

If Christ Had Not Been Raised

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

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I have to confess to you that for a number of years after I became a Christian, I believed in the Resurrection (you have to be a Christian) but I didn't really appreciate the significance of it. It never really gripped my heart in the way that it should. But all that changed on April 21, 1984. I was a seminary student. It was the Saturday night before Easter, and, for reasons I still don't remember, I was alone in my apartment on a Saturday evening. And I thought I would take some time to prepare my heart for the next day. And so I grabbed my Bible, and I turned to 1 Corinthians 15, really the one chapter in all the Scripture that speaks most profoundly to the issue of the Resurrection. And if you're a Christian and you're a believer in Christ you understand this. It was one of those times when the Holy Spirit just made the Word come alive. As I read it, it gripped my heart in a way that it never had, and I was struck with the profundity of the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And I started reading it again and again. For more than an hour I poured over the contents of this great chapter.

And then it became close to time to get ready for bed, and so I took my Bible and I laid it over on the cabinet next to me. And no sooner had I put my Bible down than the phone rang. On the other end was my brother telling me that my dad, and the man I loved dearly and whose example I still longed to follow, had had a massive heart attack and was dead. I drove to Mobile. And a few days later I stood before his open casket looking at his body, and all of the things I had read and contemplated from 1 Corinthians 15 came flooding back into my heart and mind. And I realized (as I looked at him lying there, as I looked at his body lying there) that he wasn't really there, that wasn't him, that was merely the house in which he lived, that what Paul had promised in 1 Corinthians 15 was true, that I would see my dad again.

That and everything else we hold dear as Christians is based on and is made possible by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. You see, it's crucial that we as Christians come to understand the

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absolute centrality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ to our faith. Nowhere is that message put more clearly or more profoundly than in 1 Corinthians 15, and I want us to turn there this morning. This chapter still stirs my heart as it did that Saturday night before Easter so many years ago. Paul's purpose in this chapter is to respond to something that he had heard was going on in Corinth. Notice Verse 12: "Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" You see, the Corinthian Church was made up mostly of Greeks. The Greeks, many of them, did believe in the immortality of the soul. But because the Greeks had bought into a sort of dualism where the spirit was good and matter or the physical was evil, some of them, apparently even some of the Christians in the church in Corinth had come to embrace the idea that after a man dies his body is put in the ground and only his spirit continues to exist. In fact, to some Greeks the idea that our spirits would be bound again in a physical body was ludicrous, it was ridiculous. You remember that when Paul was on Mars Hill there in Athens, he was speaking to the philosophers, and they were listening very intently to him. But Luke records that when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, then they begin to sneer, because to them this was a ridiculous thing. And somehow Paul had heard that there were influential men in the church in Corinth who had bought into this Greek concept, who were teaching that in the church. The idea that once the believer's body dies he continues to exist but only as a spirit, that's the false teaching that Paul is trying to correct in this chapter.

Let me give you just the flow of his argument. In the first eleven verses, Paul shows us that the Resurrection is the central event in Christianity, and he demonstrates that it is an historical fact based on two realities. First of all, the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. You see, Jesus was buried (His body, His physical body was put in a tomb), and that tomb was empty. The second argument he makes for the historicity of the Resurrection is the post-Resurrection appearances of Christ. Christ appeared to as many as 17 groups of people after his Resurrection. Six or seven of them are recorded here by Paul—as many as five hundred people at one time. And he says on

the basis of these realities, the Resurrection of Christ is an historical fact. And we have preached it, and the apostles have preached it.

When Paul gets to verse 12, in verses 12-19, he gets to the heart of his argument, and he sets out to show the Corinthians how illogical their position is. Because if no one is raised from the dead, then that means Christ hasn't been raised. Notice verses 12-13:

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised.

