



POST SUNDAY CONTENT STUDY GUIDE

A large, detailed image of a human hand, palm facing up, set against a background split diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right. The top-left portion is blue, and the bottom-right portion is orange. A solid black shadow of the hand is cast over the blue area, and the words 'OUT OF THE SHADOW' are written in white, blocky, textured letters across this shadow.

OUT OF THE SHADOW

EASTER 2015

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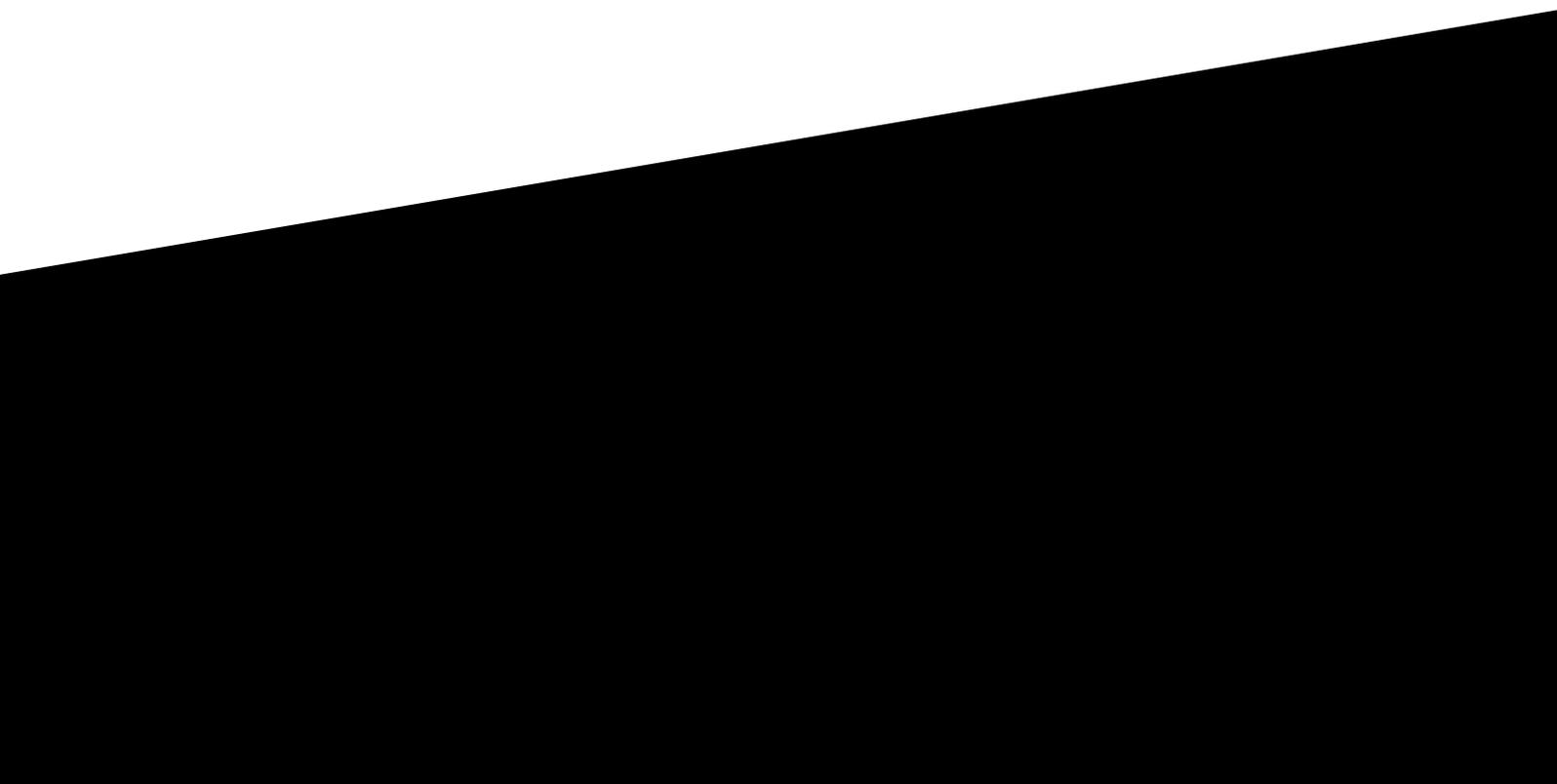
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INTRODUCTION



