

MADRID CHURCH OF CHRIST

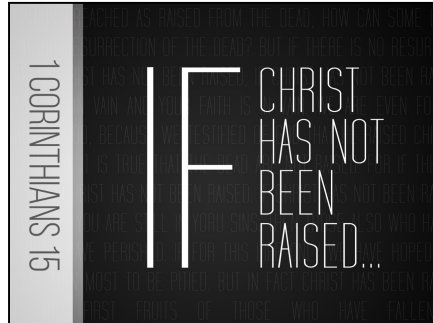
SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2017



"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL" (EPHESIANS 6:11).

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

9AM



11AM



"[JESUS] WAS DECLARED TO BE THE SON OF GOD IN POWER ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS BY HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD" (ROM 1:4).

OUR FAITH: NOT IN VAIN

As we reflect on the Gospel of Jesus Christ today (specifically His resurrection), let's remember that the hope and faith that we have is not in vain.

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you 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...” (1 Cor. 15:1-5, NASB).

The gospel is grounded in the facts of the death, burial, resurrection, and appearances of Jesus. Without these historical realities, there is nothing on which to base the Christian's faith, and no particular reason to think we should be serving Him. With these realities, we have every reason for hope and living a life in accordance with God's holiness. Paul enumerates the appearances of Jesus and claims that his own conversion was due to the fact that Christ appeared to him. He then shows that without the resurrection, faith and preaching are “in vain,” and those who died in Christ have perished (vv. 12-19). But, as Paul affirms, “now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep” (vs. 20).

Paul makes a series of arguments to show why denying the resurrection cannot make sense within a Christian's worldview and leads to other problems. If we denied resurrection, we are denying that Jesus was raised, and if we do that, what's the point of calling ourselves His disciples? Even if we, in our finite minds, cannot understand exactly how it works, that doesn't change the historical reality of Christ's resurrection that assures us all of our own resurrection.

In this context is given the well-known warning: “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals’” (vs. 33). The primary reference point here has to do with influences that would cause us to doubt our conviction in the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. By doubting the resurrection, we open ourselves up to further corruption and the ultimate loss of our souls. Paul ties this doubt to the reason why some are sinning: “Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame” (vs. 34).

After Paul discusses the nature of the resurrection, he concludes: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Now notice the connection back to verses 12-19, where Paul argued that if Jesus was not raised from the dead, then faith is “vain” and preaching is “vain” (vv. 12-19). That word “vain” is the same used in verse 58, and the connection should be noted. If Christ wasn’t raised, faith is vain; if He was raised, faith and all we do for Christ is worthwhile.

What makes our faith worthwhile (not in vain) is the fact of the resurrection. Because of the resurrection, we can know that we will be raised and that we are victors in Christ. The sting of death is defeated through Christ. If we have confidence that Jesus was raised, then we have confidence that everything we do in the Lord is worth our whole lives.

This is why doubt can become so destructive. If we are not so sure about the resurrection, then we will never have full confidence in serving Him. We will wonder if our labor is in vain. We may harbor that needling thought that we can spend our time doing something else more desirable. We may begin to think we wasting our time, and our “religion” becomes a drudgery.

On the other hand, if we have confidence in the resurrected Christ, then we can know the value of what we do for the Lord. This is the direct connection. This is where we can ground our faith. This is

how we can learn to be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord. We may then rejoice in this truth:

“For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (vv. 53-57).

Never minimize the significance of the truth that Christ died, was buried, rose again, and appeared to many. This is the core of the gospel, and it is the foundation of our confidence in service.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 08/06 – Song Service
- 09/02-09/04 – Labor Day Weekend Outreach
- 09/10-09/13 – Gospel Meeting w/ Matthew Allen

Brethren, please be prayerful about our upcoming opportunities to serve and reach out to the lost in our community, and be thinking about what you can do during this weekend to help.

DAILY READING:

- 07/31 – Daniel 10-12; Psalm 58
- 08/01 – Haggai; Psalm 59
- 08/02 – Zechariah 1-4; Psalm 60
- 08/03 – Zechariah 5-8; Psalm 61
- 08/04 – Zechariah 9-14; Psalm 62
- 08/05 – Malachi 1-2; Psalm 63
- 08/06 – Malachi 3-4; Psalm 64

