

# Resurrection Realities

## 1 Corinthians 15:10-19

Easter 2026

### Intro

In 1998 a movie called *The Truman Show* was released...

- In the film, Jim Carrey plays Truman Burbank, a normal guy with a normal job, a normal wife and a normal best friend....

But as Truman experiences an odd series of events, he begins to doubt that things *are really what they appear to be...*

- As it turns out, Truman's entire life has been lived out in front of cameras for the ultimate in reality TV, *The Truman Show....*

Truman's life has been filmed by thousands of hidden cameras, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and broadcast live around the world...

- By the time the movie draws to a close, Truman escapes his false world and is then free to live *a real life...*

Now, in the case of Truman Burbank, the discovery that his life was a *manufactured illusion* eventually led him to break free into the *freedom of a real life...*

*Now, imagine for a moment that the Christian life was a sort of Truman Show...*

- But in our case imagine the ***illusion*** was ***the Resurrection of Jesus Christ...***

What if the Resurrection of Jesus Christ never happened?...

- Like Truman Burbank, would we experience freedom and joy once we were freed from *the illusion of the resurrection of Jesus Christ?*...

***As we will see in our study this morning, the answer is a resounding NO!...***

- The Apostle Paul will make it abundantly clear that *the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the reality upon which all of our hope is built...*

If the Lord Jesus ***did not*** rise from the dead then ***our faith is in vain and we are still in our sins...***

*So, with this as our introduction, would you please follow along as I read our passage...*

### **1 Corinthians 15:10-19**

**10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**

**11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.**

**12 Now 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?**

**13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.**

**14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.**

**15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.**

**16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.**

**17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!**

**18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**

**19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.**

*Let's move into our first section...*

## **1) Wasted Labor (vs 10)**

*Now, it seems safe to assume that none of us enjoys wasted labor...*

When we spend time working at a job, on a special project or on a chore at home, *we want it to mean something* — we don't want our work to be done in vain...

*And this is just this sort of thing that Paul is focusing on as we get into 1 Corinthians 15:10...*

- You see, *if the Lord Jesus did not rise from the dead* then all that Paul did as a believer was **wasted labor...**

*To get some context on 1 Corinthians 15:10 please look back with me a couple of verses to...*

### **1 Corinthians 15:8-9**

**8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.**

**9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.**

- Here Paul was telling the Corinthians that he had seen the resurrected Jesus...

*To remind ourselves of this transformative encounter, please turn to...*

### **Acts 9:1-6 (NKJV)**

**1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest**

**2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.**

**3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.**

**4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"**

**5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"**

**Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."**

**6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."**

Now, I would argue that there is no reasonable way to explain the change from Saul to Paul — from persecutor to Apostle — apart from the Resurrected Jesus...[expand]

*Please turn back to 1 Corinthians 15 as we continue in vs...*

**10 But by the grace of God I am what I am,**

**grace** - *a favor done without expectation of return; unearned and unmerited favor; God's Riches At Christ's Expense...*

So it was this ***unearned*** and ***unmerited*** favor that made Paul into the man that he became...

*Continuing on we read...*

**and His grace toward me was not in vain;**

**in vain** - *empty, fruitless, without effect, wasted...*

**but I labored more abundantly than they all,**

Here Paul is making a reference to the fact that his public ministry was much more extensive than any of the other apostles...

**labored** - *working to the point of exhaustion...*

*Now, it is true that Paul led an amazing life as a believer — but why is he bringing these issues up to the Corinthians?...*

***Because Paul is showing the impact that the Resurrected Lord Jesus had on his life...***

- *You see, if the Lord Jesus had not risen from the dead then none of this would have been possible...*

*Without the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, there is no Apostle Paul — there are no writings of Paul — and how much poorer would your life be without the writings of Paul?...*

*Continuing on in 1 Corinthians 15:10...*

**yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**

Paul is quick to point out that he could not take credit for his abundant labor — it was actually the work of the grace of God that energized and empowered Paul...

