

Main Idea: We learn three things about Christ’s resurrection day in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. It truly is the day that changes everything.

I. It is a day to remember (1-2).

- A. The gospel must be preached.
- B. The gospel must be received.
- C. The gospel must be cherished.

II. It is reality (3-8).

- A. Christ died (3).
 - 1. His death was for sinners.
 - 2. His death was according to the Scriptures.
 - 3. His death must be our priority concern.
- B. Christ was buried (4a).
- C. Christ was raised from the dead (4b).
 - 1. It was a historical event.
 - 2. It was a prophetic event.
- D. Christ appeared to witnesses (5-8).
 - 1. He took the initiative.
 - 2. He made Himself known to individuals and to groups.
 - 3. He wants people to know that He is alive.
 - a. Knowing the truth about Jesus is a privilege.
 - b. Knowing the truth about Jesus involves responsibility.

III. It is producing lasting results (9-11).

- A. The risen Christ reaches unlikely people (9).
- B. The risen Christ works through unlikely people (10).
 - 1. Ministry involves our effort.
 - 2. Ministry is made possible by His grace.
- C. The risen Christ deserves honor from all His people (11).

Implications: It truly is a day that changes everything.

- 1. It’s now called ‘the Lord’s Day’ (Rev 1:10).
- 2. It’s the day that prioritizes everything else we do in life (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2).
- 3. It’s the day that assures us we have a living hope (1 Peter 1:3).

Scripture Reading: Mark 16:1-8

A week ago on Thursday I had breakfast with a man who was taken captive by ISIS. I told you Agoop’s story last week. This morning I’d like you to hear him tell his own story for I recorded our conversation. You’ll have to listen carefully for there is a lot of background noise (we were eating breakfast in a room full of people). But it’s worth the effort. I particularly want you to listen to what he told the ISIS commander when, facing the reality of his impending execution, he compared Mohammed with Jesus.

[play seven minute audio; here is the final part of what he says]

“When I stood before the boss, God gave me words of wisdom and He opened my mouth to speak to him. I gave my testimony to Christ, and I told him that you are worshipping a god who is now under the dust, Mohammed. And I am sad for you because you are going to hell. But I have a living God. And then the boss commanded that I would be killed.

When they came to execute me, the boss turned his face to me and said to them, ‘Leave him. He has the light of God on his face.’ But one of his men said, ‘We will leave him, but we will leave a mark on him which is a bullet.’ He shot me and it hit me, but it was between the fingers in my feet. God was very faithful to me and I did not have a big damage in my feet.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC on 3/23/08.

One month ago something new happened. One person who was with ISIS called me. When I was kidnapped with them, he took my number. He says to me, ‘I am now living in Turkey. God appeared to me and I am now believer in God. He travels now to Germany and he is now in another area. And now he is helping them in the ministry to witness to Muslim people in camps.

God is good.”

Agoop is right, isn’t he? Today is the day that changes everything. And that’s not an exaggeration. *You are worshipping a god who is now under the dust, Mohammed. And I am sad for you because you are going to hell. But I have a living God.*

How can you say those words to a man who will decide whether you will live or die? Only if you are convinced that he does *not* decide whether you will live or die. Oh, he may end this life, but you know that this does not end your life. It merely transitions you to your eternal home in the presence of the One who secured that home for you.

The day Jesus the Christ rose from the dead and left His tomb changes everything. It even changes terrorists into ministers of the message they sought to eliminate.

This morning I want us to consider the testimony of another terrorist turned minister. This man was killing Christians before Christ entered his life, and he became a fearless preacher of the message he once hated. I’m talking about Paul, and what he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15.²

Paul wrote this letter in AD 55. He was in Ephesus at the time, and though miles away from Corinth, these dear brothers and sisters were on his heart. He’d received a visit from some members of the household of Chloe who informed him of some problems in the Corinthian church (1:11). He also received a letter from Corinth requesting counsel concerning various subjects (see 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1).

How do you help people you care about who are struggling? Here’s one way. You help them *by reminding them* of what they already know. That’s what Paul did. “I want to remind you.”³

We actually don’t find out why he offers this reminder until verse 12. It’s there we learn that some people in Corinth were saying there is *no resurrection from the dead*. The Greeks believed the body was bad, so why would it be raised after it died? It won’t be, some were saying. They probably weren’t denying the reality of *life* after death, but rather *life in a body* after death.

