

The Evidence for Resurrection, Part 1

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Code: 1876

We're continuing to study First Corinthians and coming now to the fifteenth chapter. There's only 16 in the book so it won't be long and we'll be finished. But we come to this marvelous fifteenth chapter for this morning. It's going to take us some weeks to get through it because of the great depth and significance that it holds for us.

A Christian was walking through an art gallery in Glasgow, Scotland and he came upon a small boy gazing at a particular painting of the crucifixion. He stood and watched the little fellow for a moment and then he walked up and laid his hand on his shoulder and he said, "Son, what is that a picture of?" "Why, Sir," said the lad, "don't you know? That's our Lord dying on a cross and bearing our sin." The man patted the boy on the shoulder and said, "Thank you, Son." And then he walked on and continued to look at the remaining pictures in the gallery. Suddenly he felt a little tug at his sleeve and he looked down and there was the same little fellow. The boy looked up and said, "Pardon me, Sir, I forget to tell you one thing. He's not dead anymore, He arose."

And that is the message of the gospel. He's not dead anymore. He arose. And that basically is the heart of the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. And just as the heart pumps life blood to the body, so the resurrection is the very heart of the gospel pumping life into every other area of truth. The resurrection is the pivot on which all of Christianity turns. Take away the resurrection, Christianity comes out as wishful thinking and just another useless human philosophy. Christians down through the ages have banked their destiny, have banked their life, have banked their hope on the fact that the shameful death of Jesus Christ was not the last word, but that He arose and triumphed over death and that when He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also," He granted to anyone who comes to Him by faith the same resurrection hope. And it was this belief and this belief alone, frankly, that turned the heart broken followers of a crucified rabbi into the courageous martyrs of the early church. It was the resurrection that gave birth to the fellowship of the saints that became the church.

And they found in those early years that they could imprison them and they could chastise them and they could beat them and they could verbally assault them and they could invent ways to persecute them and they could even kill them but they could never make them deny the reality of the resurrection. It has always been and will always be the cornerstone of the Christian faith. And because that is true, the most fierce blows struck at Christianity in its history have been struck at the point of the resurrection. Because if you wipe out the resurrection you get rid of everything. You eliminate salvation, you eliminate the deity of Christ, you eliminate eternal life, you eliminate the

consequence of death, you just wipe it all out. And so the resurrection is always under attack.

Some of you picked up the morning Times on Monday after hearing our message on the resurrection last Sunday. On the front page you saw that article which stated that all Christian scholars agree that there is no resurrection. L.A. Times, and that this is something that's just the wishful thinking of a few ancient fundamentalist fuddy-duddys who have long since lost touch with the reality of the truth. You know how some people define fundamental, no fun, too much damn, and not enough mental. Well that's all of us, that's all of us who want to hold to the resurrection. But when somebody attacks the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whether they come from a theological seminary, a church, a denomination, or whatever, they are tearing down the very cornerstone of the Christian faith.

Now this wonderful chapter, the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, is really the singular chapter in the whole book that confronts a doctrinal issue. All the other ones are really practical issues, although they have doctrinal bases, but this is purely a doctrinal issue that has arisen in the Corinthian church to which Paul must address himself. And thank God he did because he gave us the greatest statement on the resurrection ever penned in this chapter. And by the time we're finished, you and I and everybody who knows anything about us is going to know where we stand about the resurrection. Not only the resurrection of Christ but the anticipated resurrection that you and I and every person who has ever lived in the history of the world, both just and unjust, will experience. And frankly for us it comes down to the simple reality that the entire destiny of man hinges on whether Jesus Christ is simply a crucified rabbi whose body lies long rotting in some forgotten Palestinian tomb, or whether in fact He is God as proven by His resurrection.

Now the resurrection is the core of the Christian faith. The Apostle Paul said, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In other words, salvation is predicated on the confession of the Lordship of a resurrected Christ. And if there is no resurrection of Christ confessed, there can be no salvation. So people who deny the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ may call themselves Christians, they are not. They may say they reflect the Christian tradition or the Christian position, they do not. They could not be Christians and deny the resurrection. According to Romans 10:9 you are saved by confessing that God has raised Jesus from the dead.

