

Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 (4) - If There is no Resurrection, What Then?

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[0 : 00] Psalm number 31, that's on page 36, and verses 1 to 8. In you I've taken refuge, Lord, you are my shelter in distress.

Oh, let me never be ashamed, but save me in your righteousness. Lord, turn your ear to hear my cry, come quickly to deliver me, and be my rock and firm defense, my stronghold and security.

Verses 1 to 8, we'll stand to sing these verses to God's praise. Lord, turn your ear to hear my cry, come quickly to deliver me.

Lord, turn your ear to hear my cry, come quickly to deliver me.

Lord, turn your ear to hear my cry, come quickly to deliver me.

[1 : 30] And be my rock and firm defense, my stronghold and security.

You are my fortress and my rock.

For you this day, if I should guide, which set me from the trap of set.

You are the refuge where I guide. Lord, turn your ear to hear my cry, come quickly to deliver me.

Redeem me, Lord, O God of truth, my spirit I commit to you.

[2 : 47] I hate all those good trust, O God. I trust the Lord, for he is true.

I will rejoice and take delight in all the love that you have shown.

For my affection you have seen. To you, my soul's distress is known.

You have not led me to my foe. For given me into his hand, But you have set my feet within.

A spacious place where I may stand. Let's unite our hearts now in prayer.

[4 : 28] Let's call upon the Lord in prayer. Our gracious and loving God, we give thanks as we come together in this way, that we do so around your word of truth, that we do so conscious of drawing near to God and seeking that God would draw near to us.

We thank you for these wonderful words, O Lord, where we are reminded of the refuge that you are to your people, of the way that we can find you as a ready place of safety, from all that endangers us in life.

And we bless you especially for the fact that you are a spiritual refuge to us. A refuge from your own wrath. A refuge from what we deserve for our sins.

Every way, Lord, in which you are a refuge to your people, is so precious to your people. And we thank you tonight for the preciousness of knowing this.

We pray that you would bless us, Lord, as we come once again to your word, and as we come to hold our conversation with you in prayer, and sing to you in praise, and contemplate your word.

[5 : 41] Lord, we thank you that that is a great privilege for us, Lord. We fail to estimate just how great a privilege it is. And we confess, O Lord, at many times that we find in a measure ourselves resting satisfied with the outward performance, with the mere formality of our worship.

But forbid that it should be so, O Lord. For while we would want our worship to be formal in the sense of being beautiful and ordered, and nevertheless, Lord, help us, we pray, to enter into the spirit of worship, as we are guided by your spirit.

And we thank you tonight, Lord, for the way that we have each other to share in that worship. And for the gatherings of your people are precious in your sight. And they have always been the case, Lord, ever since you had a people who were formed to call upon your name.

And we thank you for the way that your people are spread throughout the world. That your people share that same common testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And hope in him as the risen Christ. And that whatever denomination or church or group or country they belong to, we bless you that these things are foundational to them.

[6 : 58] We thank you, Lord, that you have brought us in our own understanding, in our own experience, to hold these things precious. We pray that we may constantly be on our guard, Lord, against the enemy.

We have been singing in these words of your refuge being a refuge against the enemy. We know that the enemy of our souls, the devil, prowls about seeking whom he may devour like a roaring lion.

But we know, too, that he comes disguised and that he comes in many ways that would seek to lead us away from confidence in your truth and from seeking to have our hope and confidence fed by your truth.

Lord, we thank you tonight for the many advantages we have compared to so many other people in the world. We thank you for the gospel. Lord, we thank you for being part of a worshipping people. And we thank you, Lord, that we know of a history in our congregations and churches in this locality where we find your blessing still being spoken of, still being experienced, that we have entered into a great heritage of spiritual blessing.

[8 : 10] We pray that we ourselves, Lord, we be furnished by your Spirit's power so that we might go on seeking to transmit this legacy we have received to others, to those who are coming after us.

And so to that end, remember our children, our young people, we thank you for their participation in worship services, in activities that we seek to set out as a congregation.

And we ask, oh Lord, that you would be pleased to bless this to them, bless them under your word, especially help them to develop morally and spiritually under your word as that which would be a ready light to them for their path through life.

We ask that you protect them, shield them about, we pray, by your own special power, and give them to know that they are your children, even as they would seek to place their trust, their confidence in you.

We pray that you remember every family connected to us as a congregation of your people, and every family, Lord, throughout this town where your word is prized.

