



# What if Christ has not been raised?

## 1 Corinthians 15:14-19

**Result #1: We preach in vain (verse 14)**

**Result #2: We believe in vain (verse 14)**

**Result #3: We lie about God (verse 15)**

**Result #4: We are not forgiven (verse 17)**

**Result #5: We will perish (verse 18)**

**Result #6: We are pathetic people (verse 19)**

The fundamental question upon which Christianity ultimately rests is this, "Did Jesus Christ actually, historically, literally, physically, bodily rise from the dead?" If you were to demonstrate that Jesus Christ never raised bodily from the dead, the entire Christian religion would crumble and fall. If you take a shovel and begin to dig in Jerusalem and find a tomb filled with the bones of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christian faith would be shattered. This is because the resurrection stands at the heart of our faith. No resurrection? No Christianity. Without a physical, literal resurrection, we have no foundation to our faith!

This fact has not escaped the unbelieving world. For two thousand years, skeptic after skeptic after skeptic have sought to disprove the resurrection. They have reasoned correctly that if they can destroy the resurrection, Christianity will be proved wrong. So many have fired their darts in that direction.

The centrality of the resurrection did not escape the apostle Paul either. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul will demonstrate the implications of what would be true if Jesus Christ didn't raise from the dead. Paul will argue that Christianity is nothing if Jesus didn't raise from the dead. In verse 14, Paul asks a question I would like for us to consider this morning, "What if Christ has not been raised?"

This morning, I am not seeking to prove the resurrection for you. Last year, we spent a considerable amount of time looking at the Scriptural testimony of the risen Christ. We traced out all of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus from the dead. We saw that Bible records Jesus appearing to His disciples on 16 different occasions. His appearances were to different people (over 500 people) at different places (from Jerusalem to Galilee) in different circumstances (at the tomb, along the road, in the home, on a mountain, ...). If the New Testament writers are at all historically reliable, the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead is as solid an historical fact as many of you will ever encounter (click [here](#) to read this sermon).

This morning, I am not seeking to prove the resurrection for you. I simply assert with Paul in verse 20, "But now Christ has been raised!" My aim this morning is to demonstrate to you exactly how crucial it is the Jesus Christ raised literally from the dead. To do this, I want to consider Paul's question as our question, "What if Christ has not been raised?"

1 Corinthians 15:14-19

"if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, 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. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."

In this passage, Paul gives **six disastrous results** if Christ hasn't been raised.

### **Result #1: We preach in vain (verse 14)**

Verse 14, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain." Our words to our unsaved friends are empty and meaningless. Our words have no power and make no effect. Our words make no difference in the lives of people. In other words, "our preaching is an exercise in futility if Jesus had not raised from the dead."

When Paul was in Athens, preaching the gospel of Christ, some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" (Acts 17:18). If the resurrection of Jesus Christ were not true, this is what we would be, "idle babblers." I think of little children. Before they learn to speak, they simply babble, "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, ..." Such would be our testimony before the world if Christ was not raised.

If Christ were not raised from the dead, the apostolic gospel message would be filled with empty words, because it included the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead as a key element to their preaching. Look up at verses 1 and 2 to see how crucial the resurrection is to the gospel message. Verses 1 and 2 read, "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain."

Paul reminded the Corinthians of his message that he preached while he was among them. He said, "I preached this to you. ... You received this message. ... You stand in this message. ... You are saved by this message." Paul was saying, "O Corinthians, I want you to be clear on this matter of the gospel. let me tell you what this gospel message is which I preached to you."

Paul then gives the content of his message in verses 3-8. Notice that he basically four propositions which contained his message. Each of them start with the word, "that." Notice them in the text before us, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, **(1) that** Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and **(2) that** He was buried, and **(3) that** He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and **(4) that** He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After which He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also."

This is Paul's gospel message. It had four points.

1. Christ died for our sins (verse 3).
2. Christ was buried (verse 4).
3. Christ was raised (verse 4).
4. Christ appeared to many (verses 5-7).

Paul's message included the (1) death, (2) burial, (3) resurrection, and (4) appearances of Jesus. He didn't stop after the death of Jesus. He didn't stop after the burial of Jesus. He didn't stop after the resurrection of Jesus. Rather, Paul continued through the appearances of Jesus. The essence of the gospel that Paul preached included all of these points.

If Jesus did not raise bodily from the dead, half of his message (points 3 and 4) isn't true. To negate some of his message is to negate all of his message. To negate all of his message is akin to "preaching in vain" -- preaching something that isn't true. **If Christ has not been raised from the dead, our preaching is vain.**

What if Christ has not been raised? ...