Now, there never has been any question about that in Christian circles. True Christians have always believed in the resurrection because they had to be saved. Anybody who doesn't isn't a Christian. That's the line. That's the bottom line. And in the Corinthian church they were not denying the resurrection of Christ, what they were denying was the bodily resurrection of the saints. That's where they had their hang-up. And so 1 Corinthians 15 is written primarily not to prove the resurrection of Christ to Christians, listen, you're not a Christian if you haven't already come to that conviction. And it isn't written to try to convince the unbeliever that Jesus really rose. It is written to try to prove to the Christians that because He literally rose, they too will literally physically bodily personally rise from the

dead. That's the thrust of the fifteenth chapter. It's for us, folks. This is all about you coming out of the grave. This is all about me coming out of the grave. Now that makes it kind of interesting. By the time we're done, you will know every detail of what's going to happen when you come out of the grave. That's fascinating.

Now the Corinthians were having a problem at this point. They weren't having a problem believing in the resurrection of Christ, they were already Christians, they believed that. But they had never seen the ramifications. And what Paul says in the fifteenth chapter is this, look, verses 1 to 11 he says, you already believe in the resurrection, right? Right. Therefore realize this, Christ is just the firstfruits of all them that slept, so if you already believe in the resurrection of Christ bodily and physically and literally, why are you hung up on your own resurrection? That's the issue of the fifteenth chapter. That's it basically.

Now you say, "Where did this problem come from?" Well, you see, it came from this particular point, now watch. As I've told you all the way through 1 Corinthians, the Corinthians had allowed themselves to be victimized by the beliefs of their time. Right? They had fallen prey to every goofy philosophical bent in their society. They had allowed the sins of their society to enter the church. They were really the world mixed with the church. They had sucked in just about everything there was. And it was...watch...it was denied among the Greeks that there was such a thing as bodily resurrection. They denied that. So even though the Corinthian Christians had accepted the bodily physical resurrection of Christ, their pagan background, the influence of powerful Greek philosophy had convinced them that there was no physical resurrection for anybody else and so they drew the line after Christ. They were like Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2 Timothy 2:17 and 18 who said the only resurrection that's going to happen already happened. They were teaching the resurrection as past and they were ruining the faith of people. They were saying, "Oh yes Christ rose bodily, but, oh no, there's no resurrection for us." Because that's what Greek philosophy believed.

To illustrate that that is in fact what Greek philosophy believed, look at Acts chapter 17 and let's see Paul at the very core of the philosophical center of the Greek world, the city of Athens. And he comes to the city of Athens in Acts 17 and immediately he begins to preach about Jesus. And naturally when he preaches about Jesus he talks about His bodily physical resurrection from the grave. And that immediately creates a problem for the Greeks. Verse 18, Acts 17:18, "Certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him and some said, What will this babblers say? What is he dribbling on about? Others said, He seems to be a center forth of strange gods." Now watch. He seems to be introducing some new kind of religion. He seems to be saying something we think is very strange, very different, we've never heard of this. Why? Because he preached to them Jesus and...what?...the resurrection. You see, they had no place for a literal physical bodily resurrection and when he came preaching that they said, "What kind of babble is this?" And others said, "Who is this guy with this new religion?"

Further in verse 32 it says, "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, which he undoubtedly preached, that not just Christ but all the dead would rise, some mocked and others said, We ought to hear this guy again." You'll notice that nobody believed. And so Paul left town. They were so steeped in their philosophy that was anti-physical, bodily resurrection that they couldn't really believe the message of Paul in Athens. Corinth was a suburb of Athens, so you'll understand the impact that Greek philosophy headquartered in Athens had on Corinth.