[9 : 19] We ask that you would bless us in a day when so much of this is cast aside. Lord, when there are so many challenges to family life lived under the dictation of your word.

Lord, we pray that you would bless every family that seeks to be true to you, that seeks to be a testimony to their own neighbors of what it is to live in obedience to God.

We pray that many others will be added to the number of such homes and families, Lord, so that we may see more and more coming under that proper influence of your word, coming to hold you forth as their Lord and their God.

We ask your blessing tonight to be with us as we meet later in fellowship. We pray that you would bless us as we come to hear about the work of Safe Families Scotland.

We thank you for its establishment here in our own locality. And we pray that it will prosper and that you will bless those who are involved, that you will bless especially those like Catherine who are involved in running of Safe Families here locally.

[10 : 27] Bless her tonight, we pray, as she brings this message to us. Bless her and her work from day to day with the charity. Bless those who have already come to benefit from it.

We pray that we, Lord, will give due consideration to how we, ourselves, may contribute and help to that work here locally. And remember it as it takes place throughout Scotland as well.

We ask, O Lord, that you will bless every other agency that seeks to uphold your own cause, your own truth and help those who are in need.

We pray that you will bless also the work of Road to Recovery. We pray for David as he takes part in leading that work, O Lord, locally. We thank you for his commitment to it over the years.

We pray that he will know encouragement and blessing as he seeks to bring the message of the Gospel, but also support practically to those at this time who are caught up in various addictions, different kinds of problems in life.

[11 : 35] O Lord, our God, remember them, we pray, and grant that you would benefit them from hearing about David's own experiences and of the work of the Gospel, especially in the lives of others.

We pray your blessing too for those tonight who mourn the passing of loved ones. O gracious God, we have been involved and have heard of those who have bereavements in their families in these past weeks especially.

We pray for all of them again tonight, and we ask that you would bless them with your comfort. Lord, we pray that whatever measure of help we may give them, that we may be concerned to do so, that we may especially commend them to you in our prayers.

Lord, we pray that we may be concerned with them, and grant to them, O Lord, as they experience that loss, and as they seek to come to terms with loved ones no longer being here present with them in this world. Guide them to yourself, we pray.

Guide them to the God who knows of death and the experience of his own dear Son, and who is able to bring such succor and support to those who are in need in all temptations.

[12:44] We give thanks tonight, Lord, for your resurrection from the dead. We thank you for the reality of it, and we thank you for the way that it is so foundational to the hope of your people.

We pray that as we consider this tonight, O Lord, from the teaching of your word, that you will come to impress again upon our hearts how wonderful it is that death has been defeated, and that the Lord Jesus Christ stands over death beneath his feet, and that he now reigns as Lord on the throne of the universe.

We pray that our confidence in him will be all the more enhanced as we learn more of the glory of his resurrection and the prospect of resurrection for your own believing people.

Bless any tonight, we pray here, who have not yet come to embrace you in faith. Any elsewhere, Lord, who hear the gospel, are not yet saved, have not yet come to comply with and obey the command that you give yourself in your word, although it is also your invitation to come and place their trust and confidence in you and to receive you as you are offered in the gospel.

We thank you tonight, Lord, for the sincerity of that offer. We thank you for its freeness, for the way that you seek nothing from us in order to contribute to our salvation, for you have done everything that's needed for us.

[14:10] And you require of us that we come simply and place our trust in what you have done, and in you as the one who has done it. So receive us now, we pray. Continue with us here and pardon our many sins and wash us from our sin, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Let's sing again to God's praise in Psalm 71. Psalm number 71. This time we're singing in the Scottish Psalter. That's page 312.

And we'll sing from verse 20 to the end of the psalm. Verse 20 to 24 to God's praise.

Verse 20 to 24 to God's praise. O Lord, who great adversities and sought to lead its show, Shall we care and make me again from death so happy Lord.

My goodness and my power, Thou wilt in peace that Thou extend.

[15:58] In my truth I also praise. My God will so praise. My God will so tell. My God will so tell. My God will so tell. In my truth, Thou will so tell. If I can see. My God will so tell. In my truth I also praise. My God will so tell. In my truth I also praise.

My God will so tell me. My God will so tell me. United, I also praise my heart, their salt and heat. Thou Holy One, O Israel, with heart I sing to Thee.

My lips shall not rejoice in Thee, when Thy life is still sound.