Result #2: We believe in vain (verse 14)

Verse 14, "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain." Paul uses the same word here to describe preaching and faith. They both are vain, empty, meaningless, void.

Preaching and believing are intricately connected. When people embrace a message preached, their faith is only as strong as the strength of the message. If the people believe a strong message, the foundation of their faith will be strong. If people believe an empty message, the foundation of their faith will be empty.

As many of you know (particularly you men), one of our neighbors recently gave to us a wooden play-set, which sits in our back-yard. Now I have two of these play-sets. It is my plan to build a bridge between them, so our children can pass from one play-set to the other. If I build a strong bridge, and the children trust the bridge, they will be able to walk from one to the other. If I build a weak bridge, and the children trust the bridge, upon placing their weight on the bridge, it will break, and they will find themselves on the ground, not on the other bridge.

So with the message. I don't care what somebody's message promises, if its foundations are weak, it won't do anything. I don't care how great my children trust the strength of the bridge between our play-sets. If the bridge is weak, it will break. This notion that "it doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you believe it strongly" isn't true.

Charles Hodge summed it up well when he wrote, "If the apostles preached a risen and living Saviour, and made his power to save depend on the fact of his resurrection, of course their whole preaching was false and worthless, if Christ were still in the grave. The dead cannot save the living. And if the object of the Christian's faith be the Son of God as risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of God in heaven, they believe a falsehood if Christ be not risen" (A Commentary on 1&2 Corinthians, p. 320). What use is it to believe in a resurrected Christ, if Christ is dead?

Let me put it in perspective. Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, was a brilliant man. But he was bothered by many of the things written about Jesus in the gospel accounts (like many other brilliant men are). He liked some of his teaching, but he didn't like some of the miracles, or Jesus' claims of deity. During the summer of 1820, he completed a work he entitled, "The Life and Morals of Jesus." He edited the gospel accounts of Jesus' life, so as to remove the miraculous from them. This work had four columns, one in Greek, one in Latin, one in French, and one in English. (This is no different that what many of the people in the Jesus Seminar are doing today). Thomas Jefferson's literary work is commonly known today as "the Jefferson Bible." His book ends like this, "Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed (chapter 17, verses 61-64)." That's it! **"There laid they Jesus, and rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed."** There is no, "rest of the story" as Paul Harvey might say. Thomas Jefferson ended his account of the life of Jesus, with Jesus' body buried in a tomb.

Doesn't this leave you empty? We know enough in our hearts to say, "Keep going! It cannot simply end there! Keep telling the story." This is because our faith is in a resurrected Christ. If Christ has not been raised from the dead, our faith is in a man whose body rotted in a tomb, rather than in the living, reigning, Son of God -- our faith is vain.

What if Christ has not been raised? ...

Result #3: We lie about God (verse 15)

Verse 15, "Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised."

If Jesus Christ was never raised from the dead, we are liars, because we have said that God indeed raised him from the dead. From the beginning of the church, the early apostles have given great testimony to the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. This is the core of the message that they preached! Let me take you on a quick survey of the apostolic evangelistic message.

Turn in your bibles to Acts 2. In this passage, Peter is responding to this miracle of people from many different nations hearing in their own tongues people speak of, "the mighty deeds of God" (2:11). In verse 22, Peter speaks of Jesus' ministry (for one verse). In verse 23, Peter speaks of Jesus' death on the cross (for one verse). In verse 24, Peter says, "**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" (according the truth of Psalm 16, which Peter quotes and exposit in verses 25-32). In verse 32, Peter continues, "This Jesus **God raised up** again, to which we are all witnesses." That's nine verses on the resurrection on two verses on Jesus' ministry and death! In these verses, you see the core of the resurrection and the testimony to which the apostles bore witness to this fact.

Look over at chapter 3. We begin at verse 14. Peter again is addressing the Jews of his day, "You disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the One whom **God raised from the dead**, a fact to which we are witnesses" (verses 14-15). In verse 26 this emphasis continues, "God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways." Again, we see Peter preaching that Jesus died. Oh, but God raised Him from the dead!

In Acts 4:10, Peter said to the religious leaders, "Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom **God raised from the dead** -- by this name this man stands here before you in good health." In the next chapter, we see the same thing, "The **God** of our fathers **raised up Jesus**, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross" (Acts 5:30).

It wasn't just Peter, it was Paul also who testified to the risen Jesus. Turn over to Acts 13. Paul is preaching to the Jews at Pisidian Antioch. Four times in his sermon he refers to the crucial place of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

In verse 30, Paul says, "God raised him from the dead."