Is that a big deal? Is belief in the resurrection of the body a big deal? According to Paul, it sure is. He penned the longest chapter in this letter to address that question.

Our focus this morning will be on the first eleven verses, where we learn three things about Christ’s resurrection day. It truly is the day that changes everything.

I. It is a day to remember (1-2).

The account of Jesus’ resurrection is mentioned in each of the four Gospels and referenced in nearly all of the New Testament books. That should tell us something. We need to know about Christ’s resurrection, but this knowledge mustn’t get stored on a top

² It’s important to be learning new truth from the Scriptures, and God’s Word is full of yet unmined nuggets. But it’s just as important to keep going back and reflecting on and reaffirming truth we’ve already learned. And there’s no subject more vital to remember than *the resurrection of Christ*. With that in mind, let’s turn our attention to 1 Corinthians 15. Notice the first sentence: “Now, brothers, I want to *remind you*.” The writer is Paul, and the readers were the members of the church in Corinth.

³ The goal of preaching ought never be novelty, but always faithfulness. Paul is writing to *remind* his readers of something they knew very well. And what precisely is that? He says, “I want to remind you of *the gospel*.”

shelf. This is a front and center truth. But to keep it front and center, something is necessary. We need *reminders*, just like the Corinthians did.

Verse 1 “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.”

Repetition is a great teacher, especially when you’re handling great truth, and there is no greater subject than the gospel. *I want to remind you of the gospel.* The word ‘gospel’ means “good news.” But just what *is* the gospel? Paul will define the gospel in verses 3-5, but before defining it, he mentions three things we ought to be doing it.

A. The gospel must be preached. “I want to remind you of the gospel *I preached to you.*” That indeed is what Paul did, as described in Acts 18. Paul went to Corinth, entered the synagogue every Sabbath, and testified to the Jews that “Jesus was the Christ” (5). Due to opposition, Paul had to leave the synagogue, but he didn’t stop preaching the gospel. He went next door to the house of Titus Justus and kept preaching (7). In fact, one night the Lord actually spoke to Paul in a vision and said, “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city (9-10).”

And so Paul did, preaching the gospel for eighteen months in Corinth. Do you remember who first preached the message of Christ to you?

B. The gospel must be received. “Which you received and on which you have taken your stand.” Preaching the gospel is the first step, but merely hearing the gospel isn’t enough. It must be *received*. And that’s what happened. As Acts 18 records, many Corinthians, including Crispus the synagogue ruler and his household, “believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8).”

Of course, before a person can preach the truth of the gospel, he too must *receive* it, as Paul acknowledged in 1 Corinthians 11:23, “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you...” So the gospel must be preached, then received. But there’s more.

C. The gospel must be cherished. The Corinthians didn’t simply *receive* the gospel. Paul says they *took their stand on it*. They made it the foundation of their lives. That’s good, says Paul, but then he points out that a proper response to the gospel isn’t merely a *past tense* matter.

Verse 2—“By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.” Don’t rush by that little word *if*. The gospel saves people, and when a person truly has been saved by the power of the gospel, that person will *hold firmly* to it. If that person doesn’t hold firmly to it, that person has *believed in vain*, that is, he or she has exhibited a non-saving sort of faith.

“You mean not all faith is *saving* faith?” you ask.

That’s right. This verse (and others) indicates that faith without a persevering devotion to the person and work of Christ is a vain, non-saving faith.

Keep in mind that Paul had preached to these readers. He shared Christ with them. He heard them give a public testimony of their belief in Christ, yet here he offers them a sobering warning.

If you truly have been saved, then you will hold firmly to the word I preached to you. If you don’t hold on, your faith is deficient and vain.

Because I care for you I must say this as clearly as I can. There are many people sitting in churches this very moment who are convinced they are saved and heading for heaven because they have *prayed a prayer*, or *walked an aisle*, or *got baptized*, or *joined a church*. But it’s all *past tense*. They’re not *holding firmly to the gospel* in the present. They have *agreed with* the gospel, but they don’t *cherish* it. And they don’t cherish it because they don’t truly cherish *Him*.

