## Logo  Description automatically generated with medium confidenceSpring Study Discussion Guide #11

**Sermon Title**:  Resurrection Hope

**Biblical Reference**: 1 Corinthians 15:1-20

**Date Preached**: Sunday, April 9th, 2023, @ 11am

**Fall Study Date**: Wednesday, April 12th, 2023

Ice Breaker

To get to know each other as a group, let us go around the room and have everyone answer the icebreaker question.

If you could only eat one flavor of ice cream for the rest of your life, which one would you choose and why?

Sermon Summary

## In 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to Christianity, providing evidence for its occurrence. He emphasizes its importance and centrality to the Christian faith, explaining that everything in Christianity would be meaningless and in vain without it. He teaches that belief in the resurrection inspires holy living, provides assurance of eternal life, and gives motivation for Christian service.

## Many of the Corinthians did not believe in life after death. They missed the most precious promises of the Gospel. And this belief had negative implications for their lives. It led to bad decisions. They valued food and pleasure too highly, believing this life was all there was. Paul teaches the resurrection not only shows us what to believe in this life but also promises future hope. This hope includes life after death, never ceasing to exist as a person, reuniting with loved ones, and having restored, redesigned bodies free from the curse. But is the hope of the resurrection something we can count on? Can we be assured of it, or is it a false hope?

## Quick Review

***Ask a volunteer to read the following:***

*1Co 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

*1Co 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

*1Co 15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:*

*1Co 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.*

*1Co 15:7  After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.*

*1Co 15:8  And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

* What's the most surprising or thought-provoking thing you learned from the sermon or your study of this passage?

## My Testimony

Put yourself in the shoes of the Corinthians, hearing Paul's letter for the first time. After living with the belief that there is no life after death, you now understand through Jesus' resurrection that you will live forever.

* How do you think you would have reacted to this new understanding, and why? What changes, if any, do you think you would have made in your life?

## Digging Deeper

1. **Biblical Hope vs. Regular Hope**

Biblical hope and contemporary hope are distinct concepts. In modern English, hope refers to optimism about the future, regardless of whether it is grounded in evidence or facts. In contrast, biblical hope is a confident assurance in the promises of God and the belief that they will come to fruition, even if the timing is unknown. The hope of the resurrection is grounded in the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, providing evidence and substance for our faith. Believing in the facts leads to faith, which is the evidence of our belief. Therefore, biblical hope is a confident expectation of promises.

***Ask a volunteer to read the following:***

*1Co 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

*1Co 15:18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*

*1Co 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

*1Co 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

*1Co 15:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

Discussion Questions:

Hebrews 11:1 explains that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.

When someone believes the facts presented to them, faith arises—producing the substance or evidence that they believe. Just as believing in the sturdy construction of a bridge leads to stepping onto it with confidence.

Faith is the substance of belief and the evidence that the person believes in the facts presented to them.

* How can one distinguish between blind faith and reasoned faith?
* How can one address the notion that faith makes something true only for the believer and holds no relevance for those who lack faith?
* What is the difference between biblical hope and regular hope? How does biblical hope provide a greater sense of certainty and assurance than regular hope?

If you saw the Corinthian Christians, you would likely observe them engaging in immoral behavior, such as sexual immorality, idolatry, and drunkenness.

* What does the statement “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” mean? Do you think they thought they were miserable?
* What does it mean to have hope in Christ only for this life? How did the Corinthians express their hope in Christ for this life?
* Have you ever believed death ended it all and there was nothing after this?
1. **Evidence for Hope**

 The text discusses the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are also many sources outside the Bible. Historians Tacitus, Josephus, Suetonius, and the Babylonian Talmud provide evidence for Jesus's existence, death, and influence. Atheist scholars such as Gerd Lüdemann, Bart Ehrman, and John-Dominic Crossan affirm these sources. Archaeological discoveries such as the James Ossuary and the Pilate Stone also provide evidence of Jesus and Pilate.

In addition, there is evidence within the Bible, including the empty tomb, the disciples' initial disbelief and fear, the lack of motive for perpetrating a hoax, the presence of Roman guards at the tomb, the testimony of the Apostle Paul, and the conversion of Jesus' skeptical family members. The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, the transformation of the disciples, the change in the day of worship, and the centrality of the resurrection in the early Christian message also provide evidence.

The Lord challenges people to think and reason. Faith happens when the evidence (objective proof) for something outweighs the evidence against it. The Lord wants us to consider the evidence and think critically about it.

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*1Co 15:7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.*

*1Co 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

*1Co 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

Discussion Questions:

* What, in this passage, is the most significant to you? Please explain.
* How reliable do you think the sources mentioned outside the Bible are?
* Why is it that so many nonbelievers are unaware of this evidence? Do you think Christians are aware of them?
* What are some possible explanations for why, despite seeing this evidence, some individuals may still choose not to believe in and follow Jesus?
* What is the significance of the conversion of Paul and Jesus' skeptical family members in the argument for the resurrection?
* How does the fact that women were the first witnesses to the empty tomb challenge the cultural norms of the time?
* How do the arguments presented respond to the claim that the resurrection is a myth?
1. **What Hope in the Resurrection Produces**

The belief in the resurrection of Jesus had a significant impact on the lives of his followers, who were willing to die for their testimony. This belief should inspire us to live righteous lives, understanding that our actions have eternal consequences. Trust in the resurrection brings hope and comfort in times of loss and gives us confidence in the face of death. It also motivates us to remain steadfast in our faith and service to the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain and that we will be rewarded in the end.

***Ask a volunteer to read:***

*1Co 15:32  If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.*

*1Co 15:33  Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*

*1Co 15:34  Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame*

*1Co 6:12  All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

*1Co 6:13  Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.*

*1Co 6:14  And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.*

*1Co 15:58  Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Discussion Questions:

* What, in this passage, is the most significant to you? Please explain.
* In 1 Corinthians 6, how do you interpret Paul's use of the resurrection as a motivation for living a righteous and pure life, particularly in the context of his warning against fornication?
* How did the beliefs of the Corinthians regarding death shape their behavior and lifestyle? How does this same belief system manifest in our contemporary culture?
* In what ways did it affect their witness?
* Jesus's marks from the cross made it through to his resurrection body. What if anything, do you think carries through in our bodies from this life to the next?
* Have you examined the evidence and come away convinced that this is a historical event that changes everything?

## Taking It Home

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they can do because of discovering the truths and principles in the text:

1. What truth or principle in this text was most impactful for you?

2. How did this truth or principal challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?

3. How will you put into practice what you have learned today?