

## “Resurrected + Convinced”

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

Graphics: road, new life, hope

Big Truth: Jesus was resurrected from the dead to give us victory over death as well. Each believer not only will be resurrected into the life to come, but is called to live a resurrected life now! Each person at PUMC is resurrected at salvation by grace through faith in Jesus and His teachings, life, death, and resurrection. We may be unlikely candidates, but God calls nonetheless. We may have doubts, but God will resurrect us by faith.

Focus Phrase: My resurrected life is a convinced life.

### 1. Introduction

#### A. PRAY!

- B. Last week, Pastor Tim kicked off this Resurrected sermon series by giving us this truth: The resurrected life is a CALLED life. God uses unlikely people - LIKE US - and calls them - calls US - to serve him...to be resurrected in this life and called to obediently serve Him!
- C. We're preparing for Lent, which prepares us for Easter! And, you may think, "That's a lot of preparing!"
- D. Well, this series gets at the whole point of our faith - that Jesus walked out of his own grave under his own power to give us hope for our own physical resurrections when he returns.
- E. AND...AND...because of THAT, WE are invited to live that hope-filled resurrected life NOW...not just for ourselves, but for those who don't yet know the Good News about Jesus.
- F. And it all hinges on the confession that Paul gave in 1 Corinthians 15:3, **(let's read this together)** "...that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures..."
- G. That's the lug nut that holds the wheels on. It's the lynch pin that keeps the wagon attached. It's the hinge that keeps the doors on.
- H. In 2017, the two left-rear wheels of a city bus in Florida came off while the bus was zipping along on I-95. This caused the bus to fly into a pickup truck and a third vehicle rear-ended the bus causing its engine to explode. Rogue wheels on the highways are dangerous, and the ensuing accidents can cause loss of life. Loose lug nuts, lynchpins and hinges all hold various pieces together. Yet, when they fail, the various components they connect fall apart or collapse, and chaos and disaster ensue, even loss of life.
- I. Some of us will be watching the Daytona 500 this afternoon. Those cars, driving close to 200 MPH are well-tuned machines that push the limits of the

stresses on the metal and fiber composite. Yet, one broken lug nut, and the race is over for you and maybe others. One broken pin or hinge and the car won't run. The car is only as strong as the weakest link.

- J. That's essentially what the apostle Paul was saying about the resurrection. It's the lug nut, the lynch pin, the hinge on which our faith depends. Without it, we are dead in our graves, without hope.
- K. We're camped out in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15. Last week, we read verses 1-11, where Paul invited us to be resurrected and called. This week, we'll move to verses 12-34, where Paul lays out his argument that resurrected and called disciples must also be CONVINCED that not only is the resurrection of JESUS true, but that OUR resurrections are coming.
- L. I hope you brought your bible with you. Let's open it and hear Paul's words to the church...starting in verse 12...
- M. **My resurrected life is a convinced life.** (write that down) (repeat) What does it take for us to be CONVINCED of the truth of the resurrection?

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

- i. In verses 1-11 of this chapter, Paul laid out a very plain confession that Jesus was raised from the dead, and appeared to the disciples, others, and to Paul. There was PROOF of Jesus' resurrection.
- ii. The resurrection changed Paul's life. He was resurrected by his encounter with Jesus in THIS life and he was CALLED to preach the Good News. All while waiting for the physical resurrection of the dead when Jesus returned.
- iii. BUT, even though Paul was 100% convinced, he must have gotten word that SOME of the Corinthians doubted. And he was perplexed.
- iv. What did they doubt? Did they doubt the resurrection? Not completely. Apparently, they believed that Jesus rose from the grave just fine. BUT, according to Paul, some of the Corinthians didn't believe that THEY would be raised from the dead. It was like, "Jesus was raised...that's cool. But, not US! We won't be resurrected. We don't believe it."
- v. Now, we can be all haughty and think, "Man...they had so little faith." Yet, how often and how deeply do we think about being resurrected, physically?
- vi. We don't deny it maybe...but are we convinced of it like Paul? Or are we more like the Corinthians...we are OK with Jesus being resurrected, but are we convinced that WE will?
- vii. Paul's argument here was aimed at convincing them (and us.)
  - a. If Jesus was raised, how can you say there's no resurrection of the dead?
  - b. If there is no resurrection, then Christ wasn't raised.

