

RESURRECTION
January 3, 2016 morning service
I Corinthians 15:1-5

I Corinthians 15. Not a better place in all the world to begin on this first Sunday of the year and that that brings us together and sets us apart as Christians, the resurrection doctrine in scripture. You know, it was C.S. Lewis that first said that Jesus Christ was either a liar, a lunatic – he said, “What I mean by that is like a man who is a poached egg or a devil from hell, or if he’s not a liar or a lunatic, He’s the Lord of the universe and if He arose He’s the Lord.” Josh McDowell said after over 700 hours of study trying to disprove the resurrection, he said, “I concluded the resurrection of Jesus Christ was either the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoax ever foisted upon the minds of men, or it is the most fantastic fact of history.” One of the two. A hoax or a fact.

Our friend Han, Hanegraaff who of course has preached here for us, one of the leading apologists in our world today, Hanegraaff says, “The resurrection is not merely important to the historic Christian faith for without it there is no Christianity, but this doctrine elevates Christianity above all other minds. For Christ does not stand in a line with so-called peers like Abraham, Buddha, and Muhammad but He is utterly unique in that He both died and rose from the dead.”

He is risen not just on Easter. He is risen every day of the year. Resurrection. Let’s think about it this morning. I Corinthians 15. I read the first five verses and ask you to follow along. Paul said:

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel [here is the gospel] which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, [Now get that. The gospel is preached, it is received, and on it we stand. Friend, the gospel is Christ and it’s what we preach, it’s what we receive, and it’s the person on which we stand.] by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.¹

If you read on He appeared to over 500 others after He was raised from the dead. Resurrection. The resurrection of – and I want to fill in those blanks with four, four resurrections that I want to talk to you about for a few moments this morning. Number one, that that holds us together is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the cornerstone doctrine of the church.

Now if you go out and ask people in Pensacola, if you just walked up and down the streets today and asked, “Do you believe that Jesus died?” They’d say yes. “Do

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you believe He rose from the dead?" If they weren't in a Sunday School class you'd find a lot of people telling you, "I just don't believe that He did it. He's a good man. He's a good teacher." C.S. Lewis said, "You've got to put that aside." He said, "If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, He was not a good teacher, He was a liar. He was not just a prophet. He was a liar if He didn't rise from the dead." So get that out of your mind that maybe Jesus, if He didn't rise, He was just a good teacher. Dear friend, He said He was going to rise and He allowed it to be shared that He would rise. If God let that happen and didn't do something about it then Jesus is not a good teacher. He's a liar. But if He did rise, oh it's a game changer. He is risen from the dead.

When you begin to read the book of Acts, you find it in chapter 1 and chapter 2 and chapter 3 and chapter 4, chapter 5. You just watch. Everywhere you go in the beginning of the church, it's the resurrection. Let me just show you this. Look in Acts chapter 1. Let me just show you a few verses here. In Acts 1:22 you know that Judas went out and hanged himself. Then they were going to replace him and verse 22 says: *Beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.*" And so who was it they put forward? They put forward Matthias because Matthias had been with us and what did he have to do? He had to be a witness of the resurrection.

Chapter 2:29. Look at it. *Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. [Verse 32.] This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all [what's the word?] witnesses.* Those in Acts, the reason the church was growing, they were witnessing to the risen Christ.

Look in Chapter 3 and verses 13 through 15. *You'll find Peter and John and they're speaking. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are [what?] witnesses.* Chapter 4 verses 1 and 2. Look at it. Peter and John. *As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*

What happened to them? They went to jail for preaching the resurrection. They didn't flinch. They were willing to give their life for the truth of the resurrection. Chapter 5:29. You find these guys keep preaching the gospel after they get out of jail. Verse 29. *But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross."* When you get over to chapter 5 and verse 40 you find they were not put in jail

but they were flogged and told, "Go and teach this no more." And they took their whipping and their striping and their flogging and they went out preaching that the One that lived and died is alive again.

Dear friend, the resurrection of Jesus makes all the difference. I read a story from Reuters that came from 2010. I found it this week. There was a lady in Austria. Her name was Christine. Christine was a housekeeper. The lady that Christine kept the house for died and when the obituary came out they got it wrong and they put in the obituary that Christine had died. When it happened the power company turned off her electricity because it had come through and somehow they had got that. She said she wrote letters, she made phone calls, but they would not believe she was alive. She said, "The only thing that would satisfy them is that I went down to the power company and presented myself and birth certificate proof that this is me and I am not dead, I am alive." It was the only she said she could get her power turned back on.

