

If Christ Has Not Been Raised

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[0 : 00] The sermon text for today is 1 Corinthians 15, 12-19.

At the conclusion of the reading, I will declare this is the word of the Lord, and the church, in joyful response to his revelation given to us, will together say, Thanks be to God.

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

[1 : 07] If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Let's go before the Lord again in prayer.

Father, as Jordan just prayed, we cannot onboard the truth apart from the work of your Spirit.

And so God, that's my simple prayer right now, that you would help us to onboard this truth that Paul proclaims to the Corinthians, which the Spirit is proclaiming to the church in every age.

God, help this truth to affect our hearts and our lives for the sake of the name of Christ, and for the advancement of the gospel, and for the building of the church. And we pray this in his name.

Amen. Well, good morning, Shoreline. Good morning. I love gathering with you all in worship, and whether it's at the Holiday Inn or the Waterford Community Center, it really doesn't matter.

[2 : 20] You know, we do desire someday in God's timing to have a building that is our own. I mean, I think it is strategically, practically helpful for the advancement of the gospel in this region, but we don't need a building, right?

You guys believe that? Like, we don't need a building to be the church. The church is the redeemed people of God. Randy's shown us pictures of African churches meeting under mango trees.

We don't need a building. We pray for one, but, you know, it's good to worship wherever we are. My name is Mike. I'm one of the pastors here at Shoreline, and I'm so glad that you all have joined us this morning.

I want to ask you all if you ever find yourselves playing the what-if game. The what-if game. You know, there are different flavors of the what-if game out there.

You know, Rob opened us beautifully this morning. In light of the horrifying and the tragic events that have gone on in our own country this week and in the world, as Rob elaborated, you know, we can get lost in a what-if game that leads us down a path of fear or down a path into despair.

[3 : 32] Now, there's also much more lighthearted versions of the what-if game, like my favorite, I mean, my kid's favorite show, Wild Kratts. If you don't know about Wild Kratts, each episode begins with zoologists Chris and Martin Kratts talking about some particular animal, such as a peregrine falcon.

I've always been a fan of the peregrine falcon. And then they say something like this. Can you imagine what it would be like to nosedive at supersonic speeds? What if? And after they say what if, they're transformed into these cartoon characters that go on to use technology to take on the creature powers of those peregrine falcons.

My favorite what-if game. But there's still other varieties of what-if games that engage our logic and our imagination in constructive ways that lead to positive change.

And a lot of times these kind of things go on in a brainstorming session at work or whatever. And you might call these thought experiments. Thought experiment. And that's exactly what Paul is doing here with the Corinthian church.

He is engaging them in this thought experiment. Now, as I said last week in introduction to this chapter, the Corinthians were in danger of losing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[4 : 50] And we're about to see exactly how that was the case. And Paul's goal here in this thought experiment is to snap them out of their false thinking by playing out the what-if scenario of their errant thinking.

Basically, if things are as you claim, Corinthians, then here are the dire implications that you're not realizing. If you're new here, we're in a series walking through the book of 1 Corinthians.

And we're looking at how the church's call is to display Christ, to display the gospel in all things. Hence the gospel culture studies that we're doing this fall.

Today, though, we're in the second of five sermons in 1 Corinthians 15, looking specifically at verses 12 through 19. So please turn there in your Bibles if you haven't already.

If you don't have a Bible, there are some Bibles up here bookmarked to today's passage. You're welcome to take one of those and keep it. The title of today's sermon, taken straight out of the text, is If Christ Has Not Been Raised.

[5 : 55] If Christ Has Not Been Raised. Now, I'm going to do things slightly differently than I normally do. I want us to first walk through all eight of these verses together, seeking to follow along with Paul in his thought experiment, seeking to feel what he wants us to feel.

And then after we do that, we'll identify the main point and how it applies to us today. So one else, are you ready to engage your reason and your imagination in this thought experiment?

Three of you are. All right, let's go. Four of us are going to do this. Following Paul's thought experiment. So look in your Bibles, 1 Corinthians 15, verse 12.

Paul says, Now, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? Okay, so here's the first thing we see here.

We see Paul's shock. Now, recall that in the first 11 verses that we looked at last week, Paul was reminding the Corinthians of what is of first importance, the core saving message of the gospel, namely, God's grace to sinners through the death and resurrection of Christ.

