

June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**Jesus, the Living Savior** (Steve Adams)

1 Corinthians 15: 1-18

Steve Swasey just read these verses but I am going to read them again:

“Now I would remind you brothers of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures....” 1 Cor 15:1-4 We can go home now because in these 4 verses we read 3 important truths and is the Gospel in a nutshell..

In 1981 there was a devastating flood in central China. During the flood an ancient pagoda collapsed at Famen Temple.

A few years later, archaeologists were digging through the rubble when they made a startling discovery. Sealed in a miniature stone casket, they found what they believed to be part of one of their religion founder’s [the Buddha’s] fingers. They brought the finger to various countries to be exhibited.

In Taiwan, it was for a while on display at a mountain-top monastery. The finger was housed in a miniature golden pagoda as tens of thousands people came to pay homage to it. They burned incense and placed flowers all around the relic.

One visitor said, “I was born more than 2,000 years after the Buddha, but I feel moved and touched to have seen the finger.” Some said they felt as though the Buddha was actually sitting in front of them.

How sad.

- People can sit in front of a piece of dismembered finger, or a tooth, any part of a body and feel as though it was something special.
- Could the finger of this religious man (Buddha) help them? Could it reach out and touch them? Could it heal them? Could it raise them from the dead?

How would we react if someone claimed to have a preserved finger of Jesus?

- It would not be special. It would only mean that he is dead.
- In fact, if someone could find a finger of Jesus it would literally destroy Christianity.

The whole Christian faith rests on the fact that there is no such body to be found.

- There is no finger, no hand, and no body — because Jesus rose from the dead.
- When the women arrived at Jesus' tomb on Sunday morning, the angel said,

“Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said.” (Matt 28:5-6).

So we are here to celebrate this fact - the tomb is empty. A reminder that Jesus is alive. A message not just for Easter but today! June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016

- This is not a memorial service for someone who lived 2000 years ago.
- We are here to worship Jesus, who is alive and is in our midst today.
- He is here with us today, and that makes all the difference.

## **BUT**

What if there is no resurrection? What if, like Buddha, Christ remains dead today?

- The Bible says, then “our preaching is useless, and so is your faith.” (v.14)
- There is nothing to preach about - since Christ who claims to be the Son of God and our Saviour, cannot even overcome death.
- Our faith then is useless. Why do you want to believe in a dead man?
- Can this dead man help you today? Can he reach out and touch you, to comfort you or heal you?

What if there is no resurrection? This is serious because it concerns you today.

If there is no resurrection... it means

(1) THERE IS NO LIFE - death cannot be overcome.

Life is terminated for good.

That means no one has ever come back to life, and no one ever will.

- Everyone will remain dead forever. And the Bible defines that as being separated from God, forever in hell. No life.
- Death would have been the ‘terminator’ – it would be the end of Christ, and the end of every one of us.

Because if Christ had not been raised, it means He has no power over death.

- God has no power over death. Death would be the greatest force in this universe.
- We would have no hope of life beyond the grave.
- If death had conquered Jesus, it would mean death will conquer you too.

So man creates stories or theories to comfort themselves.

- People *want* to believe that there is life after death.
- People want to believe there is a reincarnation.
- We are just bluffing ourselves and making ourselves feel good.
- No one has ever come back from the other side to tell us.

***Except Jesus Christ!*** “Christ has been raised” – Paul used this 7 times in this chapter.

- Christ’s resurrection makes possible our own resurrection.
- He is the first-born, the firstfruits of all those who died. In other words, the rest will follow... the harvest of the crop will follow, there are more to come.
- It guarantees that all those who believe Christ will be resurrected.

Everything we believe in today rest on this - for the Bible says, “If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.” (1 Cor 15:14).

- This is the underpinning of the Christian faith.
- Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are all fools, being deceived into believing a lie.

But that is not true. We know it is not true.

- The angel said, “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.” (Matt 28:6)
- We know that all that Jesus has said came true. The tomb is empty.
- And when we put our trust in Jesus, we experience a change.
- We find meaning and purpose in life. We know that what He said is true.

## I SERVE A RISEN SAVIOUR

One Sunday morning a pastor was dressing for church and had the radio on listening to a radio station. Suddenly he heard, "It's Easter, and it doesn't make any difference if Christ be risen or not..."

