would be empty and futile, they would be false witnesses and they would still be in their sins headed for hell.

One of the greatest proofs for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fact that all the Apostles saw Jesus alive after His death, as we shall see, and many of His disciples, 500 at once, saw Him alive after His death.

And after they saw Him alive, they were no longer afraid but became bold in their sharing about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ even under the threat of beatings and imprisonment, torture and death. So let's look at this passage and see the message they proclaimed and that we still proclaim today and the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the resurrection gospel, good news that gives us hope for today and for the future.

Verse 1- 2: Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

Paul starts out where every message about the resurrection starts out and that is with the **gospel** that he **declared** and **preached to them**. He had shared the gospel with them and back in **Chapter 4: 15** he said **I have begotten you through the gospel**, I became your spiritual father through the gospel.

Then Paul says the gospel I preached to you, about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, **you received it and you stand in it**. You heard the gospel, you understood it and you received it and now you are continuing to stand in it, you are holding to it, you are not wavering from it. That same word **stand** is used in **Ephesians 6: 11 – 14** where we are called to **stand against the wiles of the devil...by putting on the whole armor of God**.

Paul then says it was the gospel message, Verse two, **by which you are saved**.

Paul says it is the gospel message about the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ that you received, in which you stand and what saved you.

Romans 1: 16 says **I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation...Romans 10: 17** says **faith** (saving faith) **comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God**, the resurrection gospel. So what are they saved from? You see the gospel saves a person from the divine punishment for unforgiven sin, for sin that has never been atoned for.

The Bible says in **Romans 3: 23** that **all have sinned and come short of the glory of God** and **Romans 6: 23** **for the wages of sin is death**. That is why **Romans 5: 12** says **for as by one man sin entered the world and death through sin, so death passed to all men because all have sinned**. That is because way back in **Genesis 2: 17** God told Adam that he could eat of any tree in the garden but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he could not **because on the day you do, you shall surely die**, both physical and spiritual death and separation from God.

As a matter of fact, **Revelation 20: 10, 15** describes the place of separation as **eternal lake of fire** where the unsaved are **tormented day and night forever and ever**. And because we have all sinned, if your sin has never been forgiven or atoned for, then you need to be saved from the punishment that your sins deserve.

So how does someone get saved from their sin and its punishment in order to have eternal life in heaven? Good question. Because of God's great love for mankind, He made the way possible to have your sins forgiven and atoned for and it was through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the very message Paul shared in Verses 3 – 4.

Because **God so loved you He gave His only begotten Son that if you would believe in Him, you would not perish but have everlasting life** in heaven **John 3: 16** says.

God demonstrated His own love for you in that while you were yet a sinner Christ died for you Romans 5: 8 says. Remember that the wages of sin is death! Well, God sent His own Son to die in your place, to be punished in your place.

The reason He punished His own Son was because His Son, Jesus Christ, took upon Himself all of your sin and my sin. **Isaiah 53: 6 says the Lord laid on Him the iniquity or sin of us all. Galatians 1: 4 says He gave Himself for our sins... 1st John 2: 2 says that Jesus is the appeasement for our sins and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

How did Jesus appease God's wrath and punishment for sin? By dying a cruel bloody death on a cross, because the Bible says in **Hebrews 9: 22 .. without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness. In Revelation 1: 5 it says Jesus washed us from our sin in His own blood.** Describe where Jesus bled from on His body.

Jesus, the Son of God, was the only one who could appease Gods wrath and die for your sins of **lusting** and **adultery** or **lying** or taking the **Lord's name** in **vain** or committing **murder** in your **heart** by being **angry** with someone or for **disobeying** your **parents** or **not putting God first** in everything, which are all part of the 10 commandments and God's moral law. Because as **2nd Corinthians 5: 21 says He who knew no sin, Jesus was sinless, became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

An exchange took place. God treated Christ, His own sinless Son, as though He were a sinner and guilty of every sin ever committed by those who would believe, even though He never once sinned, and had Him die as a substitute to pay the penalty for the sins of those who would believe in Him. Thus God's wrath was appeased through His death.

The other part of the exchange is that God treated every person who would ever believe in Him as if they never committed any sin and were perfectly righteous as Jesus Christ, even though they are not. Christ bore their sin so they could bear His righteousness. That is why Jesus had to die on the cross.

After Jesus died on the cross, He was buried in the tomb of a rich man named Joseph, of Arimathea, **Luke 20: 50 – 53** said, thus fulfilling the scripture in **Isaiah 53: 9** that He would be **buried with the rich at His death**. Jesus was buried late Friday, in the tomb all day Saturday and into the early part of Sunday, fulfilling what Jesus said in **Matthew 12: 40** for as **Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the great fish so will the Son of Man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth**.