THE RESURRECTION

One of the most foundational, awe-inspiring, and life altering teachings of the Christian faith is the doctrine of the resurrection. The conquering of death through the resurrection of our bodies is the Christian's hope. In fact, the physical resurrection and glorification of believers at the second coming of Jesus, foreshadowed by the resurrection of Christ, is such a critical aspect of our faith that the Apostle Paul wrote that if it were not true *"...we are of all people most to be pitied"* (1 Cor. 15:19). So over the next several weeks as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Jesus' resurrection at Easter we will turn our attention to one of the most significant biblical texts on the physical resurrection of believers, 1 Corinthians 15.

1 CORINTHIANS 15

1 Corinthians 15 is by far the most extensive treatment of resurrection found in the Bible. In it the resurrection of Jesus as found in the gospels is directly linked to the promised resurrection of those who place their faith in Him. This chapter was extremely important for Paul to write as there were many in his day (as there are in ours) who deny a physical resurrection of the dead. This often happens simply because we as people have come to think of material things as temporary and spiritual things as permanent. So when we imagine living for eternity in the presence of King Jesus, it is very easy for us to automatically shift our mind's eye away from the material world we now know to one much less physical. Sadly, when we think of Heaven and the life to come often times are minds are filled with pictures of clouds and fat baby angels rather than a truly biblical picture. As N.T. Wright puts it, *"We know that bodies decay and die; that houses, temples, cities, and civilizations fall to dust; and so we assume that to be bodily, to be physical, is to be impermanent, changeable, transitory, and that the only way to be permanent, unchanging, and immortal is to become nonphysical. Paul's point here is that this is not so."*¹

¹ Wright, N.T. *Surprised By Hope*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2008 p.153

No, what awaits those who have placed their faith in Jesus is much better than a disembodied eternity. What awaits us is to discover the fullness of what it means to be human and made in the image of God!

A RESURRECTION BODY

When God originally created man and woman for relationship with himself they were created both physical and spiritual. To be human is to hold both of those together perfectly in a unified whole. God has formed us from the dust and breathed life into us by the power of His Spirit. Even though sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that the physical world is somehow lesser or not as pure as the spiritual world God has made no such difference. This has been proven to us through the incarnation of Jesus and especially through His resurrection.

Jesus, being fully God and fully man, came so that all people would have access to the kind of life God had always intended His people to have. After Jesus rose from the dead in a physical, glorified body we were finally able to see part of what that looks like. God has made a way for us to live in His presence without sacrificing any aspect of our humanity! In fact, the Bible takes that even further and tells us that *only* in God's presence can we truly know what it is to be human. We have been hardwired for joy, pleasure, and fulfillment and the fullness of those things will only be discovered when God finally restores all things to their intended way of working... including us! The best things in life are nothing but a foretaste of what's yet to come for those in Jesus. Imagine a physical world in which there was no more suffering or evil of any kind. This is the picture God has given us in His Word! In Revelation 21:4 we read that when the Kingdom of God comes in fullness Jesus *"...will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away"* (Rev. 21:4). Humankind totally reconciled to their Creator; this is the culmination of the good news of the gospel!

A MYSTERY

Even with all of the revelation that God has given us through His Word we are still unable to grasp the fullness of all that this means. For now there remains a level of mystery inherent in any conversation about the resurrection.

Over the coming weeks we will do our best to steer clear of the “gray” areas and focus instead on the good news that we know for sure: Jesus is alive. Jesus is glorified. And all who are in Him will one day experience the victory over death and fullness of life that He came to give!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

- A week of daily readings that correspond with our Lent Guide are given in order to help prepare the mind and heart. (**These readings are seen as supplementary to your other daily Bible reading and do not always correspond directly with Sunday’s text.*)
- Mini introductions of each week are given in order to introduce the content of the sermon.
- A section is provided to take sermon notes and for Community Group Leaders to write their own questions while listening to the sermon.
- The Post Sunday Content is to guide you in your Community Group discussions.
- The Family Discussion questions are to help parents talk through these stories with their children. Feel free to go through the questions all at once, or periodically through the week.
- The Recommended Resources section provides some good options for those looking to continue studying this topic.