This is serious, dear friends. It's why we need *reminders*. It's not that we forget the facts of the gospel. They're still there in our cranium, neatly tucked away, ready for Bible-trivia-pursuit when needed. But for all practical purposes, these gospel facts do not affect our lives. We don't think about them when we're closing the deal at the office, or planning this year's vacation.

Should we? Should we be thinking about Christ and His resurrection as we're living life, or is this subject matter reserved to the holiday we call Easter?

Let's allow Agoop to answer that question for us. *You are worshipping a god who is now under the dust. And I am sad for you. But I have a living God.*

Can you say that? Are you saying that? I do what I do, at work, at school, when I'm captured by ISIS, because *I have a living God.*

Now some will say, "Wait a minute. Why should what happened on a day two thousand years ago matter to me today? Isn't it just a story that Jesus' followers made up?"

That's an important question. You may be asking it today. And it brings us to our second point. First, it's a day to remember.

II. It is reality (3-8).

Listen to what the terrorist turned preacher says in verse 3. "For what I received I passed on to you." So Paul says he didn't make up the gospel. He says he received it.

Peter, James, John, and the rest of the Twelve were apostles. They saw Jesus personally, and then shared what they witnessed, first verbally, and eventually this verbal message was recorded in what we call the New Testament.

But Paul received it in a different way, as he explains in Galatians 1:12, "I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."

What precisely was this message Paul received? He tells us right here. It in essence was a four point message.

A. Christ died (3). "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

Christ died. *Christ*—that's His title, the Anointed One, the Messiah God sent into the world on a rescue mission. *Christ died*—the Living One actually stopped breathing and died. And what makes His death different from the deaths of other great religious leaders? Three things...

1. *His death was for sinners.* "Christ died *for our sins.*" Christ died in the place of sinners, that's true. But here Paul says that Christ died, not simply *for sinners*, but *for sins*, that is, for the sins that sinners have committed.

Did you ever get in trouble growing up? Did your brother or sister ever offer to take your place and experience the punishment you deserved for your transgression? Usually it's just the opposite. "I didn't do it! Don't spank me! *He* deserves it!"

One of our problems as church-goers is familiarity. We've heard it so many times that we've lost the wonder of it all.

What we're talking about right now is called the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, which means that Christ died as a *substitute* for and in the place of sinners, bearing the penalty that their sins deserve. But it's not just somebody else's sins. Paul makes it personal for the first readers.

Christ died for *our* sins. When He died on the cross He had *us* in mind, and it was *our* penalty He endured.

Amazing. Unthinkable. Yet it is the gospel truth and you find it all over the Bible.

For instance, John the Baptist said this about Jesus in John 1:29 “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” Paul declared in Galatians 1:4, “Who gave himself for our sins.” And Peter likewise affirmed in 1 Peter 2:24, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

What makes Jesus’ death unique? First, His death was for sinners.

2. *His death was according to the Scriptures.* “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” In other words, Christ’s death didn’t just happen. It was the fulfillment of a plan that God put down in writing centuries ahead of time.

Let that sink in. *Centuries.* For example, here is what the prophet Isaiah prophesied seven hundred years before Christ came in Isaiah 53:5-6: “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

So His death was for sinners, and it happened according to the Scriptures. Therefore,

3. *His death must be our priority concern.* Listen again to the beginning of verse 3, “For what I received I passed on to you *as of first importance:* that Christ died for our sins.” “First of all,” says the KJV. It doesn’t get any more basic than this. Christ died for our sins.

This truth is at the heart of Christianity. It is central to our message. We’re not talking merely about one important fact amongst many others. This is *the fact* around which everything else revolves. We as a people exist because someone died for us, and this reality affects everything we believe and do.

Let me share an example. On a dreary winter day in 1943, 903 troops and four chaplains boarded the SS Dorchester. One of the chaplains was Moody Bible Institute alumnus Lt. George Fox. World War II was in full swing, and the ship was headed across the icy North Atlantic where German U-boats lurked. At 12:00 on the morning of February 3, a German torpedo ripped into the ship. “She’s going down!” the men cried, scrambling for lifeboats.

