

1. What day or event changed the world? Americans might say...
  - a. July 4, 1776 – the day the Declaration of Independence was adopted and a new nation was birthed.
  - b. October 29, 1929 – when the Wall Street Stock Market Crashed in a chain of events that led to the Great Depression.
  - c. April 15, 1938 – when the Superman was first introduced to the world on the cover of issue number 1 of Action Comics.
    - 1) What guy when he was a boy didn't want to be Superman?
      - a) Superman Underoos?
  - d. Feb 9, 1964 – when the British musical group the Beatles first appeared on the Ed Sullivan show which in part help to launch a music revolution in the United States.
    - 1) Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away (Tim Hawkins – Chick-fil-a)
  - e. May 25, 1977 – when Stars Wars Episode IV – A New Hope came out.
    - 1) “Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope.”
  - f. Some say that September 11, 2001, is the most modern significant event that changed our world.
2. What *was* the single most important event in all of history that changed our world?
  - a. The day that really changed the world was the day that Jesus was raised from the dead, when He came out (not of the womb) but out of the tomb.
  - b. Interesting thing is that there were no news reporters, no lights, and no cameras.
  - c. Matt Lauer didn't flash on the screen. There were no interviews with Bill O'Reilly.
  - d. Life didn't come to a screeching halt. Governments were not called into emergency session. There were no shockwaves that reverberated around the world as they did on September 11.
  - e. No..., Resurrection Day was not an international event like September 11, but friends, it changed the world forever.

3. Yet unlike September 11 or other historic days, many do not believe in the reality of the Resurrection Day.
  - a. The idea of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has been relegated to the world of mythology right up there with Homer's Iliad and The Odyssey.
  - b. Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ are just fairy tales. **THINK ABOUT IT.**
4. Skepticism about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is nothing new. There were scoffers in Paul's day just like today.
  - a. In 1 Corinthians 15:1–11, Paul boldly declares that the Resurrection is the gospel truth!

**Read 1 Cor 15:1-11 and Pray <sup>1</sup>**

1. Context: 1 Corinthians on a whole is a book addressing various problems in the Christian church found in the city of Corinth. Paul was writing to correct some of these problems and issues.
2. 1 Corinthians 15 is a chapter that deals with an error in their doctrine concerning the resurrection.

Some in the church were persuaded to believe that there was no resurrection following death.

3. Because death has to precede resurrection, last week we looked at why there is death in this world.

Death in this world is a result of sin.

Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden and that sin nature was passed on to all of mankind.

We are all infected with that sin nature, all of us.

- 1) Romans 3:10      *“There is none righteous, no, not one”*
- 2) Ecclesiastes 7:20      For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise marked, all scriptures taken from the New King James Version. ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

#### 4. Definition of sin

Lawlessness (1 John 3:4) or transgression of God's will, either by omitting to do what God's law requires or by doing what it forbids. The transgression can occur in thought (1 John 3:15), word (Matt. 5:22), or deed (Rom. 1:32).

In essence sin is the failure or refusal of human beings to live the life intended for them by God their creator.

#### 5. At the end of my message last week I shared how turning to Jesus Christ was the only way to rightly deal with sin in our lives.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In order to be delivered from the penalty of sin, forgiven and granted eternal life, you must know, understand, and believe in the resurrection of God's Son Jesus.

Romans 10:9 ...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

In order to be saved, you must believe in a Man who lived a perfect life, died on the cross, and was resurrected.

In 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Paul gives us solid evidence in order to believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- First of all, we know the Resurrection is true because the gospel declares it...

1 Cor 15:1-2 <sup>1</sup> Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, <sup>2</sup> by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

1. Notice that Paul uses the word gospel in these verses. What is the gospel?
  - a. The word *gospel* means literally “good news.”
  - b. What does the gospel declare? Paul succinctly states what the gospel is in verses 3 and 4. The gospel in a nutshell is this: Jesus died, was buried, and was raised from the dead on the third day.

2. This is the gospel that people have believed and accepted down through the ages, “which you received.”
  - a. It is the same gospel that Paul preached when he first came to Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18).
  - b. Paul makes it clear that years later he has not changed his message one bit. He had not found anything that changed his mind about the gospel and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - c. That is the testimony of the church. For two thousand years the church, the true church, has faithfully declared the gospel of Christ.
  - d. We have nothing new to offer here in the 21st century. We just have the same old message that Jesus died and rose from the grave.
3. This is the gospel that people have staked their lives on
  - a. Notice at the end of verse 1 it says concerning the gospel that they received it and were standing upon it.
  - b. If we call ourselves a Christian, then we should be standing upon the Gospel.
  - c. The apostles lost their lives defending the truth of the Resurrection. The early believers staked their lives on it, even when faced with the threats of Nero.
  - d. People still continue to stake their lives on it today.
  - e. Voice of the Martyrs<sup>2</sup>: **Laos: Katin Christians Endure**

A group of Christians who were expelled from Katin village in January were again urged to recant their faith in Jesus Christ on March 15, according to The Voice of the Martyrs contacts. The believers have been living in makeshift shelters about 4 miles outside the village, where they were abandoned in January without food or shelter.

“At noon [on March 15] ... seven Katin believers were summoned to the district office,” VOM contacts reported. “The district head urged the Katin believers to reconsider their decision to follow the Christian faith.” When the Christians again refused to renounce their faith, the district head stated that although the

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.persecution.com/public/newsroom.aspx?story\\_ID=MjQw](http://www.persecution.com/public/newsroom.aspx?story_ID=MjQw)

Lao constitution and law provide for freedom of religion in Laos, he is not going to allow Christianity in his district. The Katin believers later learned that the officials planned to burn down their temporary shelters along with 11 temporary homes at the site where they were taken in January.