WEEK 1

I CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

As Paul begins to instruct the Christian Church at Corinth on the truth of the resurrection, he begins with what is most important: The Gospel of God fulfilled according to the Scriptures. This is not simply a technicality for Paul. No, this is the foundation of all that he is about to say. It is only through belief in Jesus, specifically through faith in His resurrection from the dead, that the resurrection still yet to come bears any weight. Paul is reminding the Corinthians that Jesus' resurrection is much more than a nice idea, it is a historical reality. Written somewhere between 20 and 25 years after the resurrection of Jesus, Paul is attempting to show that this demonstration of God's power over death changed the lives of the apostles, changed his own life, and is meant to radically alter the life of every person who comes in contact with this truth!

COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.

2) _____

3) _____

OTHER QUESTIONS:

4) If you had to explain the gospel to an interested friend what would you say about it?

5) Why do you think Paul has to “remind” his readers of the gospel?

6) What are the key elements of the gospel?

7) What does it mean to believe “in vain”?

8) What type of proof is offered for the resurrection of Jesus? Why would Jesus’ appearances be important?

9) Why do you think Paul stresses the “grace” of God in verses 9-11? What aspects of God’s grace do you learn from these verses?

REFLECT: Where would you be today if not for God’s grace?

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Who is writing the book of 1 Corinthians, and who is he writing to?

2) What is the gospel (good news) in one sentence (see verses 3-4)?

3) Who did Jesus appear to after he was raised? Why is it important to tell people about that?

4) What is grace? How did God show grace to Paul?

5) What is Paul's response to God's grace (verse 10)?

WEEK 2

I CORINTHIANS 15:12-19

In this text Paul is trying to help the Corinthian Church see the ways in which their own culture has influenced their understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is an issue that the earliest Christians have had to deal with just as those of us who live two thousand years later do. The popular belief systems of our day constantly wage war against the truth of God's Word. If we are not careful to search the Scriptures for what we believe we will, without a doubt, be led into error. This was the case for the church in Corinth and Paul wanted to help them see the danger of this mistake.

Many had begun to subscribe to a belief system that declared a physical resurrection from the dead to be impossible and unnecessary. But this idea, as Paul points out, has no place within Christian theology. If there is not a physical resurrection from the dead than Jesus has not even been raised (1 Cor. 15:13) and we, through the preaching of the gospel have been misrepresenting God (1 Cor. 15:15). What's more is that if Jesus has not been raised then our faith is futile, we are still in our sins (1Cor. 15:17), we have no hope beyond this life, and of all people we are most to be pitied (1 Cor. 15:19).

COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.

2) _____

3) _____

OTHER QUESTIONS:

4) What is the false teaching that Paul is addressing in these verses?

5) Locate the "if" statements in these verses. What problems emerge if there is no resurrection from the dead?

6) If Jesus had not been raised from the dead what would it mean?

7) Why is it not enough that Jesus died for our sins but had to rise from the dead as well?

REFLECT: How does Jesus' resurrection give you hope that your service to Jesus is not in vain?

4) Why is it such a big deal if there is no resurrection (verses 16-17)?

5) Why would it be sad (pitiful) to live as a Christian if there was no resurrection to look forward to (verse 19)?

WEEK 3

I CORINTHIANS 15:20-34

Beginning in verse twenty Paul moves from the error to the truth. In this passage he begins to layout the Christian hope in chronological fashion: Death came through Adam, resurrection from the dead came through Jesus Christ. As all in Adam die, so all in Christ will be made alive. But in the midst of this reality God has instituted an order in all things. Jesus has been raised from the dead as the firstfruits, the foreshadowing of what remains still to come for believers. This is an amazing truth because in it we see that the resurrection of Jesus isn't simply a doctrine to believe; no, it's a massive part of our inheritance!