My soul, which Thou redeemed us, in joy shall march upon.

[17:23] My tongue, Thy justice shall proclaim, continue all day long.

For they, God found it, God and shined, that's me to do thee all.

Now we're going to turn to read God's Word. There are two short passages. Firstly, in the book of Acts, chapter 2. The book of Acts, chapter 2, and we're reading from verse 22, down as far as verse 36.

And then we'll read another short passage from 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. But first of all, it's in the book of Acts, chapter 2, and from verse 22.

This is Peter, standing, preaching on the day of Pentecost. Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God, with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

[18:52] This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

For David says concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced.

My flesh will also dwell in hope, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life.

You will make me full of gladness with your presence. Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

[20 : 03] This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all our witnesses, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this, that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

And if we turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, this is the passage we're going to look at shortly, from verse 12 to verse 19.

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.

[21 : 14] 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 through 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 who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

And we pray that God will bless to us those two readings of his own word this evening. Before we turn to this second passage, let's again sing from Psalm 103 this time.

And again, it's in the Scottish Psalter version. Psalm 103 from the beginning. We'll sing verses 1 to 5. O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is, be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless.

[22 : 27] Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee. So on through to verse 5.

Who with abundance of good things doth satisfy thy mouth, so that even as the eagle's age renewed is thy youth. O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord.

Lord thou, my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is, be stirred up his holy name, to magnify and bless.

Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be.

Of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on me.

[23 : 57] Of all thy iniquity, lost great glory, most gracious shield the Lord, most graciously forgive.

With all night in Jesus' Huang, he hath bestowed on me, doth heal and heal him.

Who doth redeploy life of love to death this not go down?

To thee with loving kindness and tender mercies come.

Who with the wonder so good things that satisfied my mind so that he has the eager stage renew it is thy youth.

[25 : 35] Now please turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. And we're looking this evening at the passage we read from verse 12 done as far as verse 19.

Now having started to study through the chapter, you'll recall the previous studies in the earlier verses of the chapter. Paul begins by emphasizing those things that are true of the Lord Jesus Christ himself and therefore form the nucleus or the basis of the gospel.

And he describes that for you in verse 3, following the way in which Jesus died, was buried, was raised on the third day, and then appeared to various people that he mentions, including then Paul himself.

And we saw last time how that brought Paul into speaking about the grace of God as the grace of God was something that he had come to experience in his own life, where he had been turned from

his previous way of life to become what he is now an apostle of Jesus Christ. And now he comes in verse 12 to deal with certain doubts or certain matters in Corinth regarding resurrection that weren't just being disputed but were actually being denied.

[26 : 52] Do you believe in resurrection? I'm not asking do you believe in the potential of a resurrection?

Do you believe in the possibility of a resurrection? The question really is, do you believe in the reality of resurrection? Do you believe that resurrection is actually factually true in respect to Jesus himself and also in respect to resurrection being a reality in itself that awaits all believers in Christ? It wouldn't be surprising to some extent if somebody here were to say, no, I don't believe in resurrection. You might say that's pretty serious, it is.

You might say that's pretty unlikely. I hope it is as well. But it wouldn't be a surprise if someone in here would turn around and say, no, I actually don't believe in resurrection.

Why do I say that? Well, because here is a congregation in Corinth, in the city of Corinth, that were actually taught by an apostle. They were taught by an apostle the things of God, the things he says in verse 3, I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received.

[28 : 11] They were taught by Paul himself. By this man, an apostle of God, to whom God had revealed himself so dramatically and who had been established as a great preacher of the gospel.

Yet he now says in verse 12, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

You would not expect to find people under the ministry of an apostle who had emphasized the resurrection of Christ as central to the gospel, who had emphasized the reality of resurrection as in the prospect of God's people.

You would not have expected anybody in Corinth not to believe in resurrection. And yet it was true. It may be that they were like those in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 18.

We don't know exactly what kind of thinking these people had with regard to resurrection or anything else. He simply mentions how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

[29 : 17] In 2 Timothy, he mentions two individuals, Hymenaeus and Philatus, who say that the resurrection is past already and are overthrowing the faith of some or causing some to actually wobble in their faith.

They say the resurrection is past. So maybe that's what it was like for these people in Corinth as well who regarded resurrection as confined to the matter of being brought to life spiritually.

In other words, from the deadness that we have naturally in our sinfulness, these people seem to have just regarded resurrection as confined to Jesus or God bringing them alive out of that spiritual resurrection, creating life in them.