Let me tell you, friend, the New Testament church presented the fact that He is not dead. He is alive and they presented a witness to say we are willing to give our lives. Dear friend, you'll never live for Jesus until you're willing to give your life for the resurrection. You may just believe in vain but let me tell you, if you really believe, you will lay down your life as a witness to the fact He did die but He got up and He rose again. Let me tell you, friend, if Jesus is alive He rules so you can fear not. If He's alive He helps so you can doubt not. If He's alive, that means He's coming again and you need to not stop telling that He came, He lived, He died, and He is going to return again.

The resurrection of Jesus. It's what we base our life on. It's what we come together around, whether you're rich or poor, black or white, American or European. If you come to faith in Christ, let me tell you that it is the resurrection that brings us together. It is the glue of the church, if you will, that makes us what we are. If you leave from this place and you go to another city and you join another church, you make dead level sure that you don't join a liberal church that does not believe in the resurrection. You question them. If they just believe that Jesus rises in your heart or if He literally got up out of the tomb. A church that does not believe the resurrection's already dead, has no life in it. It may do some good stuff just like a Civitan Club but it'll never bring soul salvation to a single solitary soul. The resurrection of Jesus.

Number two. Not only do we find in scripture the resurrection of Jesus but here in I Corinthians 15 we find the resurrection of believers. Did you know you're going to get up too? Amen. Look at it in verse 35 of I Corinthians 15. Paul begins writing about this and he says: *But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies.* You see, you've got to die and be buried and then they asked the question. "What kind of body do we have?" Verse 37. He's illustrating here. *But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.*

We all have a glory of the earth but we're going to have a glory of the heavens. Verse 41. *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

Now here's the illustration. He says it's like a seed. When you take corn and put it in the ground, it dies and rots and then gives life and when that corn comes out of the ground, you get an apple tree, right? No. You get what you sow. He says, "You've got this natural body and you've got to die and be sown and put in the ground."

Now just parenthetically it's the big question of the day. Thirty-five percent of those in America today are cremating those that die. I'm often asked the question, "Pastor, is it okay to cremate people?" Well I study the word of God. The only people who ever cremated folks were pagans. You never find that in the New Testament church. There's not enough there to build a doctrine on to tell you it's sin but it is enough to tell you don't you dare cremate me. Many people do that.

I did a couple of funerals over the holidays where people were cremated. I had one lady who told me not long ago, she'd always suffered with her weight. She's been big and when we had a funeral she came in. She said, "Pastor, now when I die I want to be cremated and I want them to put me in a tall, skinny urn." She said, "If they pour it all in there and there's some of me left, just throw it out on the ground. I want to be tall and skinny."

Here Paul says the kind of body that you sow is the kind of body that will come but now it will still be different because that seed that you sow, you see, he says that it has to become its own grain and it does. It's of the same kind but it's not the same one. It came forth with its own kind of glory. So he uses the seed and then he talks about the spiritual body which is in verse 44. *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.* And there is a glory to it just like the glory to the sun, the moon, the stars. There'll be a glory to that new body.

Now the body you're going to get when you get to heaven, number one, it will be supernatural. Number two, it will be sin-free. Can I get a witness? Those things I want to do I don't do. Those things that I don't do, I want to do. That's what Paul said in Romans 8. There'll be no struggle on the other side. Your body will be supernatural, it'll be sin-free, and it'll be spirit dominated. You'll have the kind of body Jesus had when He rose. Remember He just walked through walls but they knew who He was. He could just think. He could just say, "Wal-Mart," and He'd be there. Amen. He didn't have to walk. He didn't have to travel. He just showed up.

Those guys were walking down, remember, down the Emmaus Road and they look around there and there's a visitor. Where did He come from? Jesus was just there. He had a spirit body. They would know Him when they looked at Him. You'll be known as you're known. There's a thousand questions about that. When a baby dies, are they always going to be a baby? How old? If I'm 100 when I die, will I always be 100? I don't want to be caught up in heaven and be 100 years old. I don't know. I do believe – it's just my opinion. I have no scripture to base it on. I just think we'll all be 33. That's when Jesus rose. I think that's where we're going to be. I don't know that. I can't prove that but then you'll know as you are known. It's a spiritual body. It's sin-free.

If you want to hear and read about the spirit body, go read Joni Eareckson Tada, is her name now that she's married. She's been paralyzed from her neck down since she was a young girl from a diving accident. Go read her dreams about the next life. She dreams about not being in that chair. I often wondered that. People that are quadriplegic, do they dream that they can get up and go or do they not? Some do; some don't. She writes these beautiful, beautiful passages about the vision that God's let her have about what the body's going to be like on the other side. She quickly goes on to say, "God would have never used me in this life had I not been confined to this chair." She said, "God did something in me that He would probably have never done had I been walking like the rest of all you abnormal people." She said, "In my normality came a touch of God but there's going to be a day when I get up from here and I'm also going to be in a spirit-body that's sin-free and it's supernatural. It'll be what God made."