- Now, as we move on, I must make it perfectly clear that as great as Paul's abundant labor was, it was all **wasted labor** ***if Christ did not rise from the dead...***

*And Paul will show us why as we move on to our second section...*

## **2) Empty Preaching & Faith (vs 11-14)**

**11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.**

Here Paul refers to the fact that it didn't matter who the Corinthians had received the gospel from...

- They could have heard the gospel from Paul, Apollos, Peter, James, you name it — the ***message***, and not the ***messenger***, was what mattered...

**preach** - *to herald or proclaim; always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed...*

**believed** - *to entrust one's spiritual well-being to Christ...*

- The Corinthians had placed their faith in the same gospel message that was preached by each of the apostles...

And that gospel proclaimed that Jesus Christ had died for their sins, was buried and then rose again on the third day...

*Moving on to verse...*

**12 Now 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?**

*Here's the problem...*

- Though the Corinthians initially believed the gospel message, some were now wavering on the truth of the resurrection...

And it may be that they began to doubt because the philosophy of their day taught the superiority of the *immaterial* over the *material*...

- The idea was that the *material* was evil and that the *immaterial* was good...

Consequently, the doctrine of a physical resurrection was thought to be absurd to many in the Greek world...

*When Paul preached in Athens we read in...*

**Acts 17:32 (NKJV)**

**And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter."**

*And Paul challenged King Agrippa in...*

## **Acts 26:8 (NKJV)**

**“Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?”**

Now, the society that we live in is dominated by naturalistic materialism and the idea of the resurrection seems just as absurd as it did in the ancient world...

- We are taught over and over again that this life is all that there is — when you die it is all over — there is no life after death — there is no resurrection...

*Paul addresses this denial of the resurrection as we move on into vs...*

**13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.**

- Now, maybe the Corinthians were now denying the resurrection of believers because it contradicted with Greek philosophy or maybe they had another reason for denying the resurrection...

But whatever their reasons, Paul adamantly states that the denial that God can raise the dead was tantamount to denying the resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself...

- ***In other words, if there is no such thing as the resurrection of the dead then Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead...***

*Paul continues in verse...*

**14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.**

**empty** - *hollow; nothing inside...*

- [ex. going to furniture store - cardboard TVs & computers]

So, if Jesus did not rise from the dead then the preaching of all the apostles was empty...

- And if that was the case then *all of the Corinthians* had an ***empty faith*** because it was based on ***empty preaching...***

[ex. episode of Lost — Charlie shares an empty jar with Claire and they pretend they are eating peanut butter...]

- *Now, why — if Jesus did not rise from the dead — would all the preaching of the apostles be empty?...*
- ***Because the foundation of all NT teaching is the resurrection of Jesus Christ!...***

This is seen with absolute clarity in the very first sermon ever preached in the church age...

*To prove my point please turn to...*

## **Acts 2:22-36**

**22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—**

**23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;**

**24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.**

**25 For David says concerning Him:**

**‘I foresaw the Lord always before my face,  
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.**

**26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.**

**27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades,  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**

**28 You have made known to me the ways of life;  
You will make me full of joy in Your presence. ’**

**29 “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.**

**30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,**

**31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.**

**32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.**

**33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.**

**34 “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:**

**‘The Lord said to my Lord,**

**“Sit at My right hand,**

**35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” ’**

**36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**

Peter's sermon would be incomprehensible apart from ***the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ...***

- And that sermon on the day of Pentecost ***was*** and ***is*** the foundational teaching of the NT church...

*Now, it is also vital that we note one more thing before we move on to our next section...*

***If Jesus did not rise from the dead then He is not worthy of our trust...***

*To see what I mean please turn to...*

## Mark 10:33-34

**33 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles;**

**34 and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”**

- You see, if Jesus did not rise again then we have a big problem...

*And both options are heartbreaking...*

***If Jesus did not rise from the dead then either He was mistaken about the claim that He would rise again or He was simply a fake...***

- Either way He would be disqualified from being our Savior — because that would prove that He was either ***imperfect*** or He was an ***imposter***...