And that was about the end of their understanding of resurrection. So they needed to be taught.

They needed to be corrected. And Paul does so here in this passage, 12 to 18, 12 to 19.

He did so by a series of logical statements. And as we work through it, the logical statements are in the form of Paul saying, if such and such is true, then other things inevitably or logically follow.

[30 : 35] And we'll see that that's what he's really doing in these verses. For example, he's saying, first of all, if there is no resurrection, if there's no such thing as resurrection, then it follows, logically follows, indubitably follows that Christ has not been raised from the dead.

If there's no resurrection, there's no risen Christ. That's the first point he makes. But then he takes that second part of that statement, there is no risen Christ.

And he says, if Christ is not risen, then certain things also follow logically from that. And in fact, there are four points that follow from that that we're going to follow through this evening.

If Christ is not risen, well, if there's no resurrection, Christ is not risen. And if there's no, if Christ is not risen, then one, our preaching is in vain. Two, your faith is in vain.

Third, those who have died have perished. And fourthly, we are most to be pitied of all people.

These are the outlines of our study this evening, these points.

[31 : 44] Let's pick up that first one, the point Paul is making to begin with. If Christ is proclaimed from the dead, if there's no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

In other words, if you discount the idea of a physical resurrection, that's what Paul is dealing with.

Paul is not dealing with something that's merely spiritual, or something as potential, or something of an idea or a theory.

He's dealing with facts. He's dealing with real facts that happened in the history of space and time. Jesus, risen from the dead, physically risen from the dead. And that's what he means by raised from the dead.

If we discount physical resurrection as a possibility, not just as a possibility, but as a fact that has happened already in Christ's case, then he's saying, Christ has not been raised.

Christ's body is still in a grave somewhere. That's the reality of discounting or rejecting the reality of resurrection.

[32 : 48] And you notice the words Paul is using here, interestingly. He's saying, if there's no resurrection, then not even Christ has been raised. Now, why is that interesting?

Why is that significant, in fact, that he's using these words, has been raised? Because he's saying, this is something that was done to Christ. There are other parts of the Bible, of the New Testament, that speak about Christ himself rising from the dead.

But more often it's actually God the Father who is specified as having raised Jesus from the dead. For example, Galatians, just to pick up one of those verses, Galatians chapter 1 and verse 1, where Paul is about to go in through this great letter in regard to justification, especially by faith in Christ. He wants to make it clear that it's faith in the risen Christ that's significant. This is how he begins, Galatians. Paul, an apostle not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

And why is it important that Paul is putting it in such language that God raised Jesus from the dead, that God did something to the dead body of Jesus to actually raise him, lift him up, raise him from the dead?

[34 : 10] Well, because it brings us into that other great theological fact that the atonement that Christ rendered to God by his death on the cross was fully accepted by God the Father as sufficient for the forgiveness of all the sins of his people, and for them to be ultimately raised from the dead as well.

That atonement that Jesus rendered, which is the death that he died, is the death we deserve to die. It's the penalty that we were due for our sin, for our rebellion against God.

And God was right in demanding that. But he took it on himself to do so in the person of his son Jesus.

And he raised him from the dead because the resurrection of Christ, being raised by the Father, is itself the evidence and the indication, more than anything else, that his death was accepted as an atonement for sin.

That's why it's important that he was raised from the dead. God the Father raised him from the dead. And now he sets out in the rest of the passage why that is important, that God raised him from the dead.

[35 : 25] And the implications of Christ not being raised from the dead are set out in these four points we mentioned. So that's the first thing he's saying. If there's no resurrection, then Christ has not been raised.

But now, if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then it follows first of all, our preaching is in vain. Our preaching is in vain.

It doesn't just mean their preaching as apostles. He means the preaching of the gospel in every instance. Because at the very heart of the gospel, central to the gospel, is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That is what we proclaim, Paul is saying. That is central to the message. It's not just about the cross. It's about the cross followed by the resurrection from the dead, where God raised him up from the dead, and everything that then followed on to that.

You see, it all, as we saw earlier on in the chapter, it all has to be kept fitted together in the way it actually happened. He actually died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures.

[36 : 27] He was buried, and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and then appeared to these people. You see, he's saying, this is an unbroken chain. This is a chain that you must keep intact.