Now some of you have studied philosophy. And you're like me you wasted a few years doing it. But you will remember something from your basic philosophy class and that is something that came out of Greek society called "philosophical dualism." Now philosophical dualism is basically attributed to Plato. And philosophical dualism dominated Greek thinking. Philosophical dualism says on the one hand matter you have and it is evil, on the other hand, spirit and it is good. That's dualism. Matter is evil, spirit is good. That's what the Greeks believed. So when they died, the body which was evil sloughed away, the soul which was good went into immortality. They didn't want anything to do with the body. Plato said the body is a prison that binds the spirit and the man waits to be released from his prison. To Plato a resurrection with the body, a rejoining to a body would be like a second hell. So he denied it and Greek culture went along with it. In fact they had a proverb. Their proverb said, "The body is a tomb, I am a poor soul shackled to a corpse." They thought only of the fact that the body was evil, the body was matter, the body was flesh, it would just die and you would flee away to be united with immortality.

Seneca, a famous Greek, said, "It pleased me to inquire into the eternity of the soul. Nay, to believe in it. I surrendered myself to that great hope." Now notice, Seneca believed in the immortality of the soul. We find that all the Greeks did. They didn't have any problem with the immortality of the soul, it was the resurrection of the body they didn't believe in. Seneca goes on to say, "When the day shall come which shall part this mixture of divine and human, here where I found it I will leave my body and myself I will give back to the gods." Now that was the typical Greek view that there was a dualism, that your spirit just went on to eternal life, your body never did. In fact Seneca said the spirit went to be resolved into its ancient element. And its ancient element would be God.

I'll look at it from another angle and show you what I mean. There was another group called the Stoics, mentioned in Acts 17. And they were a very interesting philosophical group. Let me tell you basically what they believed and you'll recognize this as modern liberal theology, it's the same old stuff. They believed that God was a spirit but that He was fire, okay? He was fire. He was a fire spirit...whatever that is. That's what they believed. And they believed that every man when he was born, God somehow sent a little spark of that fire to live within the flesh and that's what man is, he is a spark of deity in flesh. That's exactly what liberal theology teaches today. Every man has in him the spark of deity. So we're a whole lot of little pieces of this fiery spirit of God and running around in flesh. And the Stoics said that when the body dies it goes into the grave, it dissolves into the ashes,

goes back to the dust and the spark goes back and rejoins with the big spark who is God. And so it's lost in the immortality of the universal deity. That's Stoic philosophy. That was pretty much the Greek thing.

So you put all of that together and there's no way that a Greek in his culture or in his philosophy or the religions in which he had been trained would have ever tolerated or understood a resurrection of the body. To him it was a strange message to be mocked and to be disbelieved as occurred in Acts 17. But here comes the Corinthian church and in the midst of the Corinthian church they're a whole bunch of people who believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. They have to be saved. But now they are denying that the rest of the people are going to rise.

Now Paul points this problem up in verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 15, he says, "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? Why are you saying this?" And then the first part of verse 12, "If Christ is preached that He rose from the dead." I mean, if you've already admitted that Christ rose bodily and physically, why can't you believe that you will also? Now there may have been another or other contributing factors to this. There were a group of Jews running around loose at that time known as the Sadducees. And the Sadducees did not believe in bodily resurrection, that's why they were so sad, you see because they had absolutely...they had...you like that...they had absolutely no hope. They had nothing to anticipate, they had nothing to look forward to. They did not believe in the resurrection. They didn't believe in angels or the resurrection it says in acts. So they may have influenced the Corinthians. And further, there were some people who made a joke out of bodily resurrection by saying, "Can you imagine some stinking rotting decayed thing coming out of the ground to house the immortal divine soul? Yuk." You know, that's how they'd look at it. Reject that. Even as late as 220 A.D. a man named Celsus(?) attacked Christianity with the idea of a bodily resurrection in these words, "That is the hope of worms," he says, "for what should a man...what soul of a man would any longer wish for a body that had rotted?" So maybe they were a little confused. And in fact that's why Paul spends a great portion of the fifteenth chapter describing the resurrection body. So any of the skeptical rotted body fanatics wouldn't have any more fuel for their fire. He really ends that discussion when he describes the body at the end of chapter 15.

So now here's what Paul is trying to do. He's trying to say, "Look, there is a physical resurrection. It is validated or proven by the resurrection of Christ which was physical and don't worry about the rotten body theory, let me tell you the kind of body you're going to get." And he starts to do that in verse 35 and following.