You see, Paul is now going to take, for the sake of argument, their position and assume it's true. Let's assume for a moment that dead people aren't raised. Well if that's true, then, logically, no one ever has or ever will be physically raised from the dead. And if that's true, then that means even Christ hasn't been raised from the dead. And the results of that are absolutely staggering, Paul says. If Christ has not been raised, then all is lost. Paul wants to catalog for us the frightening consequences if, in fact, Christ has not been physically raised from the dead. He sets his argument for us to convince us of the absolute centrality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. If this stone is removed from the Christian building, the whole thing collapses in a pile of dust and rubble, fit only for history's trash bin of dead religions. The consequences of a still-dead Jesus are beyond calculation. And in verses 14-19, Paul records for us five profound and tragic consequences if Christ has not been raised. Let's look at these consequences together, these tragic consequences if we assume for a moment that the dead aren't raised and that Christ hasn't been raised.

The first is that there is no legitimate gospel. No legitimate gospel. Notice the first part of verse 14. Again, for the sake of argument, assuming their position is correct, "If Christ has not been raised [he says], then our preaching is vain." Now the word "preaching" doesn't refer to the act

of preaching like I'm doing this morning; instead, it refers to the content of his message. He's saying the content of what I have taught you is vain. What exactly was it Paul taught them? Well, he tells them back up in verse 3: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I... received, that Christ died for our sins... that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and [then] that he appeared to [Peter]"—and so forth. There is the message that he delivered to them. It's the good news. It's the gospel. And he says if that, if your argument is true, if it's true that Christ has not been raised, then my message, the content of what I'm telling you is vain. The word "vain" means empty, without substance, absolutely void. You see, if Christ has not been raised, then the gospel, the good news that Paul had given his entire life for is absolutely worthless. It's without reality. The very foundation of Christianity is sinking sand.

For the 16 years that I lived in California, I would regularly get calls from worried relatives on the East Coast, worried that California was going to fall off in the Pacific Ocean, worried because they'd seen in the news some new disaster had struck. And it is true, when I look back on it. I mean, we had fires and we had riots, we had earthquakes and we had mudslides—you know, the famous Malibu house races out on the coast. We were quite disaster prone. Well, just a few miles north of my house in California there was a monument to the second worst disaster in California history. You've probably not heard of it. In March of 1926, the St. Francis Dam was completed. Two years later, on March 12, 1928, the dam collapsed, and a sixty-yard-tall wall of water started flooding through the canyon, pushing to the ocean. Five and a half hours later it reached the Pacific Ocean. And when all the counting was done, 470 people lay dead in its path. Mulholland was the famous L. A. engineer who designed the dam, and when he heard about the tragedy he was devastated. In fact, his biographers record that he never really physically recovered from the news. What had happened? How is it that this famous engineer and architect who did so many things so well, how could he have designed this dam that collapsed? Well, they've since discovered that the dam itself was structurally sound, but it was built on flawed ground, on a bad foundation. They couldn't have known then what we know now

through modern technology that the very ground itself was subject to shifting in a way that made that dam doomed from the day it was built.

In the same way, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not some isolated fact that can be accepted or rejected and the rest of the truth of Christianity still stand. It is the very foundation of the gospel. If you remove the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, then the entire structure collapses just like Mulholland's dam. In the introduction to the Book of Romans, Paul writes that Christ our Lord was declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection from the dead. If Christ was not raised, then His claim to be God's Son is suspect, and the entire gospel collapses. You realize how crucial the Resurrection is? If Christ's body has not been raised but it remains to this day in some obscure Jewish grave, then the gospel that we have embraced is nothing but ancient fiction. The amazing message of the gospel, the message that God in His grace found a way to forgive sinners by punishing His own Son in their place, Paul summarizes it in 2 Corinthians 5:21 (a verse that I dearly love): God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him—as I love to paraphrase that text as I've heard it so many times myself. Basically, Paul is saying this: on the cross God treated Jesus as if He'd lived your sinful life, so that forever He could treat you as if you'd lived Christ's righteous life. That's the good news. That's the gospel. But if there is no Resurrection, then that message is a fabrication. It's a lie. There is no legitimate gospel.