Dear friend, you're going to get up one day if you know the Lord God. Those that are dead in Christ will rise. We're going to get up. Amen. When they bury you, that's not the end. The minute you die, your spirit goes to be with the Lord. Your body will one day be raised. There's going to be a new body and it's going to be a glorious day.

There's the resurrection of Jesus, the resurrection of believers. Thirdly, there's the resurrection of unbelievers. Oh yes. Those of you that sit in this room today and you do not know Christ, you'll die if you don't come to salvation in the Lord Jesus. If you don't invite Him to save you, if you don't call out to His name, you'll die lost, we'll bury you lost, you'll go into eternity lost. You'll immediately, when you breathe your last, be in the presence of hell itself. But there comes a day of resurrection and a day of judgment. It's told us in Matthew 25.

Just take your Bible and look there very quickly in Matthew 25. When Jesus speaks about that in verse 31, Mathew 25:31: *"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left."* [Drop down to verse 41.] *"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. [Drop down to verse 46.] 'These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

When we get to judgment, there will be a time when those on the right, saved, will go into eternal life and those on the left will be cast into a lake of fire. Hell is described in the Bible with many, many words. You find it called a darkness with weeping. It's called a fiery furnace. It's called a lake burning with sulfur. It's called everlasting torment. It is qualified by being unquenchable. You cannot put out the fire, the torment that is there.

Now just listen to me. If you are here today and you do not know that heaven will be your home and you do not know that you're a saved man or woman, when I give the invitation and Jon plays on this instrument and I ask you to come forward, you ought to leap out of your seat and run to the front and say, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." I want to give you good news today. The Jesus that died and rose, He did it just for you. He says to you, "I will save you and whoever will call on My name will be saved."

If you were here on Christmas Eve, I told you I was going to go home and we were going to have a testimony meeting at our pizza supper that we have every Christmas Eve and we did. We had the 4:00 service filled up, 6:00 filled up. We went home, had the pizza, and after we ate we got ready for dessert and I said, "Okay, for this year, what we're going to do is I want us to go around the table and give our testimony." So I started over here and we went around.

We had about two and Kathryn, the verbal child, said, "Papa, what's a testimony?" That's why we were doing it. She came to big church on Christmas Eve so she could put the money in the manger. She said, "Another question, Papa. Why were you up in that water with those people? What was that?" Her mother said, "Baptism." She said, "Why did you bapitize those people?" Every child says bapitize. I don't know why. "Testimony. It was their testimony." She didn't grab it all but we planted a seed. That's what you do with your kids. That's why we have the Lord's Supper. That's why we have baptism. It's a drama so people will ask questions and say, "What's that mean?"

We went around the table. We got over there to this 90-year-old man, my father. Tears start coursing down his face. He said, "Well I want to tell you." He had never told his grandchildren his testimony. He said, "I want to tell you that when I was a young man and playing ball as a high schooler and then into the military," he said, "I wasn't worth much. I just did whatever I wanted to. I was just kind of wicked." Then he put his arm around my momma. He said, "But when I met this lady she told me of a Christ." He stopped and choked up. We all stopped and choked up. Dessert didn't matter anymore. Preaching was going on. A testimony.

Friend, if you don't have a testimony today, if you couldn't go home at your lunch table and somebody asked you to give your testimony, you need to run down here and get one today. Because if you don't have one, the day's going to come when they're going to bring you to a building like this or a funeral home or somewhere and they're going to bury you but it'll be too late for you because there is no second chance. There

is no get out of hell purgatory card. As a matter of fact, purgatory is a made up place by people that don't know how to read the Bible. Friend, you're sealed when death comes. They can't pray you out. They can't light you a candle out. They can't weep you out. Let me tell you, Jesus can get you out. There's coming a day of resurrection for the unbeliever. The Lord will say to those, "Depart from Me. I didn't ever know you. And He will send you to eternal torment.

That's why, friend, you ought to be sharing the gospel this year. I gave everybody that came here on Christmas Eve one of these little cards. I hope you've already given a witness to somebody and shared it with them, talked to them about the Lord Jesus. Take those cards, those True Life cards. Pass them out. Get a tract. Somehow be ready to tell the gospel. We're fixin' to have a month of training for evangelism. We're going to try to make this the most evangelistic year we've ever had at Olive. We're going to try to train more people than we've ever trained. We're going to start that next Wednesday night. We're going to do that. We'll begin the teaching right there. Most of you already know more than you're telling. We have a gospel and we need to make it known so that people will not die lost.