So he really is dealing with a very specific situation in Corinth. But while he deals with it, as so often occurs in Scripture, he lays out for us the most tremendous statement ever penned on the resurrection in this chapter. This is it.

Now remember Paul's purpose is not to deal with the immortality of the soul. The Greeks didn't have a problem with that, they believed in that. Paul's purpose is to deal with the resurrection of the body. So this is all about the body. Now here's the reasoning of the chapter. I'll give you just this little vignette that will help you to understand it. The first eleven verses he never discusses the problem. The problem is introduced in verse 12. Because before he even needs to deal with the problem he wants to establish some common ground. So his common ground is we all believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ bodily and since we all believe in that, what's the hang-up with believing in our own bodily resurrection? Now that's the flow of the chapter right there and he moves that way through the chapter.

Now for today and next time we're going to look at the first eleven verses and we're going to see a restatement of what we already believe...the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He rose bodily. He came alive out of the grave physically and literally. That's the basis. And he doesn't even bring up the problem here, he just restates what they already all believe or they wouldn't be Christians. Now in so doing as we go through this, I want to just pull out five little points and I call them testimonies to the resurrection. The first eleven verses have five of them. As we listen to Paul restate the gospel and restate what the Corinthians and you and I who are Christians already believe that Jesus rose physically and this is the basis of his later statements about our physical resurrection, but as we go through this statement of the gospel there are five testimonies to the validity of the resurrection. We'll cover the first two this time and the next three next time.

Let's go to number one and as Paul begins in his restatement of the gospel, he first of all gives us...it's an implication rather than explicitly stated here...the testimony of the church. Let me begin by reading you the first two verses then I want to add a couple statements from three and four. "Moreover, brethren," now moreover is a Greek term that separates this chapter from the last chapter. This has no connection to the last chapter. This is a new subject all together. He throws brethren in there as a term of love and affection. He says, "I make known," and it's emphatic here, very strong statement. "I want to remind you of the gospel." Now let's go back to basic, and some Corinthian might be scratching his head saying, "For goodness sakes, Paul, why? What are you doing here? Why are we going through all this again?" Well he slugs his way through the resurrection, the first eleven verses, and then he hits them with the thunderbolt in twelve, "Listen, if that's true of Christ, why can't it be true of you guys? And why do you have some who deny it?" See, which is a great way to set up an argument. You get everybody agreeing on the same thing and then ask them how come if they all agree on that they have a problem with this. That's what he does. So he says I have something firmly to declare. I want to make known to you. And what he winds up doing is restating the gospel. He says nothing new, it's what I preached to you, it's what you received, it's what you stand on, it's what you are saved by.

Well what is it? Verse 3, it is this, that Christ died for our sins. Verse 4, that He was buried and that He rose again the third day. Now stop there. Paul says let me recite to you the gospel. I want to

declare the gospel. And what is the gospel? It is that which I received and delivered to you, Christ died, He died for our sins, He was buried, He rose again the third day. Paul says let's go back to the basics, we're almost done with this letter, I want to remind you of the basics. The gospel...an interesting statement here, he says, "I declare unto you the gospel," the Greek says, "I declare unto you the gospel which...with which I gospelized you...with which I preached to you." And what gospel is it, Paul? Well it's the gospel of the death, the substitutionary death, the burial, the resurrection of Christ, that gospel. Paul says let me remind you of it.

And then let me remind you this, look at the end of verse 1, "You received it...you received it." Now what happens when somebody receives the gospel? First chapter of John verse 12, "To as many as received Him to them gave he the right to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." So they received it. And remember it? You received the fact that Christ died, that He died for our sins, that He was buried and that He rose out of the grave, you received that. Second point, you stand on that...perfect tense...you took your stand and you continue to stand on it. You haven't changed. This is the permanent state in which you exist.

Not only that, he says you not only received it and you not only stand on it but you are being saved by it. In other words, because of your commitment to this truth of the death and resurrection of Christ, you are the possessors of salvation.