Because all of these parts fit together in a way that's essential to our understanding of what the gospel is, what salvation is. And so now he's saying, if Christ is not risen from the dead, then our preaching is in vain.

When we're actually saying about Jesus that he was raised from the dead, that that's foundational to our hopes and to our expectation, and indeed to eternal life as it's presented in him, it's presented in him as the living Christ.

Not merely the Christ who died on the cross. Our preaching is in vain tonight. Not only the Christ who died on the cross. If God did not raise him from the dead, if Christ is still dead.

If I believed, even to the least extent, that God did not raise Christ from the dead, I ought to walk out of this pulpit and out of this church tonight and say, there is no point to preaching.

[37 : 39] There is no point to proclaiming eternal life in Jesus Christ. Because our proclamation of the gospel, the gospel itself as it comes across from the scriptures, has central to it the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

And you see, that's the basis of our hope. That's the message that we set out in the gospel, that's set out in the gospel that we preach, that death has been defeated. What is your hope other than a hope that's beyond death and above the reach of death?

And you go through, as we will, God willing, to the end of this great passage in 1 Corinthians 15.

And what does it all mount up to? What does it all actually come to eventually?

It says, death is swallowed up in victory. Oh, death, where is your victory? Where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The victory over what? The victory over death. The victory over sin. How have we come to have victory over sin? By having a dead Christ still in the grave? No, but by having a Christ raised from the dead who now reigns in heaven.

[38 : 53] That's the basis of our hope. And if you come across somebody who says, I'm a Christian but I don't believe in the resurrection of Christ. I'm a Christian but I don't really believe that Jesus rose from the dead physically.

You'll have to say, well, you might call yourself a Christian but you're not a Christian in terms of God's definition of what a Christian, what a believer is. Because when I say that I believe in Jesus Christ, what I'm really saying or ought to be saying is, what I want to mean by that is, I believe in the risen Christ.

I believe in the Christ who lives today and reigns from the throne of heaven. God having raised him from the dead.

Hope, you see, needs a solid foundation. As I say so often, and particularly at times of funerals, in the message we try to give at these times, it's no message of consolation or comfort to people to even give the suggestion that somehow it'll be alright if there's no resurrection from the dead.

That's why we say so often, we need hope. We need hope more than a hoping for the best as we normally refer to it.

[40 : 11] We need hope that's based on something that makes the outcome or fulfillment of that hope certain. What is the one thing that will make the outcome of your hope certain?

It's the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That's why he says, if he is not raised, has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain.

It's futile. There's no point to it. But secondly, he says, if Christ is not risen from the dead, your faith is in vain.

You see, because trust in Christ, which is really the main element or ingredient of faith, you mustn't just think that faith is believing things that are unseen.

It is that. Faith is more than just accepting this Bible, this Word of God as God's Word. It is that too. Faith is more than just taking hold of Christ. But faith, in the main ingredient of faith, the main action of faith, is actually taking hold of Christ, placing your trust in Christ, taking Him as your Savior, accepting Him as God's provided means of salvation and forgiveness of sin.

[41 : 28] But what is the point in taking hold of Christ if all it means is taking hold of His teaching? No, when you take hold of Christ, when you receive the Jesus that's presented in the Gospel, your faith, this trust, this trust in Him as the living Christ, as the risen Christ, the Christ who defeated death, the Christ whose resurrection was real, physical resurrection from the dead.

He's saying here, if that's the case, then your faith is futile. At the end of verse 17, he continues that point. And he says, you are still in your sins.

Now, that's another important emphasis there. It doesn't just say your faith is futile. But he says, consider this as well, that the futility of your faith, if Christ has not been raised, contains this element

that you are still in your sins.

You're still as you were as a lost sinner coming into this world if Christ was not raised from the dead. Because, you see, forgiveness is more than God making a declaration, I forgive you.

You know, some people have the idea that atonement or the kind of atonement that we believe in from Scripture, where there is a substitution on the part of Christ, God placing Him in our place and Him taking the penalty of our sins and making reconciliation for us.

[43 : 06] There are some people, theologians, that would say, well, that's really not actually necessary. God could just have declared from heaven, as it were, somebody who comes to Him to ask for forgiveness, God could have said, I forgive you.

Your repentance is genuine. I forgive you. But then God has revealed that He couldn't have done that. Why not? Because of something serious that needed to be attended to.

Because of the alienation that we had caused by our sin and the provocation and the offense that our sin had given to God.