- c. And if Christ wasn't raised, then our proclamation has been in vain. Your FAITH has been in vain, honestly.
  - d. In fact, not only that, but we are liars, misrepresenting God...because it was GOD that did the raising...and if God did not raise Jesus, then the dead are not raised.
  - e. If all that's true, then your faith is futile...and you're not even saved (you're still in your sin).
  - f. Those who have died in Christ have perished.
- viii. Then Paul said this sad phrase, "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." (vs. 19)
- ix. Basically, if my faith in Jesus is just for THIS life - so I can get through whatever it is I face - but not FILLED with the powerful HOPE of the everlasting life to come - raised from the dead - then what a shame...what a pity.
  - x. If I don't believe that Jesus was raised from the dead - or even if I do - but don't believe that I will be raised, then, Paul said, "What's the POINT to this life? Is it simply to live for Christ, and then die and cease to exist?"
  - xi. BUT...look at verse 20...here's the meat...here's the Good News!

**B. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-34**

- i. Paul's whole point: Jesus Christ HAS indeed been raised from the dead. He appeared to us - as he said in verse 5.
- ii. Death came to the world through Adam, who because of his sin and Eve's sin made death a thing. Yet, resurrection from the dead came through Jesus!
- iii. And all this is happening according to God's resurrection plan: first Jesus, then those who believe in Jesus when he returns. It's GOD that does this!
- iv. At the end of all things, everything will be set right...subject to God's reign.
- v. If ALL THAT weren't the case, then what are we doing? On what is our faith based?
- vi. Paul talks about those who receive a baptism on behalf of the dead in verse 29. Scholars aren't exactly sure what that means, but most likely it was a practice of baptism in the early church that was done on behalf of someone who had died but didn't believe in Christ before they died. Paul doesn't condemn the practice, but uses it as one extreme example.
- vii. He goes on in verse 30 to say, "If Jesus and we are not going to be raised, why are we putting ourselves in danger? Why am I fighting the 'wild animals' in Ephesus? Why don't we just eat and drink and die?"
- viii. He ends with, "Come to a sober mind and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God." Meaning: we have work to do!

ix. But you and I must be convinced of not only Jesus' resurrection from the dead, but our own resurrection from the dead.

### 3. Application

- A. So, here's my question: Do you believe - are you convinced - that you, physically and in bodily form, WILL BE RAISED from the DEAD if you die before Jesus returns, WHEN he does return? That's a serious question!
- B. According to Paul, the answer to that question is the lug nut, the lynch pin, the hinge, of your faith.
- C. If you believe that deep down in your heart, then you are convinced. And if you are convinced, then all you do in the name of Jesus is NOT in vain.
- D. If you DON'T believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, then maybe this isn't the church for you. Or at least let's talk about that.
- E. If you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, but you don't believe that YOU will be raised from the dead, then Paul would say that you are to be pitied. It's really hard to have hope in tomorrow, when tomorrow could be the end of everything you know to be true and real.
- F. In the beloved Frank Capra film *It's a Wonderful Life*, an angel named Clarence gives the depressed small-town banker, George Bailey, a precious gift: the ability to glimpse his world as though he had never been born into it. If you've seen this film, you can attest, the town of Bedford Falls is a much worse place in George's alternative vision — the scenario in which he had never been born — than in reality, where his many small kindnesses over the years have borne sweet fruit in the lives of others.
- G. So, too, with Paul's thought-experiment about the resurrection. What would the world be like, had the resurrection never happened? Would we even want to live in such a world? In how many ways would our lives be poorer without it?
- H. If Christ has not been raised, our faith is futile.
- I. But we know our faith is NOT futile. We can SEE the power of God changing lives and we can feel the Holy Spirit moving among us to change OUR lives!
- J. **This is not fiction.** This is not a story to make you feel good about yourself or coming to church. Jesus Christ walked out of his own grave under his own power! AND YOU, believer, will be raised up OUT OF YOUR GRAVE when Jesus returns.
- K. We all wrestle with doubts about things we can't see. We all wrestle with wondering is this or that is true and how. Especially when it comes to the supernatural promises of God! That's human.
- L. It's easier to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead than to envision yourself being raised, doesn't it? Paul is pretty clear: you must be convinced of

both. Because if one is true and the other is not, then they are both false and you are to be pitied.