That brings us to the second tragic consequence if Christ has not been raised. In the second half of verse 14, Paul tells us there is no reasonable faith. No reasonable faith. He says, "If Christ has not been raised, then... your faith also is vain." Paul basically tells the Corinthians listen, I preach the good news to you, the gospel, the news of forgiveness in Christ, and you believed it; but if Christ hasn't been raised, not only is the gospel I preach worthless, but your faith is vain. It's empty. It's without content. It's without reality. Oh, you may believe all right, but your faith is absolutely worthless. In Romans 10:9, Paul writes, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." You see,

the Resurrection and the death of Christ are twin doctrines that rise or fall together. They both must be believed to be a Christian. And they're both historical events that either happen the way the disciples say they did and our faith has a reasonable foundation, or they are fabrications and our faith is absolutely unjustified.

There's a modern philosophy that's invading academic circles. You may have read some in various publications about it. It's called Postmodernism. It is the dominant worldview in most secular parts of our culture and, certainly, in the academic circles of today. Postmodernism insists that there is no objective, absolute truth. To the Postmodernist, reality is whatever you want it to be, whatever you believe is true. "Well, that's okay, I mean, whatever you want to believe, that's good for you, and I'll believe what's good for me. There's really no objective truth, so it's all a matter of what helps you." But the reality is there is objective truth. It does matter what you believe. Let me give you an example. I, like many of you, suffer with allergies. Now I'm told I've moved to the wrong place for that. But suppose one day in desperation I believe something that I read on the internet. Now that would be my first mistake, but I believe it. And I come across this article that says that there is this substance (that really is poison) and you won't believe this, but if you take it in the right doses then it's going to cure your allergies. And I do it, fully believing that it will take care of my allergies. What will happen? Well, it will take care of my allergies, just not in the way I'd hope. You see, no amount of believing will help if the object of our faith is flawed. And if we believe in a risen Savior and yet He's still dead, our faith in Christ is absolutely worthless; our confidence in the gospel is completely indefensible, and it's, frankly, just unreasonable.

If Christ has not been raised, there is no legitimate gospel, there's no reasonable faith, and thirdly, Paul tells us there's no reliable revelation. Notice verse 15: "Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised." You see the words "we are... found"? It's an interesting Greek word. It's a word that usually is used in the concept of being found out, when you

discover, surprisingly, someone's true character. Paul says look, we're found out. If in this case the Corinthians are right and the dead aren't raised and Christ has not been raised, then all of those who ever taught that there is a resurrection from the dead are not to be trusted. They are false witnesses of God. Paul says we're liars, we have falsely accused God of doing something He doesn't do if there's no Resurrection.

You know, it's interesting when I read that, because Paul assumes there are only two possibilities: either, one, they're telling the truth, or, two, they're lying. There's none of that middle ground you hear from some liberal theologians today who say, well, you know the apostles, they were good men, but they were just sort of deceived or deluded. No, Paul says either we're speaking the truth or we're lying.

Notice that not only is their witness or testimony false but, he says in verse 15, it is “against God.” What does that mean? It means that we have spoken in contradiction to what God has said. You see, it's a serious crime to say God has said something when He hasn't spoken. You remember the prophet Jeremiah? God spoke through him in Jeremiah 23, and God said this about these prophets who were saying things that God didn't say. He said,

I did not send these prophets,
But they ran.
I did not speak to them,
But they prophesied.
But if they had stood in My council,
Then they would have announced My words to My people.

Jeremiah goes on to condemn them as false prophets. You see, if Christ hasn't been raised, then all those who have taught that God raises the dead are just like the prophets of Jeremiah's time. They are liars. They're false prophets, and they're not to be trusted.

Now whom does that include? Well, it includes the witnesses of verses 5-7. It also includes Paul. Notice verse 8, Paul claimed to have seen the resurrected Christ. All of the apostles are included in this group, notice verse 5, Jesus appeared to Peter and the twelve. Verse 7, “He appeared to James, [and] to all the apostles.” Verse 11, all the apostles preached the message that Jesus had been physically raised from the dead. It also includes the Old Testament. Notice verse 4: “[Christ] was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” In other words, if Christ hasn't been raised, you can't trust Paul, you can't trust the apostles, you can't trust the Old Testament. Moreover, you can't trust Christ Himself.

