

Restart Series – Sermon 1 – Re-discovering the Resurrection

Ask any computer guru how to fix a problem on your computer and they will inevitably respond by asking if you have restarted or rebooted your machine. What happens when you reboot a computer is that it wipes out all the unnecessary files and junk that is affecting the performance of your pc and sets you back at the beginning. Now sometimes this simple answer isn't enough, and you have to take it a step farther, and that is called a "hard reset." Some of you are already like I didn't come for a computer lesson this morning. Hang on! A hard reset uses the same principle or the restart but it does it in full. It sets your computer back to its original factory default settings, eliminating, viruses, unnecessary files, freeing up storage space, and so on. This allows your computer to once again perform as it was intended, at full capacity, and complete the desired tasks.

I have been increasingly aware in my own life of the need to reboot. See our Christian life very closely resembles that of a computer. Over the course of time we begin to get bogged down, and we no longer operate according to our design. This may be that our schedule has become so hectic that we are doing a lot of things, but in reality we are doing none of them at peak performance. There are times when we are bombarded with crises, one after another, to the point that we are worn down and we can't see anything beyond our own current set of circumstances. Other times it is a broken relationship that demands all of our attention. Then you have issues of the heart such as sin, anger, bitterness, and forgiveness. These issues of the heart are like viruses that a computer gets. These are the real problems the ones that seem to shut us down, and completely destroy our ability to live a life pleasing to God.

So what do we do when this happens? What's the answer? I believe that many of you like myself need a hard reset. We need to restore ourselves to our original default settings. We need to discard junk in our life that competes against Jesus for our time and attention. We need to address our sin, let go of our anger, and learn to forgive as Jesus forgave us. I know some of you are thinking yeah that's great Josh but you don't understand what all I have going on right now, or yeah but you don't understand what they did to me, yeah Josh that's great in theory but am I really supposed to just forgive them. Look I get all of this I have been there and in many circumstances I am there right now in my life. However, if we are going to restart, reboot, or reset then we need to go back to the beginning, and the beginning point for our Christian faith is found in 1 Corinthians 15.

While you are turning there let me give you a little information on the city of Corinth and the purpose for this letter. Corinth was a city in Greece located on an isthmus, which is a little strip of land connecting northern and southern Greece. This city was crazy. Because of its location sailors found that it was easier to dock their boats on either side of the isthmus and transport the boat on rollers to the other side to continue on their journey then to travel all the way around the southern tip of Greece. Because Corinth became a hot spot in the trade routes people from all over the known world were making their way through Corinth on a regular basis. Corinth became a booming metropolis that was known for its wealth and affluence. Along with this wealth and influx of people came an influx in pagan religion, taverns, prostitutes, and every kind of debauchery you could imagine. Corinth has been compared to modern day cities of NY, LA, and even Sin City itself – Las Vegas.

There was an old sailing proverb that said many a men go to Corinth but few leave the same way they entered. There was even a term coined “to Corinthianize” meaning simply to indulge in all that Corinth had to offer. So it is easy to see why Paul desired to plant a church in Corinth.

Now the letter to the Corinthians was written by Paul somewhere between AD. 54-56 while he was in the city of Ephesus. On the screen you will see a brief outline. You’ll according to the outline that in Ch. 15 Paul was actually responding to issues that had been raised in a letter from the Corinthians to Paul. All throughout this letter Paul addresses tons of issues from things he’s heard to what the Corinthians had written, and if you ever think our church is bad, just read this letter. Man the church at Corinth was messed up. When you hear people talk about their church and they say we are a NT church I always cringe and think I hope they aren’t like Corinth. I mean it was bad.