But Paul goes even further in this text as he moves to show that the power of the resurrection is the motivation for the entire Christian life! Without the resurrection baptism has no relevance. Without the resurrection sacrifice has no meaning, and without the resurrection living lives of holiness really boils down to a waste of time. If there is no resurrection why bother with the Christian life at all - eat, drink for tomorrow we die (1 Cor. 15:32).

COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.

2) _____

3) _____

OTHER QUESTIONS:

4) If there is no after-life, what kind of attitudes might people have towards life today?

5) In what sense do all die “in Adam” and are made alive “in Christ”?

6) What will happen when Jesus comes again?

7) What does the idea of “firstfruits” reveal about the way Jesus’ resurrection relates to ours?

8) What are some possible explanations for Paul's reference to baptism "for the dead?" (verse 29)

REFLECT: When did you connect the resurrection of Jesus with your own victory over death? What difference does it make in terms of your hope and courage today?

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) What did Adam's death in sin bring to us (verse 22)?

2) What did Jesus's resurrection bring to us (verse 22)?

3) Who is our last enemy? How has Jesus defeated it? (verse 26)

4) How does knowing you will one day be raised from the dead make you feel?

5) Is there any point in doing great things with your life if you will just get old and die and never wake up again (verse 32)?

WEEK 4

I CORINTHIANS 15:35-49

Paul begins in verse 35 with an all-important question - How? This is not necessarily a bad question although it can easily become one when asked with cynicism instead of humility. To those asking this question with cynicism Paul wants to help them see their shortsightedness. Through this text he worked to show them that we don't have to look very far to see instances of death bringing forth life even in our world today. A grain of wheat is sown but only when it's outer shell dies does life spring up from inside. He wanted them to see that as human beings made in God's image there has always been a spiritual component to our physicality. And finally he reminded them that Jesus has already gone before us in this way. Meaning, that to deny the possibility of a physical resurrection is simply to deny the historical evidence and the power of the gospel.

COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.

2) _____

3) _____

OTHER QUESTIONS:

4) What is the argument against the resurrection that Paul presumes in verse 35?

5) How does Paul's analogy with the seed address this problem?

6) How does the analogy of the different types of bodies relate to this initial objection?

7) What is the resurrection body like?

8) How does resurrection differ from the idea of reincarnation?

9) What is the point of the comparison between Adam and Jesus in verses 45-49?

REFLECT: What most motivates you to push on in the Christian life? Hope, fear, rewards...?

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Paul gives an analogy (picture) to help explain how life can come from death. What is it (verses 36-37) ?

- 2) Will our resurrection body be just like the body you have now? How will it be different (verses 42-44)?

- 3) What are you looking forward to in your resurrected body?

- 4) Read verse 49. Who is the man of dust? Who is the man of heaven?

- 5) What would you say to a friend who wasn't excited about heaven because they think it's just a bunch of clouds?

WEEK 5

I CORINTHIANS 15:50-58

Finally we come to Paul's last attempt at revealing the glorious nature of the physical resurrection of those in Jesus. Not every believer will die a physical death. Some will be alive when Christ returns. But all of us will take hold of that glorious gift of God's grace together as we are changed in the twinkling of an eye. We who once were perishable will become imperishable. We who once we mortal will put on immortality. Then and only then will death finally be conquered once and for all time. We will feel the sting of death no more. We will never again wrestle with sin. All of this will be given to us through the victory that is ours in Jesus!

As Paul closes this chapter, he does so by reminding us that this amazing reality is meant to affect the way we live our lives. Since, in Jesus Christ our hope and future is secure what more could we desire than to give all we have and all we are for the sake of His glorious name!

COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.

2) _____

3) _____

OTHER QUESTIONS:

4) What is the significance of the events Paul discusses in verses 50-53 or the quote in verses 54-55?

5) What is the relation between sin and death and the Law and Jesus' victory?

6) Why "must" we clothe ourselves with the imperishable and immortal? What is imperishable and immortal?

7) What does it mean to give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord – verse 58?

REFLECT: Write out a prayer of thanks for what the hope of the resurrection means to you.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) What does it mean to “inherit the kingdom of heaven” (verse 50)?

2) In what ways will every Christian change (verses 51-53)?

3) How does Jesus take away the sting of death?

4) What would it be like for people to live, without any fear of dying?