Turn to John 2. I want you to see what happened early in Christ's ministry. You remember the story. He's just beginning His ministry, and He goes into the temple in Jerusalem. And to demonstrate the authority that He has, He goes into the temple and He chases out all of those who are making merchandise of the worship of God. Well, they responded like we would have responded. Verse 18, “The Jews then said to Him [What do you mean? What are you doing?], ‘What sign do You show as Your authority for doing these things?’” By what right do You come in here and do what You're doing? That was a valid question. But notice Christ's response. Verse 19, “Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’” Well, the Jews misunderstood. They said, well, are you kidding? “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” John tells us,

But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

They got it, and they embraced it as the truth. But do you see what Christ did here early in His ministry? You want to know, He said, by what authority I act? You want to know by what authority I speak? Then only consider this: if you destroy the temple of My body, I will raise it

up in three days. That's the sign. That's the source of My authority. You want to know if I'm from God? Then wait to see if I can do this. Listen, if Christ is not raised from the dead, then Christ Himself is either deceived or a deceiver, because He staked everything He said and did on the reality of His Resurrection.

So if there is no Resurrection, you can't trust what Christ said or did. In addition, you can't trust the Old Testament. You can't trust Paul. You can't trust the other apostles. All of those who wrote the Old Testament and all of those who wrote or supervised the New Testament are liars. So if Christ has not been raised, the Bible you hold in your hand is no more valuable than the writings of Confucius or Muhammad or Joseph Smith. There is no trustworthy message from God. There is no reliable revelation.

That brings us to the fourth tragic consequence if Christ had not been raised, and that is that there is no real forgiveness. This comes to the heart of where we live, doesn't it? No real forgiveness. Notice verses 16-17: "For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." Notice, in verse 16 Paul reminds his readers of the flow of his argument. He's saying look, let's take your position for a moment. If no dead people are raised, then Christ hasn't been raised. And if Christ hasn't been raised, then here's the reality: your faith is worthless. Now this word "worthless" is similar to the word *vain* used previously in this passage, but it's different. The word "worthless" speaks of something that produces no results. It doesn't produce. Well, it doesn't produce what? If Christ is erased, what is it that our faith doesn't produce? Well he tells us, the end of the verse: "You are still in your sins." It produces no real forgiveness. You see, the New Testament everywhere connects the Resurrection of Christ with forgiveness. Listen to Romans Chapter 4:25 as an example: "He was delivered over because of our transgressions, and [He] was raised because of our justification." He was delivered over. That's His death for our transgressions. He suffered in our place. And He was raised to accomplish our justification, our being declared right before God. You see, the forgiveness of sin and the righteous declaration of God are all associated with

both His death and His Resurrection. Why is that? Why is the Resurrection such a crucial part? It's because the Resurrection proved that God had accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Many of you (if your spouse hasn't already gotten to it) have money in your wallet at this point, you have paper bills. If you look on those bills, you'll see that there is a seal printed. It's the seal of the United States Department of the Treasury. Now you may not know this, but the first paper money was printed in our country in 1862. It was called greenbacks at the time, greenback currency, and it was printed to finance the Civil War. Well, to make sure that people knew that which was authentic, a seal was produced, a seal of the Treasury, the U. S. Department of the Treasury. At the time it was in Latin. Now it's in English, I guess, because of the dumbing down of our culture or something. But this seal was not printed on the bills; instead, it had to be affixed to each bill. If you go to the U. S. Department of Treasury website, you'll discover the very interesting fact that when they first started printing paper money in 1862, there were five men in the attic of the main treasury building whose primary function was to take each one of those bills that had been printed and affixed to each one this separate certificate seal. That seal was to show that the money was real, that it was acceptable currency, that it wasn't fraud, it wasn't counterfeit.