A young GI crept up to one of the chaplains. “I’ve lost my life jacket,” he said. “Take this,” the chaplain said, handing the soldier his jacket. Before the ship sank, each chaplain gave his life jacket to another man. The heroic chaplains then linked arms and lifted their voices in prayer as the Dorchester went down. Lt. Fox and his fellow pastors were awarded posthumously the Distinguished Service Cross.⁴

So here’s a question for you. Do you think the men whose lives were saved by the sacrifices of those chaplains ever shared that story with anybody else? Do you think they told their family members and friends about the sacrifice the chaplains made for them?

Brothers and sisters, Christ died in our place. That’s why we can’t keep this message to ourselves. If we are keeping it to ourselves, it’s an indicator we’re distracted by lesser concerns. Paul said that what he received he passed on to the Corinthians, and what he passed on to them was *of first importance.*

But there’s more. As Paul defines the message he preached, he moves to point two.

B. Christ was buried (4a). “That he was buried.” Why is that detail important? Think about it. Some critics say that Jesus didn’t really die on the cross.

Years ago someone came up with the “swoon theory” that proposes that Jesus merely fainted on the cross and then resuscitated in the tomb when the cool air hit Him. You have to ignore the facts to believe such a theory. The centurion was convinced that Jesus

⁴ Today in the Word, April 1, 1992.

had died. He'd seen the blood and water pour out of His side once the Roman sword pierced Him. He'd given the report to Pilate, confirming Jesus' death. He knew that Pilate had given Joseph of Arimathea authorization to take down Jesus' body and bury it.

And that's what Joseph did (see Luke 23:53). He actually handled Jesus' lifeless body, transported it to an unused, rock hewn tomb, and placed the body on the cold, stone slab. He *buried* Jesus' body, a fact that Paul emphasizes here.

His burial confirms His death. He really died. And He really was placed in a tomb.

C. Christ was raised from the dead (4b). "That he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." This says two important things to us regarding His resurrection.

1. It was a historical event. "He was raised on the third day," says Paul. In Jewish thinking a part of a day was treated as a whole. Good Friday was the first day, Saturday was the second day, and Sunday was the third day. He was raised *on the third day*. His resurrection isn't merely some inspirational fable, as Liberal theologians suggest. It was a *historical* event.

Furthermore, as was His death, so His resurrection. This day was foretold.

2. It was a prophetic event. "He was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures*."

King David recorded these prophetic words in Psalm 16:9-10, "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay." David affirmed that God would not leave him in the grave. He also affirmed that the Lord's "Holy One" would not see decay. And He didn't.

Jesus Himself announced in Matthew 12:40, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish [a reference to Jonah 1:17], so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

The resurrection happened right on schedule, for it was a historic and prophetic event.

Is Christ's resurrection important? Absolutely. Anyone could claim that his death took care of the penalty of sin, where's the proof? A dead Savior is no help to us. If He's not able to overcome death, why would we think He could help us do the same?

But Jesus Christ did, and He can! This is the gospel message. Christ died for sinners. Christ was buried. Christ was raised from the dead.

D. Christ appeared to witnesses (5-8). "And that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."

Notice three things about Christ's post-resurrection appearances.

1. He took the initiative. Paul repeats the verb over and over. He appeared to Peter...He appeared to the Twelve...He appeared to five hundred...and so on. People didn't initiate these encounters. The risen Christ did.

2. He made Himself known to individuals and to groups. He appeared to Peter—that happened on the Sunday evening of Jesus' resurrection (Luke 24:34).

Then He appeared to *the Twelve*, a reference to the apostles, originally twelve men but minus Judas (and Thomas) when Jesus made Himself known to them that Easter Sunday evening (John 20:19-23).⁵

⁵ The designation *The Twelve* simply referred to the apostolic band, even if all twelve men weren't present, much as the designation "The Big Ten" refers to a conference that today actually has more than ten teams.

After that the Lord appeared to more than five hundred brothers, at the same time, according to Paul. This appearance is not mentioned elsewhere, but apparently it was well known even to the readers in Corinth since Paul offers no other explanation (indeed, he indicates they could verify this appearance by talking to the eye witnesses since some were still alive).