[7 : 10] And he emphasized right at the beginning the need for the Corinthians to hold fast to that gospel message. You might say here that Paul is appalled that the Corinthians believe that Jesus Christ rose bodily from the grave and yet apparently do not believe that there will be a future resurrection of the dead.

And this seems to be Paul's impetus for writing this incredible chapter of the Bible. And so just as an aside, once again we see how God used the problematic Corinthian church to lead to Holy Spirit-inspired scripture from Paul's hand that has instructed and strengthened the church for the last 2,000 years.

So I'm going to say glory to God that that problem that they had is leading to this text that we can read 2,000 years later. Now, there's reasons that the Corinthians may have been led down that belief, having to do with just the Greek belief that the spirit was everything, the soul was everything, the body meant nothing.

But this is what they were believing, some of them, that there was no future resurrection of the dead. And Paul continues in verse 13, But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

Not even Christ has been raised. And so the second thing that we see here is this vital link that Paul asserts, the vital link asserted. Paul's shock in verse 12 is due to there being a vital link that the Corinthians have completely overlooked.

[8 : 43] And that vital, that inseparable link is between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the future resurrection of the dead in Christ. That's what Paul is asserting here, that the bodily resurrection, the historical resurrection of Jesus from the grave cannot be separated from the future resurrection of the saints.

Christ's resurrection, believers in Christ that are here, Christ's resurrection is a booming declaration of what's in store for his followers.

His resurrection confirms and it points to the future resurrection of the saints. So just spoiler alert, Paul will say in verse 20 next week that Christ's resurrection is the first fruits of those who have

fallen asleep.

It's like that first pristine and savory McCown apple from Holmberg Orchards. Some of you know what I'm talking about. If you didn't know, it's the best apple in the area, Holmberg Orchard. But when that first apple appears, I've never been there for that moment, but I can imagine it, you know that the rest of the harvest is coming, right? That's what Paul's talking about, and we're going to get to that more next week.

[9 : 55] Now underlying this assumption, though, that Paul makes is the beautiful doctrine of our union with Christ. That's the link.

He doesn't actually state it here, but it's assumed. By sheer grace, which we talked about last week, and through faith in Christ, we are eternally joined to Christ. We're united to Christ.

We are one with Christ. Paul says in Ephesians 2, 5 through 6, that God made us alive together with Christ, and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3, 4, Paul says that your life is hidden with Christ in God. And of course, there's Romans 6, verse 5. Paul says, And you know, Jesus illustrated this spiritual reality of our union with him with a really great metaphor.

Do you remember John 15? The vine and the branches. Right? The vine and the branches. He is the vine. We are the branches. The life that flows through the vine is shared by all of the branches that abide in that vine.

[11 : 14] Okay, so therefore, to deny the reality of the future resurrection of the dead is at the same time to deny the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul is therefore insisting, as one commentator put it, that this denial knocks out the bottom of Christian faith.

It quite literally destroys, by logical exclusion, the foundation on which the gospel rests. The Corinthians were losing their very foundation without realizing it.

And this is where Paul gets into the thought experiment. Okay? He's saying, Okay, Corinthians, let's just play this thing out. Okay? Imagine with me for a minute that your belief is true, that the dead are not raised, and therefore that Christ has not been raised.

Now look at verse 14. He says, And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised.

[12 : 24] Okay, here's the third thing that we see here. We see dire implications of a dead Christ. Okay, Shoreline, this is where I want you to put your imagination cap on here, and your thinking cap.

Let's imagine with Paul that Christ has not actually been raised. Okay? He has not been raised bodily, historically, from the dead. That means, first of all, Paul says here, that means that gospel preaching is in vain.

Okay, last week we reveled in the fact that the gospel is power, Romans 1.16, unto salvation for everyone who believes. But if Christ did not rise from the grave, then what becomes of the gospel? What becomes of the gospel? It becomes just empty religious mumbo-jumbo, right? It becomes a fairy tale or a fable, wishful thinking that just helps us cope with life in a fallen world.

Gospel preaching is in vain. Secondly, Paul says our faith is in vain. Okay, if our faith rests in a fairy tale, in a delusion, then our faith becomes, as well, empty and worthless.