Well in the same way, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was God's stamp of approval on the sacrifice of Christ. It was God's way of saying that He would accept the death of Christ as legal tender to pay the debt that you and I could never pay, the debt we owed. God stamped the death of Christ with the Resurrection. What God did on Sunday in raising Jesus from the dead was His seal on what Christ did on Friday in dying for our sins. Charles Spurgeon wrote this of the wonderful comfort of the Resurrection to us. He said this. "God cannot"—and here we speak with reverence.

The everlasting God cannot reject the sinner who pleads the death of Christ, for if He did so, it were to deny Himself. He never can revoke that divine acceptance of

the Resurrection. And if thou goest to God, my hearer, pleading simply and only the blood of Him who did hang upon the tree, God must ungod Himself before He can reject you or reject that blood.

There's our great confidence. But if Christ is not raised, the sacrifice of Christ was not accepted, and Paul says we remain in our sins. There is no real forgiveness.

So if Christ has not been raised, Paul says there's no legitimate gospel, there's no reasonable faith, there's no reliable revelation, there's no real forgiveness, and finally, there's no eternal life. Notice verse 18: "Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." Notice the word "then." That implies that what he's about to say is the inevitable conclusion of what he's already said. Basically, let me summarize it this way. He's saying if it's true that we're still in our sins, then it must be true that those who have fallen asleep in Christ or who have died must also be in their sins. If the Corinthians were right about resurrection, then those who have died in Christ (that is, those who died believing in Christ) died still in their sins, and Paul says they have perished.

That word translated *perish* is one of Paul's favorite words. It's the end of all of those who reject Christ. To perish means to be eternally separated from God. Listen to how he uses it. First Corinthians 1:18, the message about "the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing." Second Corinthians 4:3, "If our gospel is veiled [or hidden], it is veiled to those who are perishing." And then in 2 Thessalonians 2:10, he defines those who perish as those who "did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved." It's those who haven't accepted Christ, and they will be forever perishing.

You see, Paul and the rest of the New Testament utterly rejects the idea of annihilation. You may have read—today in contemporary Christianity there's a comeback of this view that once dead, the unbeliever ceases to exist. The New Testament knows nothing of that. In fact, in Matthew

25:46, Christ Himself makes it clear when He says that those who enjoy eternal life will exist at the same time and for the same time period as those who reject the gospel. So however long eternal life is is how long those who reject the gospel will exist as well. So Paul is not saying here that those who died believing in Christ have ceased to exist. Instead, he's saying this: they're lost for good, they will be eternally separated from God. He says all of those loved ones that you have buried who were professing Christ, they're forever lost, they're forever separated from God.

Paul concludes his argument in verse 19. He says, "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied." You see, Paul is summarizing all of the negative consequences we looked at this morning. He's saying if Christ had not been raised, then the gospel has no substance, faith in Christ is worthless, God's Word and His witnesses are liars, we still live under the penalty and power of sin, and all the believers who have died are irretrievably lost, and we too will soon die and be forever separated from God. Therefore we are of all men most to be pitied.

But notice verse 20. "But now"—I love that. "But now Christ has been raised from the dead." The word "now" is not chronological, it's logical. You see, for the purpose of argument, Paul had assumed for a moment that Christ had not been raised. But now he brings us back to reality. It's not true, he says, but now Christ has been raised from the dead.

The scientists tell us that all of us dream for a period of time each night. I'm grateful I hardly ever recall my dreams. But occasionally, I have this recurring nightmare that I wake up in a cold sweat from. I arrive at a crowded auditorium five minutes before the service begins. And I discover that I'm supposed to speak, and I am utterly unprepared. Now those of you who have a fear of public speaking, you can appreciate that. But even those of you who are teachers, you can understand how disconcerting, how nightmarish that feeling is. Perhaps you have a recurring nightmare, but one that is more troubling and more unsettling. You know how wonderful it feels

when you collect your mind, and you pinch yourself, and you try to come back into reality, and you realize it's not true. It's not true! It didn't happen! And [you know] that sense of relief that floods your soul.