Shocked, A.H.Ackley shouted, " It's a lie! He is risen!"

His wife said, " Why don't you write a song about it?"

Reading the gospels again and led by the Spirit of God, he began writing. "I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today, I know that He is living, whatever men may say..." You can read the words in our Hymnal #132 “He Lives” We will be singing this Hymn to close our service after the Table.

Jesus Christ conquered death, and He said, “Because I live, you also will live” ([John 14:19](#)). That’s our guarantee.

- That’s why we do not worry about death. We are going to be with Jesus in heaven. He guarantees us that.
- Job said: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.” ([Job 19:25-26](#))

If there is no resurrection... it means

(2) THERE IS NO HOPE. We are still lost – lost in darkness and sin

17And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

18Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

Man will remain lost (v.18) – lost without hope.

- Life would be very dark. There would be no future after the grave.
- We would be lost in this darkness. We would not know why we are here. We would not know what life is all about. We would not know where we are going.

Look around you – people all long for something beyond death.

- They want to believe that there is something more. They want to believe that their loved ones continue to live on, somehow, somewhere, in some new way.
- But who say there is this somewhere that we can go to? Who say that there is life after death, if all man dies?

Jesus came to this world, introducing Himself as the light.

- Jesus says, “I am the light of the world.” ([John 8:12](#))
- If He is not alive today, then that light has gone out for good.
- And if this light has been extinguished, there would be no light for us.
- We are all living in darkness. There is no hope for mankind.

Verse 20: “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.”

- That light continues to shine. There is hope for us.

## CROSSING THE RIVER

Max Lucado, in his book, "Six Hours One Friday," tells the story of a missionary in Brazil who discovered a tribe of Indians in a remote part of the jungle. They lived near a large river. The tribe was in need of medical attention. A contagious disease was spreading across the village. People were dying daily.

A hospital was not too terribly far away — across the river, but the Indians would not cross it because they believed the river was inhabited by evil spirits. And to enter its water would mean certain death.

The missionary explained how he had crossed the river & was unharmed. But they were not impressed. He then took them to the bank and placed his hand in the water. They still wouldn't go in. He walked into the water up to his waist & splashed water on his face. It didn't matter. They were still afraid to enter the river.

Finally, he dove into the river, swam beneath the surface until he emerged on the other side. He raised a triumphant fist into the air. He had entered the water & escaped. It was then that the Indians broke into a cheer and followed him across.

### **We are going to follow Jesus across.**

And so if the resurrection is true, we are guaranteed of two things:

- We have eternal life, and we have hope in this life.
- No matter what happens, no matter what changes take place in this world, Jesus our living Saviour is with us.

We are here today to say and celebrate that Jesus Christ is alive.

Dear friends, do you grasp the wonderful truth?

- Christ is not a dead Saviour! He rose from the dead! He is our LIVING Saviour!
- But He **was** DEAD! He died on the cross, but on the third day God the Father raised Him up. "He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today"

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became a mortal man for the very purpose of dying — to pay the penalty of sin — death - for you and for me.

- Jesus paid the price. The score has been settled with God. You are forgiven. • But you need to accept His gift. You need to put your trust in Jesus Christ.
- God is not going to force Himself on anyone of us.

"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." ([John 3:16](#))

- If you have never trusted Christ as your Saviour and yet your heart longs to cry out for help, you can do so today.
- Call on Him to forgive your sins. Believe that He died for you and make Him your Lord and Saviour.
- You will receive the forgiveness of sins and a new life. And there is a home in heaven waiting for us.

Bros/Sis, we serve a risen Saviour today.

- He paid a high price to give us a new life.
- We want to dedicate this life to God.

*My life, my love I give to Thee, Thou Lamb of God who died for me;  
O may I ever faithful be, my Saviour and my God!*

*I'll live for Him who died for me,  
How happy then my life shall be!  
I'll live for Him who died for me,  
my Saviour and my God!*

*O Thou who died on Calvary, to save my soul and make me free  
I'll consecrate my life to Thee, my Saviour and my God!*

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me and dying for me on the cross. Your precious blood washes me clean of every sin. You are our Lord, our Saviour and our God, now and forever. I believe that You rose from the dead and that You are alive today. God, You are my Father and I am Your child because of Jesus Christ. Thank you for filling my heart with Your peace and joy in Jesus' name. AMEN.