Now you can see the impact of this statement to them only when you understand the point here. He is reaffirming that they already believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ as the basis for everything he's going to say in the rest of the chapter. That's the starting point. Sometimes people will say, "Do you have to believe in the resurrection to be saved?" I said it before, I'll say it again...yes. Absolutely yes. And so these are saved people. Now he says look, this is true of you already you believe in this bodily resurrection. But he adds an interesting footnote at the end of verse 2. "If you keep...and I'll read you the Greek rendering so you'll get the thrust of it...if you hold fast what I preached to you, unless your faith is worthless, or unless you have believed without effect, or unless you have had empty faith."

Now I want to talk about that phrase for a minute cause it's very important.

You say, "Whoa, boy, they received it, they stand on it, they're being saved by it." Yes, if they hold fast to it. You say, "Oh no, you mean you could lose it if you didn't hold fast to it? I thought you believed in the security of the believer?" I do. "Well what about this believing in vain? You mean somebody could believe and God could say I'm sorry, you believed in vain? I haven't responded to it." What is it saying here?

Let me show you what it's saying. In the New Testament there is always a balance between assurance and presumption, always. There's always a balance between what God does to secure

the believer and what the believer does to persevere in his faith. One is looking at it from the divine side and one is looking at it from the human side. Now remember, Paul wrote this, all right? That will help you. The same Paul exactly who wrote this, listen as I read it, "For whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate He called. Whom He called He justified. Whom He justified He glorified. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect, shall God that justifieth? Who is He that condemneth, shall Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again? Who shall separate us or what shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness or peril or sword? For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now Paul there says if you've been called it's because you've been predestinated. And if you've been predestinated and called you'll be justified. And if you'll be justified you'll be glorified. And nobody but nobody at no time will ever be able to make a change in that. Who will lay any charge to God's elect? It is God that justifies. If God says you're just, who is going to condemn you? If Christ declares you're His, who is going to condemn you? What is going to separate you? Nothing. Paul says in Romans 5:9 and 10 if the death of Christ can justify us, imagine how the life of Christ interceding for us can keep us. That's Paul's faith. He believes in the security of the believer. He believes that God holds His own.

But on the other hand, looking at it from the human standpoint, Paul also says that a true Christian is known by the fact that he continues to believe. And somebody who goes along for a while believing and then changes to unbelief gives evidence that he never was saved to begin with. He has believed in vain. What do you mean? He has had a worthless faith, a useless faith. To put it another way, a non-committal faith. How many people do you know who believe Jesus died and rose again but aren't Christians? I know a lot of them. In fact, I meet people some times and I'll say, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Do you believe He died? Rose again?" Oh yeah, I believe it. They're not Christians. Why? Because that's a useless faith. It has no commitment to it. It's like James says in James 2:17 to 20, "The devils believe in tremble." And James says you tell me about your faith, let me see its evidence. And what is its evidence? Continuance in the manifestation of faith in the life.

Now when you go to a city to have an evangelistic meeting, you know that there are going to be a lot of people who respond to the gospel but not all of them are going to be legitimate. Right? It's very true. Jesus told the parable about the man who scattered the seed, he put it on four soils. How many of the four were legitimate? Really born again? One. There's always an emotionalism, there's always a profession made by certain people and at Corinth there was a great great evangelistic movement. Paul came in and hit that city and people were saved and the church grew and fantastic things happened and no question about it, there were some people who hung on, there were some people who were emotionalized by it and joined the bandwagon. You know, got in on the deal. But their

faith was worthless. It was without effect. It was empty, that's what vain means. It was empty faith. It was empty because there was no commitment in it.