That's what you should feel when you get to verse twenty. "But now Christ has been raised." Welcome back to reality. It could be translated "but as a matter of fact" or "but the truth is." You see, this is Paul's point. Because Christ has been raised from the dead, all of those terrible consequences aren't true. They didn't happen, and exactly the opposite is true. The gospel is a trustworthy message of hope. Your faith in that gospel is reasonable, it's defensible, it's justifiable. All those who've taught about the Resurrection are trustworthy witnesses. They can be believed. That means the Bible you hold in your hand is God's reliable revelation. Christ's death does produce genuine, permanent forgiveness of sins. Your sins are gone. No Christian ever really dies. All who have died are now in the presence of Christ and will soon be raised in their new glorified bodies. As Christ said in John 14:19, "Because I live, you will live also."

Those five great realities are our confidence as believers. They are the foundation on which our faith and our future is built. And they're all possible because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let me ask you, if you're a believer, a follower of Jesus Christ, how can you apply what we've seen today in this passage? How can your life be transformed and different this week because of what you read? Well fortunately, Paul himself applies what we've studied. Turn to 1 Corinthians 15 and notice the last verse of the chapter. As Paul reaches the end of all that he's taught about the Resurrection of Christ and therefore our coming resurrection, the resurrection of our physical bodies from the dead, he applies it this way. Verse 58, "Therefore [in light of all of that], my beloved brethren, [here's what I want you to do] be steadfast." That is, be steadfast in your conviction of the truth of the gospel. Christ did die for our sins, and He did most certainly and assuredly rise from the dead. Be "immovable." Be immovable in your confidence that just as He was raised, you too will be raised to the new physical life. And be "always abounding in the

work of the Lord.” Be committed in this life to obedience and to service to Christ, because you know “that your [labor] is not in vain.” It's reality, so be abounding in your service.

Or perhaps this morning you know in your heart that you don't know God. You know in your heart that you've never come to the place of genuine repentance, where you've acknowledged your sin to God, and you've expressed a desire to leave it, and you've turned to Jesus Christ, and you've said He will be my Lord and my Savior, you've embraced Him as your master, you've agreed to become His disciple. How should you respond to the reality that Christ has been raised from the dead? How should you respond to the passage we've looked at this morning? Well, Paul applies the Resurrection to you as well.

I want us to turn in closing to Acts 17. Paul is on Mars Hill. He's speaking to those who rejected the concept of resurrection. But notice how he applies the Resurrection to them, verse 30. After he's told them all about the nature of God and the creative power and the majesty of God, he says in verse 30,

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, [Why?] because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, [and He] furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.

You see, if you're here this morning and you're not a believer in Jesus Christ, God has one very simple application of my message to you. And that is one word—repent. Be willing to turn from your sin, acknowledge it as an offense against God, and embrace Him and His Son as your only hope. In the Resurrection God gave you all the proof you need to obey this command. You see, here's the reality. If you don't, if you choose this morning to pass up yet another opportunity to repent of your sins and embrace Christ as your Lord and you leave this service, someday—God wants you to know—someday you will stand personally, individually before Jesus Christ, not as

your savior, but (as He says here) as your judge. What a wonderful day to turn to Christ and embrace Him, who, as the angel said that Sunday morning almost two thousand years ago, “He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.” Let's pray together.

Father, we are absolutely blown away by the reality that You have sent Your Son to die, to die in our place, to die the death we deserve, to pay a debt we could never pay; and that You raised Him from the dead as a divine act of approval, Your stamp on all that He accomplished. Lord, help us as your people, those who know You and love You, help us to be steadfast, to be immovable. Help us to be always abounding in service to You and in obedience to You, knowing that any labor we expend here is not in vain, our faith is real, because He lives we too shall live, and wherever He is we will be with Him.

And Lord, I pray this morning for someone who may have come (maybe a regular part of our church, maybe someone who's been with us a few times, maybe someone who's visiting today) but who has to admit before You they've never come to the place of true repentance, crying out to You to forgive, to cleanse them, to give them a new heart, to declare them right with You by the work of Christ. Lord, I pray that today would be the day when they would repent. Help them to see that they can embrace Jesus today as Lord and Savior, how they can stand before Him one day as Judge. Lord, I pray that You would do that work in some hearts even today. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.