

# The Religion of Resurrection

## 1 Corinthians 15:12-13

Life Group Discussion – April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010

There are many religions in this world. A lot of seem to have legitimate faith and beliefs. However, deep down inside, they are futile because all religions are man-made.

Besides Christianity, all the founders of different religions have died. God, who created Christianity, never dies. Jesus died for our sins, but He rose again.

The resurrection is foundational to the Christian faith. We are all sinners. Jesus paid the ultimate price our sins on the cross, and on the third day, He rose again.

Jesus' death was complete. When He was completely dead, by the power of God, He came back to life.

Jesus said that our resurrected bodies would not be like our current bodies. Upon our resurrection, we will have glorified bodies that do not get sick nor die. Resurrection is not simply a process of restoration. We will have new bodies that are nothing like our body of flesh.

Jesus is the first fruit of the resurrection. This means that there are many more fruit to come. When we believe in the resurrection, we too receive the joy of resurrection and eternal life.

The resurrection of Jesus is a historical event that was witnessed by numerous people. Our transformed lives are also testifies the resurrection.

According to today's passage, the church firmly believed the resurrection because the eyewitness accounts of the apostles. However, as time passed by, people started to doubt the resurrection account in the church of Corinth.

**<sup>2</sup> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised (1 Cor. 15:12-13)**

Paul is saying that the resurrection is central to the gospel. Without it, our faith is futile.

Paul is emphasizing about resurrection because there was Hellenistic beliefs within the church of Corinth that was attacking gospel. In Greek philosophy, the soul is important while the body is sinful. So, many believed that Jesus' resurrection was just a resurrection of His soul rather than a bodily resurrection. They interpreted the resurrection in a spiritual way. However, Paul emphasizes that Jesus' resurrection a real bodily resurrection that took place in history.

**<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep (1 Cor 15:3-6)**

What is Paul trying to say here?

The resurrection is a reality rather than an idea.

Many scholars talk about "resurrection faith" rather than the resurrection as a historical event. However, this could be misleading. The resurrection is not a myth. It is historically reliable, which is also why it is believable. Twice, Paul uses the phrase "accordance with the Scriptures" to highlight the historical reliability of the resurrection.

He also includes himself as a witness.

**<sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God (1 Cor. 15:7-9)**

Paul's faith is based on the resurrection. His life was completely changed when he encountered the risen Lord on the road to Damascus.

Before he met Jesus, he persecuted the church. He killed Christians and imprisoned them. For Paul, Jesus was just a liar who died on the cross.

But his life changed completely after he encountered the risen Lord. Once he had faith in the resurrection, he followed Jesus for the rest of his life.

What about James, the brother of Jesus? He too did not believe in Jesus when Jesus was alive. However, when he encountered the risen Lord, he changed completely.

If our life ended with death, people in this world would simply live for pleasure and fun because this life is it. However, we must remember that there is life after death. This is why we must live for Jesus right now. We must live for things that are eternal.

If the resurrection is not true, then the gospel is not true, and those who share the gospel become liars.

If Jesus did not come out of the grave, our sins would still be unpaid for. Those who believe in Christ would be the most miserable people in this world.

Those who believe in Christ anticipate eternal life. This is why we fight the desires of our flesh and the temptations of this world. However, if the resurrection were not true, again, those who believe in Christ would be the most miserable people in this world.

This is why Paul says this in today's passage.

**When there is no Answer, God has a Reason**

**If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Cor 15:19)**

Jesus died, but He rose again.

He defeated the power of death through His resurrection. He cleanses us from all our sins and gives us eternal life. The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Take time to meditate on the resurrection of Jesus. May our hearts be filled with joy and thanksgiving.

## Sharing -----

1. What would have happened if there was no resurrection after the cross?
2. Many Christians easily confess, "Jesus died on the cross." However, not many emphasize the resurrection. Based on today's passage, discuss why the resurrection of Jesus is central to the Christian faith.