[13 : 36] At that point, we're simply trusting in some human social construct that's not going to take us any further than the grave. Gospel preaching is in vain. Our faith is in vain.

And thirdly, Paul argues we are false witnesses for God. Okay, Paul was raised Jewish. He doesn't imagine that Christ not rising eliminates the reality of God.

So he's saying that if Jesus isn't raised from the dead, and therefore all of Jesus' claims are false, we're going to talk about that more later, then to hold Jesus up as the promised Messiah that was long foretold in the scriptures is to misrepresent God himself.

He's saying we are declaring something on behalf of God that God hasn't actually said. We're saying, thus saith the Lord, but he hasn't spoken. That's a serious thing. Okay, so you see, the gospel then is not only contributing no positive value to our lives or our standing before God.

It's also seriously detrimental because we are sinning against the holy God by even preaching the gospel message. Friends, these are the dire implications of a dead Jesus Christ.

[14:49] This is the bleak reality if Jesus has not actually been raised. But Paul doesn't stop there, does he? Next, he circles back on this vital connection that he had asserted before.

So we see in verse 16, the vital link reaffirmed. He says, for if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. In only five verses, he has made this assertion three times, right?

Back up in verse 12, in verse 13, now again in verse 16, Paul really wants the Corinthians to understand the logical error that they have made to see this vital, inseparable link between the resurrection of Christ and the future resurrection of the dead.

He's saying you cannot have one without the other. To lose the resurrection of the dead is to lose the resurrection of Christ, and to lose the resurrection of Christ is to lose the gospel. Okay, so having reaffirmed this assertion, Paul again goes into the thought experiment, okay, to give us more dire implications of a dead Christ.

Look at verse 17. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

[16:12] So just in case the Corinthians missed it the first time, Paul reminds them that faith in a dead Christ is a worthless faith.

Okay? And that's because faith in a dead Christ is a faith that will lead to death. And why is that? Well, because, and this is the fourth implication we see here, if Christ has not been raised, then we are still in our sins.

We're still in our sins. Now, it's worth stopping to consider why this would be the case. Okay? I mean, couldn't Jesus have still paid for our sins on the cross to reconcile us to God even if he didn't rise from the grave?

I think it's worth asking that question, right? And I'm afraid the answer is no, absolutely not. Jesus could not have paid for our sins if he did not rise from the grave.

If Jesus' body remains in the grave, a victim of death, like every other human before or since, then who is Jesus? Who is Jesus? See, Jesus claimed to be the Son of Man, as prophesied in Daniel, one with authority and power and glory.

[17:28] He claimed to be the Son of Man, and he claimed to be the Son of God. Right? Jesus claimed to hold ultimate authority as derived from his union with God the Father. He told the Jews, and they almost stoned him, I and the Father are one.

Jesus claimed to be the long-foretold Messiah. He read from Isaiah and said, this has been fulfilled in your hearing. He claimed to be the Christ promised from ancient times.

And Jesus even predicted multiple times, read through the Gospels, over and over again. His disciples didn't get it, but he predicted his future death by the authorities and his resurrection from the dead three days later.

He talked about it. It's recorded in Scripture. What becomes of Jesus if he did not rise from the dead? As all of his claims amount to nothing.

All of them. Right? He becomes, as C.S. Lewis has famously expressed, either a lunatic, either he was crazy, deranged, didn't know what he was talking about, or he's a liar.

[18:33] He was deluding a whole bunch of people. And therefore, so here's where I'm going here. Therefore, his death on the cross was not a death in our place.

Right? It does not pay for our sins. It was a death that he deserved. Or even if he didn't deserve it, even if he was a morally good person and he went to the cross but didn't rise, then it certainly has no propitiating effect.

That is, it in no way satisfies God's wrath for the sins of the world. Right? Only a God-man, only someone who was perfect in every way and divine, yet at the same time, one of us could fully absorb God's wrath for the sins of mankind.

And if Jesus did not rise from the dead, he certainly isn't the God-man that we need to save us from our sins. And therefore, we're still in our sins.

The guilt, the penalty of sin remains. God's wrath abides on us. Justice needs to still be satisfied. And that means, fifthly, that the dead in Christ have perished.

[19:51] The dead in Christ have perished. Paul uses the word perish all throughout his letters to speak of final judgment.