In verse 33, "God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, ..."

In verse 34, "He raised Him up from the dead."

In verse 37, "But He whom God raised did not undergo decay."

To the Areopagus in Athens, Paul preached that Jesus was raised from the dead (Acts 17:31), which caused many to turn against him. Also, before the counsel in Acts 23:6, Paul said, "I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead."

"What if Christ has not been raised from the dead?" If Christ has not been raised, then Peter is a liar. If Christ has not been raised, then Paul is a liar. If Christ has not been raised, then I am a liar. If Christ has not been raised, then you are a liar if you have ever told anybody that Jesus rose from the dead.

But this isn't just a lie about yourself! No, this is a lie about God concerning the greatest question in life! We bear witness of God falsely! "We are found to be false witnesses of God" (1 Cor. 15:15). We say that God did something that He never did! Feel the weight of this! Old Testament "prophets" were stoned if they predicted something that God would do, if it never came to pass. If Jesus never raised from the dead, we are telling people something about God to be true, which is not true!

What if Christ has not been raised? ...

Result #4: We are not forgiven (verse 17)

Verse 17, "If Christ has not been raised, [repeating the question we are considering this morning] your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

Apart from the resurrection, there is no forgiveness, because the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was God's declaration that Jesus was indeed who He claimed to be. It was the opportunity for God to show before the world that Jesus was indeed the Son of God and that God accepted His sacrifice for sins. Listen to Romans 1:4, "[Jesus] was **declared** the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." Also, Paul preached to those in Athens, "[God] has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having **furnished proof** to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Let me give you an analogy. When the paralytic was brought to Jesus, by being lowered down through the roof in the ceiling of the house (in Mark 2), Jesus said, "My son, your sins are forgiven" (verse 5). The scribes who were sitting there were objecting in their hearts, saying "He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" (verse 7). Jesus responds, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Arise, and take up your pallet and walk?'" (verse 9). So **Jesus performed a great miracle to confirm His words**. He told this paralytic, "rise, take up your pallet and go home" (verse 11). This man, who was carried into the house by his friends, walked out of the house because of the power of Jesus. What gave Jesus the credibility to forgive sins was His ability to do the miraculous.

Such is the role of resurrection to our forgiveness. The miraculous work of Jesus raising from the dead was God's confirmation that Jesus' words were true! Apart from the resurrection, any claims that Jesus made were simply words. To put it another way, which is easier, to be crucified or to be resurrected from the dead? Anybody can die on a cross (case in point, the two thieves next to Jesus). God raised Jesus from the dead as a testimony to His acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus.

Before Jesus died, he repeatedly said that He would rise again. He told his disciples on several occasions, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again!" (Mark 8:31; see Mark 9:31; 10:33-34). In speaking with the Jewish leaders, Jesus spoke about His body and said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again" (John 2:19). The religious leaders were seeking a sign from Jesus. Jesus said, "No sign shall be given to [you] but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:39-40).

Jesus said that He would rise again. When God raised Him from the dead, God placed His seal of confirmation upon Jesus and confirmed His words. The resurrection of Jesus is like a thumbs up signal, which demonstrates approval. The resurrection of Jesus is like a confirmation letter, which confirmed Jesus' words to be true. The resurrection of Jesus is like a press release, which lets the world know of some great event. The resurrection of Jesus is like a commercial on television, which has informed the people of the world that Jesus' claims are true.

I want to place before you the crucial role of the resurrection to our forgiveness. Though Jesus said on the cross, *tetelestai* (*tetelestai*), which is translated, "It is finished" (John 19:30), apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, it means nothing. We rightly focus our attention upon the sacrificial death of Jesus upon the cross for our forgiveness. We rightly think of Him taking upon Himself the wrath of God for our sins. We rightly think of Him as our substitute. But apart from His resurrection, Jesus Christ is no different than anybody else who dies for a cause. Apart from His resurrection, Jesus was no different than any Old Testament prophet or Christian martyr who was killed for proclaiming the truth. He would be just like any other suicide bomber, who died for a cause.

However, the resurrection confirmed our forgiveness. To put this statement in theological terms, if there is no resurrection, there is no justification. Listen to Romans 4:25, "[Jesus] was delivered up (i.e. crucified) because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." We can talk all day long about our forgiveness in the cross of Jesus. We can talk all day long of the mercy of God to forgive. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, it means nothing, because it would be proved to be false. Friday night before Easter is often referred to as "Good Friday." What makes it good? It is the resurrection makes it "good." If Christ has not been raised, we are still in our sins.