Sin is not something that you can just declare out of existence. God required Himself His justice to be satisfied. He required Himself that the reconciliation that He did effect through the death of Christ, that it's something that was necessary on Christ's part and on God's part.

God the Father. That's all the way through many of Paul's statements in his epistles. So, you see, the death of Jesus followed by the resurrection of Jesus, which proved the acceptance of His death to God, was necessary so that our sin would be forgiven.

[44 : 27] Forgiveness is not a mere decision on the part of God to wipe your sins away from your record. There is that. There is that. But that's based on something else.

It's based on the resurrection of Christ. The satisfaction God received from Christ's death and resurrection from the dead. And just go back to... Let me just read from Luke's Gospel from the final chapter there, chapter 24.

You remember that passage? Well-known passage for the two disciples who are walking on the way to Emmaus. Jesus threw near to them. They were disputing or discussing what had happened so very recently in Jerusalem.

And as they were discussing this, Jesus Himself threw near to them. They didn't recognize Him, of course, to begin with. And then in verse 44, as Jesus taught them afterwards, He said, These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations.

[45 : 54] Now, read that again and just leave out this reference to the resurrection. Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name.

You can see the missing ingredients straight away. You need that reference to the resurrection as part of the whole package, if you like, where God is providing salvation for us in Christ.

Suffering, dying, third day rising again, and then repentance, forgiveness of sins proclaimed in His name. The offer of the gospel through the preaching of the gospel is the offer of life, forgiveness, eternal life, on the basis of Christ risen from the dead, having died the death of the cross.

If Christ is not risen, then your faith is in vain. You are still in your sins. Thirdly, if Christ has not been raised, then those who perished, those who died, are perished.

That's the next point he makes. Those who have fallen asleep, in verse 18, in Christ have perished. Now, these were people who had come to believe in Christ, come to follow Christ, place their trust in Jesus, but had died.

[47 : 22] They had left this world. They had been in Corinth as part of that believing congregation. But Paul is now saying, well, if Christ was not raised from the dead, then those people have perished.

And interesting in the words, literally, that he used there, where he says, those who have fallen asleep. More literally, you could translate that, those who were laid to sleep in Christ.

Those who were laid to sleep in Christ, thinking of the burial of their bodies, these believers in Corinth who had died. They were laid to sleep in Christ.

That doesn't mean there's no life beyond death, no consciousness beyond death. He's talking here about resurrection, the resurrection of their bodies. And so he needs to deal with their bodies being laid into their grave.

And there's a beautiful way in which he speaks of it. They were laid to sleep in Christ. In other words, they were buried in a way that anticipated they would awaken in resurrection, their bodies, that is.

[48 : 34] They're buried with the hope of a later resurrection. But that makes no sense without the reality of Christ himself raised from the dead and a future resurrection of God's people based upon that.

If Christ has not been raised from the dead, then those who were laid to sleep in Christ have perished. We often say from 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, when we come to the death and the burial of believers, the remains being laid to rest in the tombs.

We often quote from that passage that we don't mourn as those who have no hope. Why do we not mourn as those who have no hope when it comes to the burial of the remains of believers?

Because their hope is based on the resurrection of Christ. Of course, that passage, 1

Thessalonians 4 is dealing with resurrection as well. And when you tie it up with this passage, this is what he's really saying.

The seriousness of not believing that Christ was raised from the dead, it actually logically leads you to this conclusion that those who were laid to sleep in Christ have perished.

[49 : 59] Because their future resurrection depends on Christ's own resurrection from the dead.

That's the Christian hope. That's the hope of the gospel, the hope that's presented in the gospel that God gave to us.

And it's evacuated of all meaning. If it simply means that, as we'll see now, fourthly, we are most to be pitied. Because if in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. Now, that's saying something like this to us. If we don't have as the basis of our hope the resurrection of Christ Himself, and therefore our future resurrection as believers united to Him, then our hope has really become nothing more than this life only hope.

A this life only hope. A hope that we will live as good and as decent a life as we can in this life, and then we die and that's it.

Some people will say, you know, it doesn't really matter all that much if I believe that Jesus rose from the dead or not. Or if I believe that He didn't rise from the dead.

[51 : 18] If I don't believe in the concept of the reality of resurrection, I can still lead a good life. I can lead a good life that will be very helpful to other people. I can follow the example that Jesus set me because I can follow His teaching.

