

IF THERE WAS NO RESURRECTION

TEXT: I Corinthians 15:12-19

There were those in Paul's day that questioned the believer's resurrection from the dead. Notice **verse 12, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"**

As William Barclay stated, "They said flatly, 'Dead men do not rise again.'"¹ But in verse 13 We read, **"But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen."**

Paul was saying that the resurrection of Christ showed the possibility of the believer's resurrection and also provided the guarantee of the believer's resurrection. Once establishing the fact of the believer's resurrection, then Paul begins to establish the importance of Christ's resurrection. **In verses 13-19** Paul gives a series of **"ifs"** that show the importance of the resurrection of Christ.

He shows what it would mean **"if"** Christ had not been raised from the dead.

What would it mean if Jesus were not raised from dead? Let me point out 3 truths from our text.

I. OUR PROCLAMATION WOULD BE FALSE!

In **verse 14-15** Paul talks about the **preaching** of the resurrected Christ and the **preachers** of a resurrected Christ. He tells us that if Jesus is not raised from the dead then both are false. If Christ be not raised then:

A. THE MESSAGE IS VOID.

Paul says in **verse 14**, "**And is Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain...**"

The word "**preaching**" speaks of a proclamation, by implication, the proclaiming of the gospel message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

The Gospel is to be the heart and soul of preaching.

Charles Spurgeon, in his Lectures to HIS Students said in closing as he dealt with the subject "**Sermons-Their Matter**," "Of all I would wish to say this is the sum; my brethren, preach CHRIST, always and evermore. He is the whole-gospel. His person, offices, and work must be our one-great, all-comprehending theme."

J.H. Jowett fitly described preaching when he said, "We are not appointed to merely good advice, but to proclaim good news."

TRIVETTE SAID In some cases "preaching" is nothing more than someone standing up and yelling. But preaching is more than yelling, it is a matter of telling. It is telling about a Saviour who died for our sins and rose again from the dead.

Paul tells us in verse 14 that if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is in "vain." The word "vain" means "void, empty of content, as a shell without a kernel."

A. THE MESSAGE IS VOID.

B. THE MESSENGER IS VAIN.

Paul adds in **verse 15: "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not."**

The words "**false witness**" speak of the bearer of an untrue message.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead on the morning of the third day, then Peter, Paul, James, John, and all the apostles were a hoax. Every preacher through-out the ages, Wesley, Spurgeon, Moody, Whitefield, Edwards, Knox, has been a false religious hoax. Every missionary, Carey, Judson, Paton, has led millions astray. Every poet and hymn-writer, Crosby, Chapman, Wesley, Watts, have been nothing but false witnesses. What they have declared, written and proclaimed is false.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead has been the theme of every preacher, missionary, poet and hymn-writer I have named and if Christ is not a living, resurrected Saviour they all, including me, have been a deceiver. All we have preached, promoted, proclaimed has been a hoax.

I. OUR PROCLAMATION WOULD BE FALSE!

II. OUR POSITION WOULD BE FRUITLESS!

In **verse 16, "For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised."**

If there is not the bodily resurrection of the believer's body the implication is devastating. It would mean that Jesus was not raised from the dead.

A. THERE IS NO REDEMPTION OF OUR SOULS.

We read in **verse 14, "and your faith is vain," and also in verse 17, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain."**

The word "**vain**" used in **verse 17** means "profitless." Each of us in this place have placed our eternal destiny on the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is upon these truths that we depend on for salvation.

Since FEBURARY, 1973 I have depended on nothing but the finished work of Jesus to save me, a finished work that includes His resurrection from the dead. Through these many years I have joined William Bradbury in saying:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus name.

On Christ the solid Rock, I stand-
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

A. THERE IS NO REDEMPTION OF OUR SOULS.

B. THERE IS NO REMISSION OF OUR SINS.

verse 17 tells us, "ye are yet in your sins."

I have often sang:

You ask me why I'm happy,
Then I'll just tell you why;
It's because my sins are gone.

But if Jesus is not a risen and living Saviour, I am still under the penalty and power of sin. My sins have never been forgiven, they have never been cleansed, and they have never been washed away.

Notice **verse 18: "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."**

All of our loved ones that believed who put their faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ all died and went to hell. Their faith was vain, their sins were not forgiven, and each one of them died, deceived and eternally damned to an eternal hell.

If Christ has not been raised from the dead then we have been depending on that which cannot save us and has been responsible for many going to hell and perishing. There is no redeemed life in us unless there is a risen life!

I. OUR PROCLAMATION WOULD BE FALSE!

II. OUR POSITION WOULD BE FRUITLESS!

III. OUR PRACTICE WOULD BE FOOLISH!

Paul sums it all up in **verse 19: "If in this life only we have hope in, we are of all men most miserable."**

The word "**miserable**" means "to have mercy on, to be pitied." If Jesus is not risen from the dead, then we are to be pitied.

A. THE LIFE WE HAVE CONSECRATED TO CHRIST HAS BEEN FOOLISH.

Men like Jim Elliot who went to the jungle of Ecuador and was brutally murdered by the Auca Indians was a fool. Elliot once said, "A man is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then Jim Elliot was a fool.

A. THE LIFE WE HAVE CONSECRATED TO CHRIST HAS BEEN FOOLISH.

B. THE LIFE WE HAVE CONTEMPLATED IN CHRIST IS FOOLISH.

VRS.19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

ACC. SAID And, if in this life we have hoped in Christ only, we are more to be pitied than all men. If, in this life, we have no other hope and confidence but in Christ, and if he be still dead, and not yet risen we are more to be pitied than any other men; we are sadly deceived; we have denied ourselves, and been denied by others; have crucified our flesh all in vain, and been persecuted by our fellow creatures on account of our belief and hope in One who is not existing, and therefore can neither aid us here, nor reward us hereafter if Jesus was not raised from the dead.

But In the early morning stillness of that third day,
Through the darkness the ladies made their way,
Up the hill through the garden to the grave
Where they heard holy angels proclaim
He's not here, He arose like He said,
He's not here, You want find Him among the dead,
He's not here, He's conquered sin's prison,
He's not here, He's risen. LIKE HE SAID