What if Christ has not been raised? ...

Result #5: We will perish (verse 18)

Verse 18, "Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished."

Paul's reasoning goes like this: If there is no resurrection, there is no forgiveness. If there is no forgiveness, there is no hope beyond the grave. If there is no hope beyond the grave, those who have died have perished. I want to take it one step further. **If those who have died have perished, we will soon follow and will perish as well.**

If you are "still in your sins" (verse 17), you have no hope. Those who have died "still in their sins" have perished. There is no hope beyond the grave for those who haven't believed in Jesus before the grave. If Jesus isn't raised, there is no hope! If there is no resurrection of Jesus, there is no resurrection of anybody. This is why Jesus is called, "the first fruits of those who are asleep" (verse 20). The idea is that Jesus resurrection is the foundation upon which other believers are resurrected from the dead as well. He is the first, the primary, the foundation. All others follow Him!

Recently, I spoke with a man, who returned from India. He said that thing that impacted him the most was the children there. In India they have the caste system. If you are born in the lower class (which most people are) you will remain in the lower class all your life. You cannot move up in the social ladder. Where you were born, you are stuck. He said that the faces of the children were stale. They stared into space, as those without hope. They understand that their life upon this earth will consist of oppression and there is no way out. Apart from the resurrection, we are like many children in India, who have no hope.

It is the resurrection that gives us great hope! Peter said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

The crucifixion of Jesus was His work. The resurrection of Jesus is what gives us our confidence that the Father received the sacrifice of the Son. It is the resurrection of Jesus that assures us that we will not perish, but live eternally. If Christ has not been raised, we will perish. If we are destined to perish, I believe than many of us are living the wrong way. If the here and now is all that we have and all that we can expect, why not live for the here and now? This is exactly the reasoning of the world today.

The world today is living for today, because they believe they have no tomorrow! Notice, their reasoning is correct! They don't believe that Christ has raised from the dead! They don't believe that anything is coming. So they live for the here and the now! "He who dies with the most toys wins!" Why not seek as much pleasure as you can? Live for retirement, when you relax on your next egg! Sexually, go have fun! What's wrong with drugs if they make you feel good? So, when the world lives for the pleasure of the moment, they look at Christians and feel sorry for us. They think we are missing out on all their fun! Which leads us to our next point, ...

What if Christ has not been raised? ...

Result #6: We are pathetic people (verse 19)

Verse 19, "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."

Believers in Jesus Christ are predominantly those who are looking past this life into the life that comes. Believers are those who have looked at this life and said that this isn't all there is. There is something after this. Believers in the resurrection of Jesus Christ are looking for and expecting something better than they have today.

Jesus called it "Paradise" to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43). Paul said it like this, "To live is Christ, to die is gain!" (Phil. 1:21). For to gain is to "be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23). Peter spoke about being a "partaker ... of the glory that is to be revealed" (1 Peter 5:1). At the end of the Revelation to John, we see the glories of the New Jerusalem, which await us (chapter 21)..

The life of a Christian is a life of hope and expectation in the world to come. This is the life of faith. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). If Jesus Christ didn't raise from the dead, our hope is in vain. There is no reward. We will receive nothing. We will perish like all others in the world. The world considers us to be pathetic people for hoping in something that won't come.

Have you ever seen poor people hope in the lottery? On several occasions I can remember seeing people who are obviously poor, throw down \$20-50 in lottery tickets. My heart has gone out to them in pity. I remember hearing of a poor man being asked why he played the lottery. This man said, "It's my hope of retirement." We look at such a person with sympathy. Here is a man, with precious little, squandering it away for the one in 10 million chance he will be lucky enough to win a million dollars. We have sympathy, because we know that this man will almost certainly be disappointed when the lucky numbers come out later in the week.

Think about disappointed hope....

- Perhaps you go to a baseball ball-game at Wrigley Field to see your favorite player, Sammy Sosa, play. Only to find out that Sammy is getting a rest today. **That's disappointment.**
- Perhaps you are called into your boss's office. You think you are getting a raise, but really, you are being let go. **That's greater disappointment.**
- Perhaps you call your parents, expecting to speak with your father, only to find that he passed away in his sleep the night before. **That's greater disappointment.**
- Think of the Jew during World War II. Many Jews were herded like cattle and sent to their concentration camps in tightly packed, unsanitary railroad box cars. When they arrived at the concentration camp, they were filthy. Often, these people were told that they needed to take a shower. So they took off their clothes and walked into the shower area with soap in their hands, expecting to bathe. Once they got there, the door was locked and poisonous gas was leaked into the "showers." Within a few minutes, they were all dead. These Jews had a hope and an expectation that wasn't true. They were expecting a shower. They were murdered instead. **That's greater disappointment.**

**But to hope in Christ, if Christ was never raised from the dead, is the greatest disappointment you could ever experience.** This is why Paul speaks like He does, "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied" (verse 19).