4. This is the gospel that people have staked their salvation on, “By this gospel you are saved.” People have put their hope for eternal life in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - a. The gospel doesn’t hold out any hope other than salvation by faith in Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection.
  - b. The unchanging message of the church is the gospel. This is the message that the church is founded upon. It is the cornerstone of the church.
  - c. The church is not organized around a personality, a social cause, a need, etc. It is organized around the gospel. The church exists because of the gospel.
  - d. If there were no gospel, then there would be no church. It is the one and only message the church has to offer to the world. We have no other message than the gospel.
  - e. The testimony of the church is that Christ has been raised from the dead. The church has always affirmed the Resurrection.
  - f. The church has gone through the battles and debates about the Resurrection, but it always returns to the truth of the gospel.
  
5. Also notice in verse 2 where Paul says **unless you believed in vain**.
  - a. Sadly, the reality is there are some who have believed in vain. They think they are saved. They think they have eternal life, but they missed it.
  - b. How? Because they were not changed by the Gospel.
  - c. A saved life is a changed life.
  - d. If there is nothing different in your life now compared with before “you became a Christian” then you have likely believed in vain.
  - e. There will be those who after boasting in the things they thought they had done for the Lord will hear the Lord say, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” (Matt 7:21-23) **A saved life is a changed life!**

We know the Resurrection is true because the Scriptures foretold it...

1 Cor 15:3-4 <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

1. Did you notice the little phrase *according to the Scriptures* repeated over and over again. All this stuff about Jesus dying and being resurrected was not something made up. It was all *according to the Scriptures*.
  - a. The Scriptures which Paul referred to are the Old Testament Scriptures. One of the great evidences for Christianity and that of the Resurrection is the Scriptures themselves.
  - b. The Scriptures written hundreds and even thousands of years before Christ's birth foretold all that would happen.
2. There are hundreds of prophecies related to Jesus Christ. Consider these Scriptures which foretold that Christ would die for our sins on a cross and be raised from the dead...
  - a. Psalm 22:16–18 <sup>16</sup> For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; <sup>17</sup> I can count all My bones. They look *and* stare at Me. <sup>18</sup> They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.
  - b. Read Isaiah 53:3–12 Tab ①
  - c. Psalm 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

We know the Resurrection is true because eyewitnesses testified to it (15:5–8). Paul calls *eyewitnesses* to the witness stand...

1 Cor 15:5-8 <sup>5</sup> and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

1. The resurrected Jesus was seen by Cephas - Peter. Peter was the first apostolic witness to see Jesus according to Luke 24:34.

2. The next eye witnesses were **the twelve**, a reference to the Apostles. Judas was dead, but according to Acts 1:26, Matthias had joined the 11 remaining Apostles.
3. Then there was over Five Hundred who saw Jesus at once.
  - a. Skeptics have scoffed at the testimony of the disciples. They say the disciples were in a state of shock. They couldn't let Him go. They were delirious and must have been hallucinating.
  - b. Ok, let's give them that argument, but what about five hundred other people who saw Him *at the same time*, and most of whom were still alive for questioning when Paul wrote this.
4. Then Paul mentions James, the half-brother of Jesus.
  - a. This was James, the former skeptic and unbeliever (John 7:5), but now a believer.
  - b. What converted him? The resurrection of Jesus Christ.
5. And last but not least, Paul himself saw the resurrected Jesus.
  - a. Paul was a powerful witness because he was formerly a hostile fanatic Jesus-hater who had come to the other side. What changed him? The Resurrected Christ.

We know the Resurrection is true because lives are changed by it... (1 Cor 15:9-11)

1 Cor 15:9-11 <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

1. There is one final evidence no one can deny and that is the lives changed by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - a. Paul's life was changed by the Resurrection.
    - 1) Once he saw the Resurrected Christ he labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.
  - b. The Corinthians' lives were changed by the Resurrection.

- c. My life was changed by the Resurrection.
  - 1) I thank God that He has saved me.
  - 2) I didn't start walking with the Lord until I was already in the Marine Corps, Married, and a father.
  - 3) And like Paul, I am what I am by the grace of God!
  - 4) My life could have been a train wreck! Married at 20 as a young Marine with a wife and 3 year old step-daughter, but by the Grace of God, as we have followed Him, He has blessed us.
- d. Countless lives have been and continue to be changed by the Resurrection. History is still writing the book on the lives changed by the Resurrection.
- e. Murderers, homosexuals, prostitutes, community leaders, politicians, arrogant athletes, and the likes are all being changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Conclusion:** The evidence is overwhelming for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- 1. Many have sought out to disprove the bible and found themselves turning to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in the process.
- 2. Charles Hodge, a theologian, says, in reference to the Resurrection: *It is the best authenticated event in ancient history.*

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOSPEL TRUTH!

- 3. Have you believed in vain?
  - a. Do you have head knowledge of the resurrection, but you haven't accepted it in your heart.
  - b. Jesus Christ has not become your personal Lord and Savior.
  - c. Accept Him, believe in the resurrection and be changed by it!
- 4. God forgives sinners! That's the glory of the gospel.
  - a. Because of sin, which we have all committed, we deserve eternal punishment.

- b. But the fact of the matter is God has placed our iniquity on Christ.
  - 1) 1 Cor 15:3 that Christ died for our sins
- c. He bore our sins in His own body. He was made sin for us.
- d. God punished Him in our place. That is the glory of the gospel!
- e. If you come to God and ask Him with a truly penitent heart, believing in Jesus that God has raised Him from the dead, and you ask God to forgive your sin, He'll hear that prayer and answer it.
- f. And like so many others, your life can be change and transformed into something that is meaning and beautiful.

Communion