Okay? Of, another big word here, eschatological destruction. That is, in the end, being sentenced to an eternity in hell. One commentator refers to this as the utter loss, consequent upon dying in sin.

Utter loss. If Christ has not been raised, then to consider the dead in Christ to have fallen asleep, as Paul says, is simply a polite way to refer to their death.

Right? It's simply a euphemism to ignore the brutal reality that they have perished and on the last day they will enter eternal punishment at the hands of a holy and righteous God.

and Paul then finally lays out this grim conclusion. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

[21 : 06] If all we have, Christians, if all we have is hope in Christ in this life and Christ has not been raised and all the dire implications we just talked about are therefore true, then what a sad bunch of people we are.

If our religion is sheer fantasy and we've placed all our hope and trust in a delusion, if we've given up fame and riches and comfort in this life to gain nothing in the end, then what a pitiable group of people are followers of Christ.

at best then, Christianity is a mere coping mechanism and at worst, as Paul is saying, it is a sure path to eternal destruction.

That's our reality if Christ has not been raised. Church, this means that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the linchpin of our faith.

It's the linchpin of our faith. If Christ has not been raised, then Christianity is mere empty religion. That's all it is. The weight of the Christian faith hangs on the resurrection, the bodily historical resurrection of Christ.

[22 : 24] It is everything. And we believe here with all of our hearts that Christ died for our sins in accordance with scriptures, that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures as evidenced by his appearances to many.

We believe, Shoreline believes, that Jesus Christ has been raised, that he ascended back to the Father in glory where he sits and reigns with power and he has poured out his Holy Spirit on the church.

He has empowered us for mission and ministry. He empowers us to live lives of holiness and love and mission until Christ comes back to judge the living and the dead.

That's what we believe here. And all of that hangs on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whether he was actually, historically, bodily, in time and place, risen from the grave.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the linchpin of our faith. If Christ has not been raised, then Christianity is a lie and we have a lot better things to do with our time.

[23 : 44] So what are we to do with these verses? That's the message of this text, I think. What do we do with that? How do we take Paul's thought experiment and then apply it into our lives today?

I have four points of application that I want to lead us through now. Okay, there's a call here.

There's definitely more here than these four things, but these are the four things we're going to talk about.

A call, a question, an exhortation, and an encouragement. Okay? A call, a question, an exhortation, and an encouragement. I think the call here is to get off the fence.

Friends, this passage shows us that it makes no sense. It makes no logical sense. Whoops. Makes no sense to be on the fence, guys.

It makes no sense to try and pretend like we have one foot in Christianity and then one foot in the world. We need to realize the radical nature of what we profess and the profound implications of our profession.

[24 : 55] If Christ is risen from the dead, then he is Lord and Savior and everything is changed forever. Okay, either Christ rose from the grave and he is everything that he said he is or he did not rise from the grave and he isn't.

He's none of those things. His claims amount to nothing. We're being called today to get off the fence and to be all in. Christians, to be all in for his exaltation and for the edification of the body of Christ and the expansion of his kingdom.

And you know, I think we're increasingly in a time where Christians are realizing that there's really no middle ground. And this region of the country has been along that track further than where I grew up in the Midwest.

Christians are realizing that any attempt to be in some sort of middle ground is foolish and dangerous. I don't mean eternally dangerous.

I don't mean physically dangerous. I mean eternally dangerous. Okay, to be all in is eternally secure but it's physically unsafe. It is.

[26 : 04] The middle ground, it's far more comfortable. It's far more safe. It allows us to play church on Sundays and then just kind of blend in to society the rest of the week. That's what the flesh wants.

So don't get me wrong. We're drawn towards that. It's an easier life. But friends, see how illogical this actually is. If Christ is risen from the dead, to be found in him is worth the loss of everything else.

Of everything else. If Christ is risen, how important is my reputation at work? If I'm asked to do something that I don't think is right? Or my reputation in sports.

If giving up Sundays is going to mess with my career as an athlete, how important is that if Christ is risen from the dead? If Christ is risen, does it matter that I win the argument with my spouse?

Does it matter that I have sinned and I want to conceal it from my peers here even though it's been fully paid for on the cross as evidenced by Christ's resurrection from the grave?