For example, in John 2 it says of Jesus, "Many believed on His name." You say terrific, it's a great revival. The next verse says, "But He never committed Himself to them because He knew their hearts." You see, it was a superficial empty faith with no commitment to it. That's the point. That's why in Romans 10 it says you're not only to believe God raised you from the dead but you're to confess with your mouth Jesus as...what?...Lord. You see, there's the commitment that goes along with the faith. In John chapter 8 and verse 30 a text that frequently comes to mind in this regard, it says, "And as He spoke these words many believed on Him." And again it looks like a great evangelistic harvest. But the next verse says, "Then said Jesus to those Jews who did believe on Him...watch...If you continue in My Word then are you My real disciples." In other words, there's all kinds of people who initially jump on the bandwagon. In John 6 there were disciples who believed for a while, superficially, and then when things weren't going the way they thought it says His disciples turned away and walked no more with Him, and that's John 8:31 too. Jesus said if you continue in My Word, then you're My disciple for real. So from God's standpoint a true believer is kept, but from our standpoint a true believer is manifest to us because he is one who continues in the faith. The one who departs give evidence of never having really been saved. Luke 8:13 says the same thing, it says this, the parable of the soil, "They that fell on the rock are they who when they hear receive the Word with joy." Oh, it's so wonderful. "And they have no root and for a while they believe but in time of testing they fall away." And their faith was empty, vain, useless, worthless, without effect. It had no real commitment.

In Hebrews chapter 10 verse 38 it says, "Now the just shall live by faith." You can tell a just man because he lives by faith. He doesn't have a bang moment of faith, he doesn't have an experience of faith, he has a life of faith and he continues in that life and he follows it out. The just shall live by continual faith. But if a man draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But he says we Christians are not of them who draw back but of them who continue to believe to the saving of the soul. So you can tell a false Christian, one with empty faith, vain faith because he falls back to perdition.

Now James speaks of the same truth in James 1:22. "Be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Now there are plenty of people who hear and they say, "Oh, this is so wonderful." "If a man is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and he beholds himself and then he goes his way and he forgets what manner of man he was." He looks in the mirror and he sees himself and he walks away and he forgets. "But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty...watch...and continues in it, he is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed." It's the one who continues, not the one who looks and says, "Isn't it wonderful?" and walks away and forgets. True Christians are evident by their continued faith.

Colossians 1:21, "And you that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works has He now reconciled." The saved. "And the body of His flesh on the cross through death and He's presenting you holy, unblamable, unreprouvable in His sight." Okay, that's a statement about salvation. Christ in His death has saved you. Watch 23, "If you continue in the faith, grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." So you see, if you move away from the hope of the gospel you give evidence that it never really took, that you believed in vain, your faith was empty, worthless, useless, faith with no commitment to the lordship of Christ.

In 1 John 2:19 it says, "They went out from us but they were not of us for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." You see what he's saying? When you see somebody leave the fellowship, they don't continue in the faith. John says they went out from us because they were not of us. If they had been of us they would have continued with us. And so the upshot of all of this, beloved, I say to you the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves whether you are in the faith, prove yourselves." You better look and see that your faith is not empty, uneffectual, useless, worthless faith with no commitment. Emotionalism.

So Paul opens up then with this...and that was all an aside really in Paul's thinking and in mine...back to 1 Corinthians 15, Paul opens up then by reminding them that if they are true Christians and they give evidence of it by continuing to believe, then they're the ones who've already received the gospel, they already stand on the gospel, they are being saved by the gospel and the gospel is a gospel of a bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. So they're already resurrection believers. And, you know, by this time in the verse they're saying, "Amen, Brother Paul, amen, amen. Oh, we believe it." And later on he'll say, "How come if you believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ you're so hung up on your own bodily resurrection?" That's the point.

But...I want you to notice just one thought that's sort of is implicit here and that is this, in my mind the greatest subjective proof of the resurrection is the very existence of the church. The very fact that the Corinthians had received it and stood in it and continued in it is evidence that Christ was alive because they were a mess. Who else could have changed them but a living Christ? Who else could have taken all these extortioners and thieves and homosexuals and fornicators and liars and adulterers and all of those gross things listed in the sixth chapter and transformed them into the community of the redeemed but a living Christ? I doubt seriously that a system of ethics could have literally transformed that entire population of Corinth in a period of eighteen months, and that's what happened according to Acts 18. It had to be a living Christ. Christ had to be alive. And here they are some years later still believing, still standing, still committed, still holding. And, beloved, let me add to that, here we are 2000 years later still believing in the resurrection. And I think we are the greatest subjective proof in the world of the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Do you realize that for those 2000 years while we've been continuing in the faith the skeptics of the world have done their best to

disprove the resurrection and never been able to prove...to disprove it at all to the true saved community? In fact, the longer we live, the greater the resurrection evidence is. And we are literally living evidence that He is alive.

