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Without the resurrection, our Christian faith would be just wishful thinking, no better than human philosophies and speculative religions. In fact, the noted seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke, some of whose ideas were incorporated into the Declaration of Independence, wrote, "Our Saviour's resurrection is truly of great importance in Christianity, so great that His being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it."

Every Easter the newspaper runs an article that casts doubt on the resurrection. Just how important is the resurrection to the Christian faith?The oldest Scripture passages contain the message of resurrection hope (see Job 19:25-26). Death has never been the end for the believer, but simply a gateway to eternal life in heaven. Abraham was ready to sacrifice his only son Isaac because in faith "he considered that God is able to raise men from the dead" (Hebrews 11:19). The Lord assured Daniel that believers "will awake ... to everlasting life" (Daniel 12:2).

The resurrection was the focal point of Christ's teaching to the disciples about His sufferings and death: "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). It is therefore completely understandable that Mark and the other three gospel writers all included an historical account of Jesus' resurrection in their narratives.

Paul knew that without the resurrection our salvation could not have been possible (1 Corinthians 15). He was also convinced a person couldn't be saved without believing in the resurrection of Jesus: "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" (Romans 10:9).

It's no wonder Paul, the other apostles, and every leader in the early church continually proclaimed Christ's resurrection as the culmination of His ministry. Those men were so captivated by the significance of the resurrection that they could not help but preach it. And that should be our attitude today.

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