

Lake Cities Community Church  
May 29, 2011  
Pastor Craig Schill  
Series: 1 Corinthians

**What It's All About!**  
1 Cor 15:1-34

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How many of you plan to drive somewhere this summer that is more than say, two hours away? I know our CDC folks will, and others of you will head out for vacations; with gas prices dropping perhaps driving is a possibility again. Road trips, for many of us, are full of great memories aren't they? Playing those car games - the license plate game. Or, how about those magnetic checker boards? Or tender memories of fighting in the backseat!

And then as you are driving along, *a sign from outside your car calls you to stop*. The sign demands you set the games aside and pull off the road.

You tell the sign, "I'm busy - got to get to this town by nightfall. Don't have time."  
The sign says - "It will be worth it, I promise. Pull over!"

The sign I'm talking about it called the "scenic overlook." Anyone here ever stop at the scenic overlook? In Arizona, scenic overlooks were everywhere. Here is a scenic overlook of beautiful Sedona, Arizona; another at the Grand Canyon, south rim. I don't find many scenic overlooks in Dallas...

As we enter into chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians, we find ourselves at a magnificent theological scenic overlook. In our journey through this book we have heard brothers and sisters arguing in the back seat, seen the games being played with false teachers, and now

we are told to set that all aside for a moment and look at the most beautiful teaching in all the Bible – the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians is Paul’s *Magnum Opus* on the resurrection. This morning we will focus on verses 1-34.

As we go through these verses ask yourself the question, “**What difference should the resurrection make in my life?**” In what practical ways should the resurrection impact how you live on a day-to-day basis? How should it shape your emotional capacity, your intellect and how you make decision?

### **1) What It’s All About (1-11)**

The title of my sermon this morning is “What it’s all about.” The resurrection IS what Christianity is all about. Paul makes this point in verses 1-11: [1Cor. 15:1](#) Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, [1Cor. 15:2](#) by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. [1Cor. 15:3](#) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [1Cor. 15:4](#) and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, [1Cor. 15:5](#) and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [1Cor. 15:6](#) After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; [1Cor. 15:7](#) then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; [1Cor. 15:8](#) and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. [1Cor. 15:9](#) For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. [1Cor. 15:10](#) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of

them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. [1Cor. 15:11](#) Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

In these 11 verses Paul reminds his audience that the resurrection was publically witnessed by many, many people – people who would have still been alive to give testimony. And that evidence is important. The gospel had two parts; the death and resurrection, little evidence was needed to prove the death of Jesus, but resurrection is another matter. And there was overwhelming proof of the resurrection.

Do you ever struggle with setting priorities? I know I do. And sometimes it is helpful when someone else sets the priorities for us. At work a boss may tell you, “this report needs to be done by noon – that if your priority.” Major life changes impact priorities – getting married can radically change your priorities, as can having your first baby.

Snoop Dog the secular rapper said his life was changed when he became a Dad. He said in a magazine interview: "Becoming a father made me settle down, go out a lot less, and stay out of trouble...and no matter what else I may decide to do or not do, that's one job I'll never take for granted. It's the number-one priority in my life."

Well, what is the number one priority for Christians – Paul says “The death and resurrection of Jesus “as first importance.” That is what it is all about. The death and resurrection is that which we received, upon which we stand, and by which we are saved.

## **2) Consequences of Belief or Unbelief (12-32)**

Now in verses 12-32, Paul demonstrates consequences of belief or unbelief. If you believe in the resurrection – here are the great consequences. If you don’t believe in the

resurrection – this is where that will take you.

Verses 12-19, Paul starts with the consequences of unbelief.

A) Unbelief: [1Cor. 15:12](#) Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [1Cor. 15:13](#) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; [1Cor. 15:14](#) and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. [1Cor. 15:15](#) Moreover we are even found *to be* false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. [1Cor. 15:16](#) For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; [1Cor. 15:17](#) and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. [1Cor. 15:18](#) Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [1Cor. 15:19](#) If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

We love the State Fair of Texas and we go every year. Maybe if you went, you remember a guy named Bryan Berg who in 2006 in the African American Museum constructed with something like 20,000 playing cards the Dallas Skyline. Did any of you see that? The room was controlled – with glass walls and no breezes. You could not sneeze on the display. If that were Christianity, no resurrection would be a bowling ball – it would utterly be destroyed in seconds.

A Christian book I read many years ago, that I enjoyed, was called, “A Skeleton in God’s Closet,” by Paul Maier, which explored the consequences of an archeologist finding what appeared to be the bones of Jesus. It was, as you could imagine a fatal blow.

B) **Belief:** (20-28) If the resurrection is not true – we are the most pitiful group of people in the world. But what if it is indeed true? Paul tackles that in verses 20-28: [1Cor. 15:20](#) But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. [1Cor. 15:21](#) For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. [1Cor. 15:22](#) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. [1Cor. 15:23](#) But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, [1Cor. 15:24](#) then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. [1Cor. 15:25](#) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. [1Cor. 15:26](#) The last enemy that will be abolished is death. [1Cor. 15:27](#) For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. [1Cor. 15:28](#) When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Do you know what a prototype is? It is the very, very first of something – many may come after, but there is only one prototype. When it comes to resurrection, Jesus is our prototype. His dead body went into the ground, and the resurrected body came out, and nothing remained except the *sindon* – the garment he was wrapped in. Paul says here that the resurrection has consequences to all who die in Christ. In other words, we believe in the bodily resurrection of the believer. That at the return of Jesus (as it says in verse 23), the dead in Christ will be raised back to life Jesus first, and then the rest of us.

