

↳ Eternity will be a place, among other things, where God is no longer stolen from. Right now, God is at a loss because of a thief named Satan. Everything was stolen from Him because of sin and the fall, and He is in the process of redeeming it all back into His permanent possession. For us, He began by redeeming our souls and He will finish by redeeming our bodies. The process of God is unstoppable. The culture of Corinth had a major effect on the thinking of this early church; they had no problem with the immortality of the soul but had strong doubts about the future of their physical bodies. They had similar questions to the ones we may have, such as: Why do we even need a body? The Greek's response to Paul's sermon on Mar's Hill is typical of the thinking of that day: "We want to hear more about this later," Acts 17:32. The Corinthian church didn't think it mattered whether or not people got their bodies resurrected, they were wrong about that, it does matter, a lot! The details of Scripture matter! It matters that we are resurrected because it is tied to Jesus' resurrection. Truths such as the creation and resurrection are foundational, and when we remove them or alter them, the entire Bible comes unraveled. Paul essentially relays to the Corinthians church that if we take away the resurrection from believers we take away everything we possess.

**If people in general and Christ in particular are not bodily raised, then:**

- 1) Christian preaching is useless, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:14. It's not the act of preaching but the content of it that is in view here, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:3-4. In other words, if we leave Jesus in the tomb we empty the gospel of its contents. It matters nothing of what kind of life He lived, His miracles, or His death if He didn't come back to life!
- 2) Faith in that preaching is also useless, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:14. We hear a lot about faith, keeping the faith, got to have faith, and all religions require faith including atheism. There is no merit in faith by itself. Faith is only as valuable as the object of faith. Christian faith becomes worthless when there is no resurrection; of what use is one more dead religious teacher?
- 3) Those who preach the gospel are guilty of perjury against God. The liars, if this is the case, are listed for us in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:5-8. Make no mistake about it; the biggest liar would be Jesus since He promised that He would resurrect and all that we believe would be anchored on the resurrection.
- 4) Faith in the gospel is also futile, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:17. It is futile because that faith doesn't supply the one thing that we need the most: the forgiveness of sins. The Hall of the Faithful of Hebrews 11 becomes the Hall of the Foolish if Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, they died in their sins and will spend an eternity separated from God!
- 5) Believers in the gospel without a resurrection who have passed away are lost forever, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:18. If Christ has not been raised from the dead, they are gone for good.
- 6) Without the resurrection, Christians are the most pitiful group there is, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:19. This is interesting since I hear from modern Christians something different: "If Christianity were false, the Christian life is still the best life there is." Others seem to think that Christian living is the ticket to things like Health and Wealth and prosperity, Paul didn't seem to think so.

**We suffer greatly from an otherwise cheap understanding of what it means to live the Christian life. We have fashioned for ourselves a cross-less Christianity nowadays, not Jesus' cross but our own. The Christian life is a cross bearing life, giving up ourselves and even our lives for Jesus' sake. Christianity for Paul and for the rest of the New Testament was a life of sacrifice and service.**

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