[27 : 16] If Christ is risen, why would I refuse to forgive an offense or to harbor anger or bitterness in my heart towards somebody when Jesus came and died for my sins in my place and then rose from the dead to prove that my sins paid for?

Why would I withhold forgiveness to someone who has sinned against me far less than what I've done to Christ? Friends, if Christ is risen, then insult, loss of promotion or a job, being shunned by the world or even being killed for the sake of Christ in the gospel is absolutely worth it.

It is absolutely worth it. But, on the other side, if we don't really believe that Jesus rose from the dead, then what are we doing here?

Why would we come here if Christianity is a sham and a waste of time? Right? Let's just go play soccer. Let's go fold laundry.

Let's do something else. This is a waste of time. But Christ is risen. Christ is risen. And I'm confident that most of this church believes in the reality of the resurrection of Christ.

[28 : 31] But I do want to say, if you're here and you've been straddling that fence, you've been unwilling to go all in, see this passage as a call to go all in.

It is through the death and resurrection of Christ that we have eternal life. He alone, Christ alone, is our hope in life and death as we were just singing.

And church, even in a week like this, in which it seems like the foundations of the nation and the earth are shaken, because Christ lives, we have hope and that hope is an anchor for our souls through anything, through anything that comes.

That's the call that I think we see here in this passage. Now a question for self-reflection. In what ways are we living like as if Christ has not been raised?

Because you know, the reality is that as long as we walk this earth dragging around our old sinful nature, there will be ways in which we functionally live as if Christ has not been raised, even if we believe it.

[29 : 39] And I think Paul's list here, these dire implications, it's essentially a litmus test for us. So I'm going to show you what I mean. I'm going to walk through two of these five as examples and I want you to consider walking through the other ones on your own.

Okay, Paul's first dire implication that we saw of Christ not being raised is that gospel preaching is in vain. Okay, so it's worth for us to pause and ask ourselves, do I sometimes believe that gospel preaching is in vain?

Okay, I think we can put evangelism in that category and think a bit more broadly. Do I sometimes consider sharing the gospel to be a futile effort? You know, so and so is too far gone.

There's no point witnessing to them anymore. All that ever happens when I share the gospel is that people squirm awkwardly and then try to leave or change the conversation. Word about, God would never use me to save anyone.

Shoreline, Satan would love for us to throw in the towel in our gospel preaching and in our evangelism. Right?

[30 : 53] But we know that because Christ is risen, the gospel is power unto salvation for everyone who believes. It is through the message of the gospel that God awakens faith by his spirit in once dead hearts and raises people to newness of life in Christ.

When we give in to the lies that gospel preaching is in vain, we are functionally disbelieving in the resurrection of Christ. Now listen, yes, some will respond with opposition. We see this in the book of Acts. Some will oppose the gospel. Some will respond with indifference. But by God's grace, some will respond with faith. That's what the promise is in God's word. Christ is risen. The gospel message saves and is saving sinners every day. So Shoreline, let us boldly and fearlessly and passionately continue proclaiming that saving gospel to the lost. That was one of the five. Let me just pick one more here. Paul says that if Christ has not been raised, then we're still in our sins.

[32 : 00] Do you sometimes live as if you're still in your sins? I think when we live as if we're still in our sins, we might be functionally disbelieving in the resurrection of Christ.

Now I don't want to oversimplify this point, because I think there very well may be other factors at the root of living as if I'm still in my sins. But today we're focusing on this link to the resurrection of Christ.

And I think Jordan was sort of getting at this earlier. Perhaps you maintain a very self-defeating, woe is me kind of attitude. Your sin is always before you.

You constantly feel like a worm before God. Or maybe like an Eeyore. You lack joy. You lack hope. In the first sermon I ever preached at Trinity, I quoted Shane and Shane's song, Embracing Accusation, which I think fits really well here.

They sing in that song, Oh the devil's singing over me, an age-old song, that I am cursed and gone astray.

[33 : 16] Singing the first verse so conveniently over me, he's forgotten the refrain. Jesus saves. To wallow in sin and shame is to remain in the first half of the gospel message.

I am a worm before God. That's true. He is holy. I am unclean. Woe is me if nothing be done. But thanks be to God, Jesus Christ died for my sins.

