

LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

citygroups

Spring 2022

Week of April 17

Easter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Baptism Sunday, April 24th! We already have 26 people signed up and would love to see many more!
- Groups will take the month of May off from meeting and will start back up in June for our summer term. The last week of meeting this spring will be the week of April 24th.

DISCUSSION FOCUS

Read (Primary Text): 1 Corinthians 15:1–28

Supporting Texts: Romans 5:12–20

MAIN IDEA: The resurrection of Jesus is not only a historical event with multiple eyewitnesses who gave their lives to testify to its validity but is also the hope on which our own future resurrection is founded.

OBSERVE

What does Paul mean “first importance” (or “most important”) in v. 3? *Paul means that this is a hill to die on! In other words, there are 1st, 2nd, and 3rd tier issues when it comes to theology. This is a 1st tier issue, a foundational one to the faith. Of all that Paul talks about, this is of the utmost importance.*

How do vv. 1–8 form the foundation for the rest of the passage (1 Cor 15:1–28)? *This is the gospel in a nutshell. The historical fact that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose on the third day, appearing to multiple eyewitnesses is the very essence of the gospel. It is on this historical fact that Paul can speak of salvation and a future resurrection for us who believe. Many scholars believe that vv. 3b – 7 make up a creedal formula that is older than the letter of 1 Corinthians that was passed on to Paul as a set of beliefs in the gospel.*

INTERPRET

How should we understand salvation in light of the way Paul describes it in vv. 1–2a? *Paul actually references, in some ways, past, present, and future aspects of salvation. They received what was proclaimed to them (past), have taken their stand (something that happened in the past but has present and ongoing ramifications), and are saved by it if they hold to the message proclaimed (although referring to the present, there is a sense of perseverance into the future). The past aspect of this (“you have received”) refers to the moment of their conversion where there was repentance and faith in the gospel. The present aspect of this (“on which you have taken your stand”) refers to the current state of how they live their lives as a result of that belief. The present/future aspect of this (“by which you are being saved if you hold to the message I preached to you”) refers first to their sanctification (being made holy...becoming more like Christ) and second to*

LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

citygroups

their perseverance into the future as they hold on to that message, ultimately resulting in their glorification (the final state of salvation when they will be with the Lord).

What does Paul mean when he says, “unless you believed in vain” (v. 2b)? *Paul assumes they are holding to the message he proclaimed to them. If they stray from this, they have believed in vain because they are toying with the idea that there is no bodily resurrection, and therefore, Christ did not resurrect.*

RESPOND

Paul says that “we are false witnesses” if Christ has not been raised from the dead (v. 15). Why would Paul and the apostles lie about the resurrection of Jesus? *They wouldn't! This is actually one of the strongest pieces of evidence for the validity of the resurrection. Many people would die and have died for something they thought was true. But, no one is willing to suffer and die, like they did, for something they knew to be a lie. In other words, they were eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus. Because of this, they were willing to suffer and die for telling this truth. If they were making this stuff up, they wouldn't be willing to suffer and die for it!*

What if Easter was a farce (vv. 12–19)? *If there is no resurrection, then Christ was not resurrected.*

If Christ was not resurrected, 1) your faith is empty; 2) the dead have no hope; 3) the apostles are false witnesses; 4) you have no forgiveness for your sins; 5) you are to be pitied

What if Easter is real (vv. 12–19)? How should you respond?

APPLY

What do vv. 20–28 have to say about the end times and how do these verses bring you comfort?

- *Because Christ has been raised, we will be also (vv. 20 – 22). Rather, the bodily resurrection is proof that God not only raised Him but vindicated Him. In the same way that the Spirit is the down payment for our salvation (Eph 1:14), Jesus' resurrection is the down payment for our own resurrection.*
- *See also Rom 5:12 – 20. The “all” in v. 22 must be interpreted in the context. Paul is speaking of believers in this chapter so this is what he means by “all” in v. 22. It does not mean unbelievers didn't die in Adam nor does it mean they will not be raised (Dan 12:2; John 5:28 – 29) but they will not be made alive in the sense of cancelling spiritual death. They will be resurrected for judgment.*
- *1) Christ resurrects; 2) At His coming, the bodies of the saints (v. 23); 3) Christ hands over the kingdom to the Father after crushing all enemies (rulers, authorities, powers = demonic forces), including death (vv. 24 – 26); 4) Christ will then submit Himself voluntarily to the Father to bring glory to Him (vv. 27 – 28).*

Pastor Dean often says that “Easter proves that the plan of Christmas worked.” What do you think he means by that and how do you apply that not only in your own life but in your sharing the gospel with others? *The plan of Christmas was God sending Jesus in the flesh to live a perfect, sinless life on our behalf and to die in our place. Easter is the fulfillment of that plan and the vindication of all that Jesus did as God raised Him from the dead. His sacrifice on behalf of us on the*

LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

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cross was accepted by God as the perfect payment for our sins and God demonstrated that by raising Him to life again.