That tomb had a large stone rolled in front of it and would be typically sealed with wax and the governors signet ring impressed into the wax so that if that seal were broken without his authority, it would mean death to the one who did. It was also guarded on the outside by Romans soldiers who, under threat of death, would not let anyone inside the tomb. Read **Matthew 27: 62 – 66** .

But if the story ended there, we would be like any other religious group; serving and following a dead, so called savior or prophet or great teacher or religious or political leader. But we love and serve a risen, living Savior, Jesus Christ.

That is what Easter is all about, Jesus victory over sin and death and the grave. The grave could not hold Jesus and death could not conquer Him because **death was swallowed up in victory 1st Corinthians 15: 54 – 55** and He rose from the grave to everlasting life. That is why in all the gospel accounts when they go to the tomb, the stone is rolled away and Jesus body is gone. An angel was sent, the gospels says, to tell those who came to the tomb **why do you seek the living among the dead, He is not here He is risen just like He said. Luke 24: 5 – 6**.

And because they couldn't account for the body they had to bribe the Roman soldiers to make up some ridiculous story. Look at **Matthew 28: 11 – 15**. But guess what, after His resurrection He began to show Himself alive to His disciples.

Look at **Verses 5 – 8**

He was seen by Peter

He was seen by the 12

He was seen by **over 500 people at one time**

He was seen by James

He was seen by all **the apostles**

He was seen by **Paul**

Then Paul says in **Verse 11**: **so we preach and so you believed.**

You see, it is the gospel of Christ that has the power of God to save someone from sin and death. That is the message we are called to preach so that others may believe. You who are born again believers here today are called, as **ambassadors for Christ, 2nd Corinthians 5: 18 – 20** says to **plead with lost sinners to believe the resurrection gospel.**

That is our plea to you here this morning who may have never been born again, have never had your sins forgiven or atoned for. The work has already been done by Jesus death on the cross and His subsequent victory over sin and death at His resurrection. All you have to do is what Verse 1 says **receive it**, receive it as it is, the word of God, not of men. You can have no part in being saved from your sin. **Ephesians 2: 8 – 9** says **for by GRACE you have been saved by FAITH, not of yourselves, it is a GIFT of God not of WORKS.**

The Bible says that **by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in His sight**. In other words there is no religious or benevolent work that you can do that will justify you before God or make you in a right standing before God. Only when you have the righteousness of Christ given to you can your sin be appeased and forgiven.

That can only happen when you believe that you have sinned against a holy God and that you deserve hell and death and God's wrath and judgment and punishment for your sin.

It can only happen when you believe that God loved you enough to send His own Son to be punished and die in your place, for your sin; not His, and that He appeased God's wrath and was accepted by God because God raised Him from the dead.

It can only happen when you repent, turn away, from your sin and confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and then, by faith, receive Him as your Savior.

And then, as Verse 2 says **hold fast** to the gospel that saved you and the Word of God that can keep you by the power of His Holy Spirit, unless you believed in vain. You see there are some people who say they believe and even profess salvation but have never truly received and stood, persevering in their faith to the end. What about you?

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Introduction:

Luke 24: 1, John 11: 25 – 26, John 14: 6
1st Corinthians 15: 12 – 20, John 20: 1 – 13
Luke 24: 1 – 2, Matthew 28: 5 – 6, 11 – 15

Verses 1 – 2:

Standing in the Gospel:
1st Corinthians 4: 15, Ephesians 6: 11 – 14

Saved by the Gospel:
Romans 1: 16, 10: 17, 3: 23, 6: 23, 5: 12
Genesis 2: 17, Revelation 20: 10, 15

Saved from what, why and how:
John 3: 16, Romans 5: 8, Isaiah 53: 6, 9
Galatians 1: 4, 1st John 2: 2, Hebrews 9: 22
Revelation 1: 5, 2nd Corinthians 5: 21
Luke 20: 50–53, Matthew 12: 40, 27: 62-66
1st Corinthians 15: 54 – 55, Luke 24: 5 – 6
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Romans 1: 16, 10: 17, 3: 23, 6: 23, 5: 12
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John 3: 16, Romans 5: 8, Isaiah 53: 6, 9
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Revelation 1: 5, 2nd Corinthians 5: 21
Luke 20: 50–53, Matthew 12: 40, 27: 62-66
1st Corinthians 15: 54 – 55, Luke 24: 5 – 6
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