Perhaps it might be helpful to you to realize that many in the world think this way of Christians. Those who are convinced that Jesus never raised from the dead, are not too concerned for the hereafter. They look at a believer in Jesus Christ and they often pity such a person. They think such a person to be a deceived fanatic. Sure, they might respect a Christian's devotion and zeal and his kindness, but in their minds, they think such a one to be crazy. I remember a man asking me once, "Now, tell me again why you left your computer job to be a pastor!" In this man's mind, it simply didn't make sense why I would give up a nice computer job to be a pastor. It didn't compute!

Paul says he was considered as "spectacle to the world" (1 Cor. 4:9). Others thought him to be a "fool" (1 Cor. 4:10). He said that he was considered to be the "scum of the world" (1 Cor. 4:13) by those who knew nothing of the hope of Jesus Christ.

What if Christ has not been raised?

- Result #1: We preach in vain (verse 14)
- Result #2: We believe in vain (verse 14)
- Result #3: We lie about God (verse 15)
- Result #4: We are not forgiven (verse 17)
- Result #5: We will perish (verse 18)
- Result #6: We are pathetic people (verse 19)

But, .... but, .... but, .... (oh, the blessed "but's" in Scripture). But now Christ has been raised from the dead! Verse 20! This means that all of the results we went through this morning are reversed! Since Christ has been raised, ...

Result #1: Our preaching is not in vain (verse 14)

Though the world might think our message to be a foolish, Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). God, through this seemingly foolish message of a crucified Savior, will save some (1 Cor. 1:21). We need to proclaim it!

Result #2: Our believing is not in vain (verse 14)

Though the world might think that we are believing a lie, we know our message to be true. We know that our faith is in a living Savior, who will redeem us from our sins! We need to believe it!

Result #3: We testify truth about God (verse 15)

Though the world might seek to convince us that Jesus never rose from the dead, and thus, deny our message, we know that God raised Him from the dead! We are God's ambassadors to spread the truth of this message. Our message is true!

Result #4: We are liberated from our sins (verse 17)

Our greatest problem in this life and the one to come is standing before a holy God as a sinful creature. Since Christ has been raised from the dead, this problem has been solved for those who have repented of their sins and have placed their complete trust in the risen Lord. We are free from our sins!

Result #5: We will live eternally (verse 18)

Our hope for eternity is bound up in Jesus Christ. Until this point, I have not made mention of the greater context of this passage, but it fits nicely here. The issue in Corinth wasn't so much whether Jesus was raised from the dead or not, it was whether or not believers in Him would be raised. Look at verse 12 and 13, "Not 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? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;" Verse 16 also repeats the argument, "For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised."

Some were saying, "It is permissible to preach Christ raised from the dead, but we certainly won't raise from the dead, because there is no resurrection." Paul says, "No, if there is no resurrection, Christ hasn't been raised." And we have seen the six disastrous results of this implication! But Paul argues that a resurrected Lord won't let those who believe in Him to perish. Look at verse 22, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (verse 22). We will live with Him!

Result #6: We are blessed people (verse 19)

Though the world might think that we have placed all of our eggs in the wrong basket and have pity on us, we need not worry. We have "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for [us]" (1 Peter 1:4). We will be blessed!

Let me close with a final thought. As I studied this passage this week, I was confronted by this truth in my own heart. **The Christian faith is all or nothing.** If Jesus hasn't been raised from the dead, our faith is nothing. If Jesus has been raised from the dead, our faith is the only thing! If the resurrection is true, it has verified everything that Jesus said. Jesus said that He is the way to life, not one of the many ways to God. Peter said, "There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved!" (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

Going back to where we started this morning, we can say that the Christian faith hinges on the resurrection! If you prove the resurrection to be false, Christianity will crumble. If the resurrection is true, Jesus is the only way!

Let me give you one final admonition this morning, since Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. It comes from verse 58. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Be a "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" Christian. We aren't to be those who waver in these things. Christ has been raised from the dead. Trust in the resurrected Christ, who will raise you up to be with Him in the last day. "Your toil is not in vain in the Lord!"

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on March 31, 2002 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).