There's a resurrection of our Lord. There's a resurrection of the believers. There's a resurrection of the unbelievers. Number four. Thank God there is a resurrection of the cosmos. This old world's going to get a resurrection. Take your Bible and look in Romans 8. Just very quickly this morning. Romans 8. Beginning in verse 19 we read these words in Romans 8:19.

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. [Did you know that the creation, the cosmos is waiting for the Son of God?] For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

The cosmos. The world is groaning and waving for its Redeemer. Take your Bible quickly and go to the last book of the Bible, chapter 21. If you're looking for something to memorize this year, I'd encourage you to memorize the 21st chapter of Revelation. My soul, what an exercise it would be. I've been working on it a little bit. I don't have it done but I think I'm going to try this year. As I walk through chapter 21 and 27 verses, what if we could just memorize that, some of you that have minds to do it? John said in chapter 21, verses 1 and 2: *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.*

Hear me, friend. The cosmos will be renewed, not annihilated. He's not going to annihilate the cosmos. He's going to set it on fire but He's going to renew it. It will be liberated from destruction and decay. Eden lost will be Eden restored and a whole lot more. Amen? It's a new heaven and a new earth that we're going to see. One day all of this is going away. Somebody says, "Is it going to be an atomic war that does it?" I don't know. "What's going to burn?" I don't know. Man, there's so much change going on. What we thought might have been destruction in the days of Truman now in the year 2016, would could destroy the earth? When the presidential debate gets hot, there'll be a big, big debate. Who do you want to go to bed with their hand on that button? They'll all talk about it. Let me let you in on a little secret. Can't no president press no button until God says he can, or she can. Can't do it.

God's in charge of this place. He made it. He oversees it. He's loaned it out to us for awhile. We're to be caretakers but let me tell you, when it comes to the redoing of it, He's the Creator God. You can trust Him because there's going to come a resurrection of the cosmos. Not annihilation but there is going to be a renewal of this earth and we'll see the new heaven coming down.

Now you've got your Bible right there. Look at this. Look at this. Verse 3 of chapter 21 said: *And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. [You got any tears today? Have you had any tears in 2015? I had some tears this year. I'm telling you, I had a couple of nights this year in my life in my quiet place I wet the carpet with my tears. I may or may not have that this year but I'm telling you, I wet the carpet with my tears this year. I knelt with my wife and I wet our sofa with my tears one evening when we cried out to God about a heartbreak. I'm telling you, there's a day coming and a place coming when He's going to wipe every tear from our eyes.] There will no longer be any death [I didn't bury anybody this year. Some of you buried people. I'm telling you, you'll never go to another funeral when you get to this place. Amen? No more funerals]; There will no longer be any mourning [No sad songs. Amen. Nobody will call me and say, "Preacher, will you do this funeral?" And I'll have to say, "Who's going to sing?" no mourning], or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, [read it with me] "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."*

You can count on them. Why can you count on the words of God being faithful and true? Because He got up from the dead. His words are not like your words. His words are different than anybody else's words. His words are faithful. His words are true. There is coming a resurrection of the cosmos of this world. When it comes, there's a great divide. The goats on one side; the sheep on the other. So just let this auditorium be that illustration. All the goats over here lost. All the sheep over here saved. Which one are you? You say, "Pastor, you've got a bad perspective." I know, because if I turn around like you, all the goats are over here and all the sheep are over here. Which one are you? Which one are you? Which one are you? I'm waiting on you. We're going to get out here in a minute, alright? Which one are you? Alright,

Lord, I thought we were fixin' to have the greatest revival we've ever had. There wasn't nobody saved in this room.

Resurrection. The resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of the believer. The resurrection of the unbeliever. The resurrection of the cosmos. Oh He set there. Praise God He did. You can go and read on: *Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost."* ["I will give to the one who thirsts without cost."] *He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.* [Verse 8 says] *But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

You see, friend, if you die lost, you'll die physically but there comes a second death when you die spiritually. But if you've been born physically as you all have, you must be born again. I ask you again. Which one are you?

Father, bring a hush over this crowd for invitation today. Lord, for those people that are saved people, help them rejoice. Help them walk in obedience. I pray for saved people today, to walk true and walk together. I pray for saved people to be baptized. I pray for saved people to join a church. I pray for saved people to live like saved people today and that they'd come unto you and that they'd respond and be in this fellowship. Then, Lord, I pray for unsaved people in this room today that they would believe that today would be the day of salvation and now would be the accepted time that they would say yes unto Christ. Thank you, Lord God, that Jesus came, lived, and arose. Thank you, Lord, for the promise of my resurrection and I pray, God, if people are in this room and they're not ready, I pray they'd be found ready today. I ask this for the glory of God in Jesus' name. Amen.