H. D. A. Major(?) from Ripon Hall at Oxford writes in his book, *The Mission and Message of Jesus*, "Had the crucifixion of Jesus ended His disciples experience of Him it is hard to see how the Christian church could have come into existence. That church was founded on faith in the Messiahship of Jesus. A crucified Messiah was no Messiah at all. He was one rejected by Judaism and accursed of God. It was the resurrection of Jesus as Saint Paul declares in Romans 1:4 which proclaimed Him to be the Son of God with power," end quote. He's right. He's saying if there was no resurrection the church would have died right there because the whole thing was predicated on that.

Kenneth Laterette(?), great historian writing in *The History of Expansion of Christianity* says, "It was the conviction of the resurrection of Jesus which lifted His followers out of the despair unto which His death had cast them and which led to the perpetuation of a movement begun by Him. But for their profound belief that the crucified had risen from the dead and they had seen Him and talked with Him, the death of Jesus and even Jesus Himself would probably had been all but forgotten." The very existence of the Corinthian church was proof of a physical resurrection of a living Christ. They still believed it. We still believe it. The resurrection faith is unique to Christianity. Buddhists don't claim it. In the *Maha Parana Bowna Suta*(????) which is some kind of book written by somebody advocating Buddhism, we read the first account of Buddha relative to his death and it says this, "When Buddha died it was with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains." Mohammed died June 8, 632 A.D. at Medina where his tomb is annually visited by literally tens of thousands of devout Mohammedans and nobody has ever claimed that he came out of the grave. All the millions and billions of Jews and Buddhists and Mohammedans and all the other religions in the world agree that their founders have never come up out of the grave. The Jews have never claimed that Moses did. But the church continues to celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead. And every time the church baptizes another believer, they portray His resurrection, into the water and back out again. That's the heart of our faith and the church alive today is great evidence that we still receive and we still stand and we are still being saved if in fact we hold to the gospel by the reality that Jesus died, that He died for our sins, that He was buried and that He rose again the third day.

Now quickly a second. The testimony not only of the church is given here by Paul to refresh them in the gospel but the testimony of the Scripture. And you'll notice that at the end of verse 3 he says this all according to the Scriptures and the end of verse 4 again, according to the Scriptures. In other words, the gospel of the resurrection was not some late edition. It was not some "Oh hey, we've got a new thing to drop on you, folks," no. All predicted in the Old Testament. Paul says look, I delivered to you that which I received. Now every good Apostle, every good minister of God is a delivery boy, nothing more. All God expects out of us is to get the right message to the people. Paul says I delivered what I received. And by the way, Paul received it first hand.

So he says I received this from the Lord, first hand stuff. You know, Paul fought a battle in his life, he was often accused of being a Johnny-come-lately. Later in the next section he calls himself a dead fetus. It's really a statement of humility. It's in the King James it says, "One born out of due time," it means an abortion. And so he was...and apparently, and I'll tell you this next week a little more about it, but apparently that's what he was called, "Paul the abortion," or "Paul the dead fetus." And people were always condemning Paul. He was born at the wrong time. He was sort of a spiritual miscarriage. And he didn't really rank with the rest of the sharp Apostles, boy, the front line guys. And so very often when Paul gives a message he will say, "I am delivering to you what I received from the Lord. I'm a first hand Apostle, not second hand."