5) Thinking of this great hope we have - what does Paul say we should spend our time doing (verse 58)? What could that look like in your life?

THE DEATH & RESURRECTION OF JESUS



As we have seen, the Christian hope of a physical resurrection and new life in the presence of God for eternity has only been made possible through Jesus. At the incarnation Jesus added humanity to His divinity in order that He might live righteously in our place, die sacrificially for our sins, and rise victoriously from the grave as the firstfruits of those who would place their faith in Him.

On Good Friday we will pause to remember the price paid by our King and our Lord that we may have abundant life in Him. On Easter Sunday we will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the implications of God's Kingdom advancing in our world through it.

We will examine both the humiliation and the exaltation of Jesus by turning our attention to Philippians 2:1-11. A portion of this beautiful text belonged to the ancient Church as a hymn. As we unpack these eleven verses may the power of God's Word fill us with awe, reverence, and love for our savior, King and Lord Jesus.

GOOD FRIDAY

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

THE HUMILIATION OF JESUS

Jesus came to save His people from their sins. But the price that this would require is impossible for us to fully comprehend. In order to add humanity to His divinity Jesus would willingly lay down His own rights as God. One may be tempted to think that the act of becoming human in itself would be enough for Jesus to stand in our place. But Jesus didn't stop there. No, He became a servant of all. He humbled Himself, and His life was marked by one thing: obedience to the Father. There were no limits to the lengths Jesus would go to obey what His Father commanded Him and so Jesus became obedient to death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:8).

Our King emptied Himself for us. Our Lord gave everything that we might know Him. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus was a powerful work that forever changed humankind but the implications reach further still. If God Himself laid down His rights and humbled Himself for the sake of others, how much more does the life and death of Jesus call us as His creation to do the very same?

COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from the Good Friday sermon?

CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.

2) _____

3) _____

OTHER QUESTIONS:

4) What are four motives for living in unity in verse 1?

5) What further instructions does Paul give in verses 2-4 for living in humility?

6) How does Jesus exemplify this humility? Can you think of any examples from the gospels?

7) What downward progression of Jesus' humiliation does Paul record in verses 6-8?

8) What is the connection between our humility and unity with others and Jesus' humility and our unity with God?

REFLECT: Why does the humility of Jesus far supersede ours? Why should the humility of Jesus still serve as our example?

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) What does it mean to be humble?

2) How did Jesus humble himself?

3) What sorts of things do we do from rivalry (fighting for ourselves) and conceit (putting ourselves first)?

4) Why is it hard to think of others instead of yourself?

5) How can you do that this week?

EASTER SUNDAY

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

THE EXALTATION OF JESUS

The exaltation of Jesus by the Father is the victorious closing note of the celebration of Jesus' resurrection! The Father has given Jesus the name that is above every name so that every man, woman, and child to have ever lived will bow before the King of the universe and will confess that Jesus is Lord. When that day finally comes and Jesus is worshipped as He deserves, the ultimate purpose of Jesus' work will become clear. The life, death, and resurrection of God the Son will echo throughout eternity in the revelation of the glory of God the Father!

COMMUNITY GROUP POST SUNDAY CONTENT

1) What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

CG LEADERS: FEEL FREE TO WRITE A COUPLE OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP.

2) _____

3) _____

OTHER QUESTIONS:

4) What upward progression of Jesus' exaltation does Paul record in verses 9-11?

5) What connection is there between Jesus' humiliation and His exaltation?

6) What is the name that God bestows on Jesus? What name is above all other names? What is the connection between that name and every knee bowing and tongue confessing?

REFLECT: How does Jesus' model of humility and exaltation thereafter, give us hope for the same?

See: I Peter 5:6

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Why is it so amazing that the son of God humbled himself to be a human?
- 2) What does it mean to be “highly exalted” (verse 9)?
- 3) Does it make sense that Jesus is honoured above everyone else in the universe? Why?
- 4) Who does Jesus ultimately glorify (verse 11)?
- 5) How can you glorify God this week?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Wright, N.T. *Surprised By Hope*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2008

Strobel, Lee. *The Case For Christ*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998



WESTSIDE CHURCH PRESENTS

Delve EP



WESTSIDE SINGS

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