At the Memorial Day service yesterday in Rowlett I was surprised to hear the speaker explain that the taking down of the flag each day to TAPs symbolizes and

memorialized the death of soldiers, and the raising of the flag in the morning to reveille symbolized belief in the resurrection of the dead. Pretty cool! As Christians we believe in the resurrection of the human body from the grave, and at that time as well, when Jesus returns, death itself will be destroyed and done away with.

Most commentators felt that the people in Corinth, though they might have believed in Jesus' resurrection, did not hold to our bodily resurrection. It was common in Greek and Roman culture to believe that after death the life continues in a purely spiritual state – with no physical body. But the Bible teaches that the spirit and the body will be reunited at the return of Christ. So get used to your body, you will have it for a long time!

C) **Unbelief** (29-32) - Paul returns again to consequences of unbelief again in verses 29-32: [1Cor. 15:29](#). Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? [1Cor. 15:30](#) Why are we also in danger every hour? [1Cor. 15:31](#) I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. [1Cor. 15:32](#) If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.

In other words, if the resurrection is not true, there is no reason for self-control or restraint. First, he talks about a baptism for the dead. This baptism, whatever it is, would have no meaning if there was no resurrection. Now Paul was not a Mormon – and he is not condoning the practice (it was probably a pagan practice). The point is that it would be a waste of time.

In fact without the resurrection, all of life loses its meaning. There would definitely

be no point to all the risk and labor and suffering for the Gospel. “Paul says, IF THE DEAD ARE NOT RAISED, hey anything goes – Eat drink and be merry!” The beer advertisers got it right as a Schlitz Beer ad said famously: *You only go around once in life so you've got to grab for all the gusto you can.*

A man by the name of Derek Miller at died on May 3, 2011 at age 41 of cancer. And he became somewhat famous for his honest, sad, funny and sometimes shocking blog he kept of his coming death. He wrote the following: "I haven't gone to a better place, or a worse one. I haven't gone anyplace, because Derek doesn't exist anymore. As soon as my body stopped functioning, and the neurons in my brain ceased firing, I made a remarkable transformation: from a living organism to a corpse, like a flower or a mouse that didn't make it through a particularly frosty night." To my wife: "I loved you deeply, I loved you, I loved you, I loved you."

I loved you, but it is forever OVER – there is nothing to come. Many of you know and have felt personally the marked difference between a funeral for unbelievers and believers. The difference is this: *unbelieving funerals are restricted to past memories while Christians rejoice in a future hope based on resurrection.*

This is my Grandma, Lily Dahlstrom. The first Christian person I loved dearly who died. She died April 22, 1989. I am 44 now, and I was 22 then, and each day that goes by I am closer to seeing her again, and others who have died in Christ. I heard an elderly pastor say, “I have more friends and loved ones waiting for me in heaven than I do now on earth, this world has little hold on me anymore.” Who is in your picture frame? What a blessing we have in the resurrection.

And for those of you who have not yet trusted in Christ, this is the good new of the

gospel that we share with all earnestness – believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his death and resurrection and you will receive the gift of eternal life.

### 3) Application (33-34)

Paul's very practical conclusion is now in verses 33-34. [1Cor. 15:33](#) Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." [1Cor. 15:34](#) Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame.

The bad company Paul refers to are those who do not believe either in the resurrection of Jesus, or in the bodily resurrection of the believer. Don't let their belief into your life, because it will necessarily lead to uncontrolled living. Instead – belief, be sober minded, and stop sinning – obey the knowledge of God, namely the death and resurrection of Jesus.

### Application

As we come to application, think again with me on that question – "What difference should the resurrection make in my life? Paul has taught us three things. First, if you believe in the resurrection, **your motivation** for self-control and godly living should be high, because how you live today will follow you into the next life. The resurrection is the ultimate accountability partner. Second, it **changes your view of death**. Whether the tragic death of a child, or an anticipated death of an elderly parent. Resurrection just means you have to wait a little while before seeing or speaking to them again – that's it – just a little while you have to wait, and you will be back in touch, literally with them. THAT is what the Christian faith it all about. Reconciliation and love.

Let me end with an interesting story of the famous Dutch painter, Vincent Van Gogh. Raised in a Christian home, Van Gogh tossed away the truth imparted to him in his Christian home and sank into depression and destruction. By the grace of God, as he later began to embrace the truth again, his life took on hope, and he gave that hope color.

The best-kept secret of Van Gogh's life is that the truth he was discovering is seen in the gradual increase of the presence of the color yellow in his paintings. Yellow evoked (for him) the hope and warmth of the truth of God's love. In one of his depressive periods, seen in his famous *The Starry Night*, one finds a yellow sun and yellow swirling stars, because Van Gogh thought truth was present only in nature. Tragically, the church, which stands tall in this painting and should be the house of truth, is about the only item in the painting showing no traces of yellow.

However in one of the last paintings he made, "The Raising of Lazarus", Van Gogh's life was on the mend as he began to face the truth about himself. The entire picture is (blindingly) bathed in yellow. In fact, Van Gogh put his own face on Lazarus to express his own hope in the Resurrection.

If you here this morning and are looking for some light in an otherwise dark and depressing world – it is found in the blinding glory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.