*Let's move on to our third section...*

### **3) False Witnesses (vs 15)**

**15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.**

*Let's try to follow Paul's logic here...*

- Paul is saying that if the dead cannot be resurrected then the Lord Jesus Christ was not resurrected...

***If this is the case then Paul and all of the other apostles are false witnesses...***

- ***Because they had publicly declared over and over again that God had raised Jesus Christ from the dead...***

As we have already seen, Peter clearly proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus Christ in that very first sermon on the Day of Pentecost...

- If the dead do not rise then Paul and the other apostles were not servants of God...

They were ***false witnesses*** who had misrepresented God every step of the way and as a result had misled thousands of individuals...

*But as bad as all that is, it is about to get much worse as we enter into our final section...*

#### **4) Hopelessness (vs 16-19)**

**16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.  
17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile;**

**futile** - *useless, of no purpose...characterized by aimlessness, leading to no object or end...*

- [ex. building houses on a foundation of sand, chasing the wind, trying to catch your shadow...]

Here in vs 16-17 Paul is showing once again the emptiness or hollowness of the Christian faith without the resurrection of Jesus Christ...

*And then Paul adds in verse 17...*

**you are still in your sins!**

*Just let that sink in for a moment — it is vital that we think clearly on this issue...*

We must remind ourselves that the NT teaches us that Jesus is the only one who can make us acceptable before God...

- Because Jesus is the only one who can wash our sins away...

He is the only one who can provide the forgiveness that we so desperately need...

- He is the only one who can save us from the judgment to come...

***But if Jesus did not rise from the dead then we do not have the forgiveness of sins...***

- If the Lord Jesus did not rise from the dead then we have not been restored to the a right relationship with the Father...

If the Lord Jesus did not rise from the dead then we are still on our way to judgment...

- As mentioned earlier, if Jesus **said** He was going to rise from the dead but failed to do so then He was either **imperfect** or an **imposter**...

And if either of those things are true then He could not have been the sinless Savior...

- You see, the resurrection of Jesus was to be God's stamp of approval of the the sacrifice of The Lord Jesus...

But if Jesus did not rise from the dead then God must not have approved...

- And if Jesus did not rise because God the Father did not approve then we remain in our sins...

*But as Paul continues, we see that this bad news isn't only for the living...*

**18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**

**perished** - *given over to the misery of Hell...*

*This is the same Greek word that is used in...*

## John 3:16

**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

*The point that Paul is making is clear — if Jesus was not who He said He was...*

- *If Jesus was not able to conquer death and prove it like He said He would by rising from the dead — then those believers who died trusting in Him have perished eternally...*

They had an empty faith that gave birth to utter hopelessness...

*Let's look at the final verse of our passage...*

**19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.**

*If Christ did not rise from the dead then believers are to be pitied more than all men — but why would this be?...*

Because if Christ did not rise from the dead then we endure senseless hardship and self-restraint for **no purpose whatsoever...**

*This is a dark and difficult truth...*

## Conclusion

Now, as our time together draws to a close, we see just how hopeless life would be if Christ had not risen from the dead...

- Our labor would be wasted, our preaching & faith would be empty, we would be false witnesses and we would be absolutely hopeless...

***Thankfully, the Lord Jesus Christ did rise from the dead on the third day and He is currently seated at the right hand of the Father...***

[expand — there are incredibly compelling reasons to believe that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead — if you are struggling in this area please read *The Case for Christ...*]

- And just in case you and I are ever tempted to doubt the ***importance*** of the resurrection, I'd like to close with the following 4 ***Resurrection Reminders...***

***1) The divinity of the Lord Jesus is proven through His resurrection...***

**Romans 1:4**

**...declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**

***2) The sovereignty of the Lord Jesus is proven through His resurrection...***

**Romans 14:9**

**For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.**

***3) Our justification rests on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus...***

**Romans 4:25**

**who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.**

***4) Our own resurrection is assured by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus...***

**Romans 8:11**

**But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**

*Let's pray and move into our time of communion...*