Up until 15 Paul had addressed issue after issue, and he does as well in 15, but he begins this chapter with the one foundational truth the church needs to remember. So let’s begin reading Ch 15:1

*****READ 15:1*****

“Now brothers and sisters.” Paul is letting them know he is changing subjects and in particular they need to pay attention. Let me remind you – some other translations read “let me be quite clear”. Let me bring to mind that which I have already proclaimed. THE GOSPEL – the good news the very foundation from which I preached. Which not only did I preach but you received, it wasn’t forced on you, but rather you willingly made a conscious decision to accept this Gospel I was proclaiming. Not only did you receive it,

but it is the message of this good news for which you have taken your stand. You no longer stand on the debauchery of Corinth but of this Gospel message.

*****Read 15:2*****

By this Gospel you are saved – you have salvation – you have forgiveness of sins – you have been made right with God – you no longer have to fear death. As long as you hold tight to the word I preached. If not then you have believed in vain.

The Corinthians already knew Paul well enough to know what he was talking about when he said the gospel. But Paul says that if you don't hold to this teaching, if this gospel is not your anchor – your foundation – the starting place for your faith – then you have believed in vain. Nothing you have done or are doing now is worth anything. It was all for nought. If you are sitting here this morning and week after week you arrive and do church, but if you are not holding to this foundational truth of the gospel then you might as well go home. For that which you have claimed as your faith doesn't really exist.

*****Read 15:3*****

For what I received I have passed on to you as most important of all. The one thing you need to remember – the cornerstone for your faith – the very essence of what you say you believe. Above all else this is what you should remember. Everything else is based on what I'm about to tell you.

*****Read 15:3-4*****

This is our starting place this morning. If you are going to reboot, if you need a hard reset, when you wipe away all else this is the starting point for your faith. It was on

this truth that you could no longer deny God, and you cried out to God to save you from your sins. When everything else is gone, this is the one thing that remains.

Jesus Christ died according to the scriptures. The scriptures are the OT the prophecies of the coming Messiah. Not only did Jesus fulfill the prophecy in the life he lived, but the manner in which he died. He died as the scriptures said he would.

He was buried, and on the third day he was raised according to the scriptures. His resurrection, just like his life and his death, was in the exact way that it had been depicted centuries before.

Everything that we believe as Christians – followers of Christ – disciples, hinges on this foundational truth. For all of you that have accepted Christ as your savior, I want you to close your eyes for a minute. Now recall that moment in time when you first recognized this truth. That Jesus Christ died on the cross so that you might have forgiveness for your sins. That they buried him in a borrowed tomb, and then three days later he rose from the grave. Now with your eyes still closed begin to think about the days, weeks, months, maybe even years following this decision, and how you felt. Wouldn't you like to be there again? I believe that for many of us in this room we need to rediscover the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now for those of you who are skeptical and have yet to make a decision to submit your life to Christ, let me give you some proof. Now think about this scenario for a moment. You have been charged with a crime, that you didn't commit, as a matter of fact you weren't even at the location at the time of the crime. You were at your family's house for a birthday party. Now what are you going to use for your key evidence? Eye witness testimony. You are going to call on everyone who saw you there to give personal

testimony that you couldn't have possibly committed this crime. Say it was a big party and you are able to get 50 witnesses all of whom their stories match, and they attest to the fact that you were at the party. In all likelihood your case is going to be dismissed and the charges dropped. Right? Everyone agree? Eye witness testimony especially more than one is as strong as any evidence to prove something did or did not happen. Alright let's continue reading.

*****Read 15:5-8*****

Those of you who are still skeptical, you have yet to surrender your life to Jesus Christ, this morning I present to you Exhibit A – 1 Cor 15:5-8. Over 500 witnesses saw Jesus after he had been crucified and placed into a tomb. 500 eye witness accounts; I would assume that would be enough proof for any trial to sway the jury in either direction.

If that is not enough then revisit the beginning of the chapter. Christ died according to the scriptures. The scriptures tell us that he died for you and for me. His blood was the debt payment for the sin of the world. Past, present, and future and that includes you. God loved you enough to redeem you at the cost of his own son. What's more is that after having sacrificed his own life, he was then resurrected. The tomb could not hold him, death could not keep him, he has victory over everything, even death, and what that means for you as someone who has not given their life to Christ, is that today just as days past, you have the opportunity to accept the gift that God has freely given you, the gift of grace, the gift of righteousness through his son. This morning you can be made right with God, and secure your eternal destination with God in heaven.