M. So, how do you become convinced of your resurrection?

- i. It has to start with being convinced of Jesus' resurrection. It's the lynch pin...the lug nut.
  - a. Death has been defeated by God. The eye witnesses are so numerous that there's no room for doubt.
  - b. Jesus predicted it and God did it!
  - c. In Mark 9:31, Jesus said, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and **three days after being killed, he will rise again.**"
  - d. Romans 8:11 says, "God raised Jesus from the dead, and if God's Spirit is living in you, he will also give life to your bodies that die. God is the One who raised Christ from the dead, and he will give life through his Spirit that lives in you."
  - e. And we know that hundreds of people saw the resurrected Christ.
  - f. Be convinced of the resurrection of Jesus...we'll get to that more on Easter Sunday! Meet me here, y'all!
- ii. But being convinced of our OWN resurrection is another story. Are we Lazarus? Or Jairus' daughter? (two people that Jesus raised from the dead)
- iii. In order to move deeper into the belief that you and I will be raised from the dead when Jesus returns, we must begin to understand more about life itself and our bodies in this life.
  - a. This body is a vessel for the soul that God has put in you. There are everlasting parts of you, and there are temporal parts of you.
  - b. From the moment you are born, your body begins the process of dying. Yet, you are NOT just your body. Your body is a vessel for the spiritual being, created by God, that makes up who you are.
  - c. Jesus had a physical body which was beaten and destroyed. Yet, after he was raised from the dead, he appeared to his disciples and even let Thomas touch his hands and side.
  - d. Jesus is the first fruit, and we will follow. Our bodies will be glorified and recreated in the life to come. That's good news, especially if you think you may have gotten a lemon in this life! LOL
  - e. Again, it's something GOD does. It's a promise and God proved that promise when Jesus was raised from the dead first.

- iv. So what? So you're convinced that Jesus rose and you're convinced that you will be too. So what?
- N. Paul gave us a clue. Live in hope today in the assurance of the life to come.
- i. The thief on the cross had moments to live after he professed his faith in Jesus was promised by Jesus that he'd be with him for eternity.
  - ii. What would that criminal have done for Jesus had he been taken off the cross and allowed to serve him?
  - iii. You have the opportunity to live NOW in the sure hope of being raised from the dead when Jesus returns.
  - iv. If you're convinced of that, then the dangers, toils, hardships, and fear of this life must bow before the hope you have in everlasting life with Jesus!
  - v. Go, make disciples for the transformation of the world!
  - vi. Go, give every person you meet the opportunity to see that hope in you and give them the opportunity to believe in and follow Jesus.
  - vii. Be resurrected NOW and CONVINCED of that future promise! Death isn't the end!

#### 4. Conclusion

- A. I pray that no one loses a lug nut in this afternoon's NASCAR race.
- B. But even more than that - infinitely more - I pray that no one that can hear my voice will waiver in the conviction that Jesus was raised from the dead and so will you and I be. Death has been defeated by Jesus!
- C. It's our full and sure hope of what's to come.
- D. John Wesley quoted Benjamin Calamy in a sermon called On the Resurrection from the Dead, "Let this especially, fortify us against the fear of death: It is now disarmed, and can do us no hurt. It divides us, indeed, from this body awhile; but it is only that we may receive it again more glorious. As God, therefore, said once to Jacob, "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will go down with thee, and will surely bring thee up again;" so may I say to all who are born of God, "Fear not to go down into the grave; lay down your heads in the dust; for God will certainly bring you up again, and that in a much more glorious manner." Only "be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" and then let death prevail over, and pull down, this house of clay; since God hath undertaken to rear it up again, infinitely more beautiful, strong, and useful."
- E. **Let's pray...**