I remember when he was writing Galatians, in his mind he's thinking they're probably prone to think that I'm just a second hand operation here so he says in verse 11 of Galatians 1, "I make known to you, brethren," now watch, "that the gospel which was preached by me is not from men. I neither received it from men nor was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." And then he says, "When I got saved I never even went to Jerusalem to talk to those guys at all. I never went down there to get the straight shot from the big shots." Never did. Went off in Nabatea in Arabia, came back, the person who gave me this is the Lord Himself. In 1 Corinthians 11:23 where he talks about the communion, he says, "Which I have received from the Lord I give to you that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread..." Again, I got it from the Lord, I give it to you. So here he says the gospel I gave you is the gospel I have from the Lord. And notice the phrase there in verse 3, first of all. And what he means by that is the principle things, I delivered to you the principle things that I received and the principle things are Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose the third day. And he says I got it from God and I gave it to you.

But he says, "Listen to this, people, it isn't just my idea, it is according to...what?...the Scripture." And that refers to the Old Testament. Paul says this is Old Testament prophecy...Old Testament prophets saw Jesus dying and rising from the dead the third day. In Luke 24 Jesus after His resurrection is walking along the road to Emmaus with two of the disciples. He says to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things and then to enter His glory?" He says you didn't believe the prophets or you would have known they said He would die, you would have known they said He would rise to be glorified. That it was all in the Old Testament. At the end of the book of Acts, chapter 26 verse 22, Paul talking to Agrippa he says, "Having therefore obtained help from God I continue this day witnessing to small and great saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." I just repeat Moses and the prophets so the Jews if they're upset at me ought to call up Moses and tell him. And what is it the prophets and Moses said? That Christ should suffer and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead and show light to the people and the Gentiles. First there the primary one of all who have ever raised from the dead.

So he says what did Moses and the prophets say? That Christ would die and rise. And you know as well as I, you can study the Old Testament and find prophecy after prophecy after prophecy about the death of Christ, can't you? Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, the marvelous prophecy of Genesis 22 in the type of Isaac who is laid as a lamb on the altar to be sacrificed, that is a picture of the death of Christ because a ram comes and takes the place. And the ram is Christ. And Hebrews 11:19 says that when Isaac went off the altar to live again, he became a picture of the resurrection of Christ. So it was there in Genesis 22 even. And again in Psalm 22. And again in Isaiah 53. And every single sacrifice in the Old Testament spoke of Christ prophetically. We'll see a chapter tonight when we meet to study Zechariah chapter 11, one of the most unbelievable prophecies you've ever seen. In Zechariah 11 it details everything Judas would do in the betrayal of Jesus Christ leading to His death, hundreds of years before Judas was ever born. So His death was prophesied, clearly prophesied in the Old Testament.

Psalm 22 talks about the fact that He'll say, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Talks about the fact that His bones will all be out of joint, that He'll be thirsty, that He'll be pierced with a spear, that the crowd will compass Him about. That they'll cast things at Him and mock Him.

The resurrection is also prophesied in the Old Testament. It can be seen in Leviticus 23 in the offering that is given there which is a picture of the resurrection. It can be seen in Psalm 16 where the psalmist said, "He will not let His holy one see corruption." But in the next verse it says, "He will show me the path of life." In other words, the holy one will be buried but His flesh will never see corruption but will come out of the grave to life. That's a clear prophecy of the resurrection. And in Acts chapter 2 verses 30...25 to 32 and in Acts 13:34 to 37 both of those sermons there quote that passage in Psalm 16 as explicit prophecies concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Then you have Jesus' own words. Our Lord said, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so shall the Son of Man be in the earth." Jonah was a prophecy of Jesus. In Isaiah 53 you have Christ dying and at the end of the chapter you have Him reigning in the earth in the Kingdom. Well you've got to have a resurrection. So the Old Testament speaks of the resurrection. Nothing new. The living church testifies to the resurrection. Now, beloved, we are committed to that resurrection, are we not? Not only as the staple truth of our salvation, but as the hope of our own resurrection which we await when God comes to take His own. Well let's pray. We'll cover the rest of those verses next time.

Father, thank You for our time this morning, for the patience of these who come to hear and study Your Word. Thank You for the great hope of resurrection. Thank You for what the Scripture says about it, for what the living church says about the living Christ. Father, we pray that we might live like resurrection people that the world might see Christ living in us and through us. And we'll give You the praise in the name of the one who lives and because He lives we shall live also, the Lord Jesus

Christ. Amen.

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