



SERIES: Pursuing Spiritual Fitness
SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD
Saturday, August 5, 2023
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
TITLE: Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

Your faith is worthless - Christianity is a joke - *if* Christ had not been raised from the dead. This is precisely what the Apostle Paul conveyed in first Corinthians 15. According to 1 Corinthians 15:17 (NLT), Paul says,

And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still guilty of your sins.

Tomorrow we celebrate Easter. But Easter has nothing to do with bunnies, baskets, and chocolates. It has to do with the claim that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead. And if He did not, then we should pack up our bags and live for ourselves, because Christianity is a lie. But if Jesus did rise from the dead, it changes everything, because Salvation and forgiveness of sins are possible, but also a future physical resurrection.

The question is: did Jesus actually rise from the dead? Well, according to 1 Corinthians 15:3-8,

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.

Virtually everyone agrees that the apostles claimed to have seen a risen Christ. Is it possible, however, that they thought they saw Him, but they really didn't? In other words, did they hallucinate this? Well, science tells us that simply is not a reasonable explanation. People do not have group hallucinations in the same way. Typically, people do not have multi-sensory hallucinations. Those who do are mourning the loss of a loved one. Well, the Apostle Paul surely was not mourning the death of Jesus.

Is it possible that the disciples lied? Well though possible, it's not probable. We know for certain that 3 of the 12 apostles died a martyr's death, and liars make poor martyrs. It's not reasonable to conclude that the apostles would suffer and die for a lie. There was no upside.

Is it possible that Jesus didn't die on the cross, but He simply survived? Well, that's not a reasonable explanation either. The Romans were the masters of execution. After being whipped, flogged, beaten, humiliated, and losing massive amounts of blood on the way to the cross, you'd be lucky to survive on the way to the cross, let alone to survive suffocating to death on the cross. That's not a reasonable explanation either.

So what is the best explanation for a risen Jesus? - That the disciples saw a physically resurrected Jesus. The same God who created the universe by His very Word, and breathed the breath of life into mankind, can bring the dead back to life.

So here's my challenge for you today to celebrate. Because Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose for our sins, we have freedom from sin, and the promise of eternal life in a physically resurrected body. Today praise God and share this Good News with the people you know!

When we embrace and share the message of the Gospel, God is glorified, and we all win the day. Happy Easter, from Back to the Bible!