I have His teaching in the New Testament and the Bible there especially. And I can follow that teaching. I can see that as my great example. And as I try and follow that great example, that's really what my Christian life consists of.

I don't need all this theology stuff. I do. I can follow that in the Old Testament. Well, you do if you've been through to Christ as a follower of Christ. Because on one occasion, and indeed there were many other occasions too, on one occasion Jesus put it this way in the Sermon on the Mount, which was pretty much a sermon that fits into the situation you and I are in today, where so much of the world is given over to either materialism or secularism or both, but wants to squeeze God out of the picture altogether.

How did Jesus address this? Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth corrupts or thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Why did he say to them, lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven? What's the point of it if there's no such thing as resurrection that takes you into heaven?

[52 : 48] He said, lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven with the sense that don't live for this life only is what he meant. And he went on to speak about the materialism of his own age and people who just lived for the things of this life.

Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. Paul said the same thing in writing to the Colossians. Set your affection on things above, where Christ is, not on the things of this earth.

And if we have, as he says here, in this life only hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Why is that? Well, because the whole chain of what he has said from verses 13 to 18 then becomes inevitable for us.

By that I mean, if we say that there is no resurrection, and therefore Christ has not been raised from the dead, then our gospel has no substance. Our faith is ineffective.

[53 : 57] We are found witnesses to God because we testified that he raised him from the dead. And it means still that sin is still in power on the throne of our hearts.

And it means all believers who have passed from this life before us have all perished. Perished. Well, perish the thought.

Perish the thought that anyone here tonight would not believe in resurrection. And would not believe in the resurrection of Jesus physically from the dead as the basis of resurrection and of hope in the way in which the Christian hope is set out in the gospel.

So let's go back to the question we had at the beginning. Do you believe in resurrection? Do you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead?

Do you believe in a future resurrection at the return of Christ? And finally, what is the basis of your hope as you go through this life?

[55 : 17] You need hope. But you need a basis for that hope to be realized for it to be more than just a hoping for the best. Well, if you're a Christian, if Christ is yours, this risen Christ, this reigning Christ, this wonderful saving Christ, if he is yours tonight, then your hope is based in him and in his resurrection.

And you can go forward through whatever this world will throw at you and say, I know that not even death can actually have victory over me at last because my hope is in Jesus who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, through his resurrection.

Let's pray. Amen. Our gracious God, our Father in heaven, we thank you tonight for the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Lord, we gather in your presence this evening with purpose and we confess that we would not have that purpose if it were true that Christ is not raised. Oh, Lord, we thank you tonight for the victory that you have achieved already for your people.

We thank you for the death you died, for the resurrection from the dead that was effected when the Father raised his son from the dead.

[56 : 53] And we thank you for the way in which that is so clear in the gospel and so foundational to the life and hope of your people. Bless us, we pray tonight, as we have come face to face with the reality of resurrection.

Help us to face the prospect of the death which we must all die, holding on to this hope of the gospel. Give us, we pray, that hope if we don't have it already.

Unite us to yourself savingly, we pray. Give us grace to receive you, grace to believe and trust in you, grace to wait for you, grace to be truly confident that when you come back to this world, you will raise your people from the dead, you will bring them to reign with you forevermore.

Bless us then now and bless us in the fellowship that follows. Bless the food prepared for us. We thank you for those who have prepared it. And again, we commend Catherine to you as you will speak to us.

Receive us, we pray now, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, we're going to conclude our service now singing to God's praise in Psalm 30. Psalm number 30 from Sing Psalms.

[58 : 11] You'll find that on page 34 of the Psalm books. Psalm 30, verses 1 to 5. O Lord, I will exalt your name, for you have rescued me.

You did not let my foes rejoice and gloat triumphantly. Lord God, in need I cried to you and you restored my health. O Lord, you brought me from the grave and saved my soul from death.

Verses 1 to 5, to God's praise. Amen. O Lord, I will exalt your name, for you have rescued me.

You did not let my foes rejoice and look triumphantly.

Lord God, in need I cried to you and you restored my health.

[59 : 33] O Lord, I will exalt your name, and save my soul from death.

You holy ones sing to the Lord. Sing out with joyful voice, When you will recall his holy name, Then praise him and rejoice.

His anger, but amohem last, Like long his favor stays.

Though tears may last throughout the night, Joy comes with morning grace.

I'll go to the side door to my left this evening. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.
[61 : 11] Amen.