As we move through the chapter we pick up in verse 12 where Paul begins to address the issue that was raised by the Corinthians. The issue dealt with specifically the resurrection of the dead, for the future. However, Paul knew he couldn't address that without first addressing their belief in a risen savior. I'll pick up now in verse 12

*****Read 15:12-19*****

If Christ has not been raised then why are you here this morning? Church if Jesus has not been raised then your faith is useless, go to the lake. Paul says later in the chapter that if the dead are not raised, then "let us eat, and drink for tomorrow we die." If Christ has not been raised then Paul says you are still in your sins. Is there a more self defeating thought than to think what you have been doing all this time as a Christian is for nothing? If Christ has not been raised you will still stand before God on that final judgement and be found guilty. If Christ has not been raised from the dead then you and I as professed Christians should be pitied above all other people.

Paul then reminds us of the good news in vs. 20 – Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. Paul goes on to develop this thought much more in depth and for the sake of time we are going to leave it at that. He ends this thought in vs. 34 with a very direct statement.

*****Read 15:34*****

Come back to your senses. Reboot – restart – reset your mind and your heart and look to the resurrection. STOP SINNING. For there are people around you everyday, at work, where you do business, in your neighborhood, in your families, your spouse, your children, who are still ignorant of God, and I say this to your shame. Romans 10 Paul says if we won't tell them then who will? You are surrounded by people dying and going

to hell and it is your responsibility to share with them the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul closes the chapter in vs 58 with this

*****Read 15:58*****

To the church, the saints, the believers, to you who profess Christianity, Stand firm, allow nothing to move you, sway you, deter you from giving yourselves fully to the Lord. Don't allow the sin you are surrounded with, the false teaching that is spewed through the media, your family struggles, work, finances, school, don't allow these things to keep you from fulfilling God's purpose for your life.

The only way to do this is to daily refocus our hearts and minds on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the tremendous benefit we gain from his sacrifice. The salvation that is freely given to us that we have neither earned or deserved, but that according the scriptures we receive when we repent and believe, when we call on the name of the Lord he will save us, that he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins.

I want to challenge you this morning. Starting tomorrow I want you to read the account of Jesus death and resurrection from each of the Gospels. That will take you through Thursday. Then on Friday I want you to read Isaiah 53 and then on Saturday I want you to come back to this passage, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. Read this passages and then sit quietly for just a few moments and think about the magnitude of God's sacrifice, that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Then consider the resurrection, that Jesus has defeated sin and death, and remember the words of Paul in Rom 6, "if we are united with Jesus in a death like his, how much more will we be united with him in his

resurrection. You are adjoined to Christ in his death, so that you may walk in the newness of life brought from his resurrection.

In just a moment we will have a time of response. You may know this morning that you need to make a decision in your life to follow Christ. I would encourage you to come forward and to address that issue. If you're not comfortable with that then please see me or Shaun or someone you are comfortable with before leaving this building today.

Some of you may be like me and recognize your need for a restart. I would likewise encourage you to step forward and spend some time on your knees before a Holy, loving, God who wants nothing more than to see you fulfill his purpose for your life. Regardless of where you are in your walk with Christ, the starting point is always the resurrection.

Our faith in God hinges on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection demands a response, to either accept it or deny it.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 12-19, 34, & 58

15 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas,¹ and then to the Twelve.⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.¹

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹²But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that

¹ *The New International Version*. (2011). (1 Co 15:1–8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²

³⁴ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame. ³

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. ⁴

² *The New International Version*. (2011). (1 Co 15:12–19). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ *The New International Version*. (2011). (1 Co 15:34). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁴ *The New International Version*. (2011). (1 Co 15:58). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.