He rose again on the third day and therefore by faith in him I am forgiven, I am adopted, I am redeemed, I am made holy in Christ through his death and resurrection.

I no longer need to wallow in shame. Friends, the guilt and the penalty of sin is gone, taken by Christ.

And so now I have access to hope, I have access to joy, I have access to power in the spirit to actually live a life that is pleasing to the Lord. It's not just theory, it's reality for the saints.

[34 : 19] Yes, I still stumble and fall. Yes, and yes, those sins too are already paid. And every time we stumble and fall, what happens? The Father picks us up.

He reminds us of the finished work of Christ. He offers us fresh grace and he says, go and sin no more, child. Christ is risen from the dead.

For those who believe in him, we are no longer in our sins. Amen? Amen. And that leads us to a third application here, which is an exhortation that Paul gave us at the start of this chapter.

Let us hold fast to the gospel. Okay, we veer so quickly from the gospel. We need to constantly keep coming back to it and letting the gospel point us true north.

Now, we've just talked about the danger of living as if the gospel isn't true. That's kind of what those gospel culture books are about, ways we need to let the gospel influence our lives.

[35 : 22] We are also in danger of believing in ways that are inconsistent with the gospel. The Corinthians manifested both problems in this letter. Chapter 15 is especially aimed at their beliefs.

They had wrong beliefs. If we lose the gospel in our church culture, in what we practice, then we're undermining gospel doctrine.

We're undermining what we profess to believe and we're going to veer off course. And if we lose the gospel in our doctrine and what we believe, then we're off course from the start.

We have to keep coming back to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have to keep ensuring that both our doctrine and our practice is in line with the gospel and to the degree that we have veered off course because it happens every single day.

We have to keep coming back to the gospel and repenting and realigning with that gospel. So today, we've followed Paul down his thought experiment.

[36 : 25] We've considered the what if of if Christ has not been raised. We've seen how dire our situation would be. But we're definitely not here pretending like Christ hasn't been raised.

Hope that's been clear today. And in the very next verse, again, spoiler alert, Paul says, but in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead.

That's where we're going next week. So I want to conclude here with that encouragement, which is somewhat of a preview of where we're going to be in the next three weeks.

So here's the encouragement, church. Christ is risen. Christ is risen. I think back there we have a couple copies of John Stott's book, Basic Christianity.

He has a whole chapter on the resurrection of Christ. And in that chapter, he confronts five different explanations that have been given for the disappearance of the body of Christ, other than, you know, this explanation, that Christ is risen from the dead.

[37 : 30] And the fifth explanation is that the Roman or Jewish authorities took it into their own custody. That's one of the explanations given for why Christ's body was missing from the tomb.

Here's what John Stott has to say about that. Not long after Jesus' death, the Christians were boldly proclaiming his resurrection. The news spread rapidly.

This new movement threatened to undermine the foundations of Judaism and to disturb the peace of Jerusalem. The Jews feared conversions. The Romans were apprehensive about riots.

the authorities had one obvious course of action available to them. They could produce the remains of the body and publish a statement of what they had done. Instead, they were silent and resorted to violence.

They arrested the apostles, threatened them, flogged them, imprisoned them, belittled them, plotted against them, and even killed some of them. But all of this was entirely unnecessary if they had in their own possession the dead body of Jesus.

[38 : 36] The church was founded on the resurrection, disproved the resurrection, and the church would have collapsed. But they couldn't because they didn't have the body.

What the authorities didn't say is as clear a pointer to the truth of the resurrection as what the apostles did say. Stott concludes, the body of Jesus was not removed by people, it was raised by God.

Christ is risen, saints, and that means for us that gospel preaching is not in vain. It is powerful and effective. That means for us that our faith is not worthless.

It is the means of our salvation that means that we are no longer in our sins. We are forgiven and redeemed and adopted through the blood of Christ. It means the dead in Christ have not perished.

They're present now with the Lord, and they are going to be given new bodies like us someday that means, church, that we are not to be pitied. We have an eternal hope, an eternal joy.

[39 : 41] Instead, we're to be filled with pity. We're to be filled with compassion as we proclaim this saving gospel to the lost. Christianity is not an empty religion.

Christ has been raised, and he is both Savior and Lord. So saints, let us live like that is true today. Please pray with me. Thank you.