Then Jesus appeared to *James*, a reference not to the two James's who were apostles, but to the half-brother of Jesus. This James didn't believe in Jesus during His earthly ministry (John 7:5), but became a believer after His resurrection, perhaps as a result of this encounter with the resurrected Christ. James later became a key leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13).

Next Jesus appeared to *all the apostles*, and this could refer to any of several occasions (such as when Jesus appeared to Thomas and the others a week after Resurrection Sunday, in John 20:26), or the occasion of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20), or the day of Christ's ascension.⁶

And last of all, says Paul, Jesus appeared to *me*. Paul was not one of the original apostles. He did not spend three years living with Jesus, watching His life, hearing His teaching, and so on, as Peter, James, John, and the rest of the Twelve did. Paul refers to himself as "one abnormally born." The Greek word is *ektroma* and means "born out of due time." It is translated "stillborn child" in Numbers 12:12, Job 3:16, and Eccl. 6:3. It can refer to an untimely birth, an abnormal birth, even a monstrous birth. It's the word for miscarriage and even abortion.

David Prior comments, "Apparently the word was used as a term of abuse. Perhaps it had been hurled at Paul by his opponents. He was not a handsome man (2 Cor. 10:10), and they may have combined an insult to his personal appearance with a criticism of his doctrine of free grace. We can imagine such opponents declaring that, so far from being born again, Paul was an abortion."⁷

Think of the contrast. When Jesus appeared to the Twelve, it was after they had spent three years learning from Him, three years of preparation and training, and His resurrection appearances launched them into service. But when He appeared to Paul, or 'Saul' as he was known then, Saul was on his way to arrest and kill Christians. As one commentator put it, Paul's ministry "had been born without the due period of gestation."⁸ Yet the Risen Lord broke into Saul's life on that road to Damascus, and he became a new man!⁹

So Christ appeared to witnesses. What does that tell us? Something very profound...

3. *He wants people to know that He is alive.* It's true.

a. **Knowing the truth about Jesus is a privilege.** But more than that.

b. **Knowing the truth about Jesus involves responsibility.** Do you believe that Jesus Christ left His tomb and is alive today? If we do, it's because someone told us. And now we have a responsibility to tell others.

Does Jesus' resurrection matter? Craig Bloomberg hits the nail on the head, "Christianity lives or dies with the claim of Christ's resurrection. To be sure, it is possible to believe in Jesus' resurrection and not become a Christian, but without the

⁶ I am indebted to Craig Bloomberg for his insights concerning the appearances; *1 Corinthians*, p. 296.

⁷ David Prior, p. 261 (quoting Barclay, p. 145?)

⁸ Quote by George Nickelsburg, in Craig Bloomberg, p. 297.

⁹ It's worth noting that two of the people in this list did *not* believe in Jesus prior to His resurrection, that being James and Paul. Why is that significant? Some say that Jesus' resurrection was merely a story fabricated by loyal followers who simply couldn't imagine life without their leader, so they made up the story of His return from death. But the evidence says, *No way!* James and Paul certainly had no motivation to make up or add to the resurrection account!

bodily resurrection Christianity crumbles. Finding the bones of Jesus would assuredly disprove our religion!”¹⁰

And that brings us to our third point. It is a day to remember. It is reality.

III. It is producing lasting results (9-11).

Paul talks about three results in verses 9-11.

A. The risen Christ reaches unlikely people (9). “For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

Paul calls himself the *least* of the apostles.¹¹ He took it a step further in Ephesians 3:8, “Although I am *less than the least* of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

I am the least. Did Paul have a self-esteem problem? No. He just never forgot what he was, nor what changed him. He put it this way in a letter he wrote a friend:

“Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life (1 Tim. 1:13-16).”

Perhaps you’re thinking, “You don’t know what I’ve done. I’m not the Christian type.”

My friend, did you ever kill a person simply because he was a Christian? Paul did. Many times apparently. Yet the risen Christ Himself broke into his life and made him a new person.

But not only does Christ *reach* unlikely people.

B. The risen Christ works through unlikely people (10). “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.¹² No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.”

Paul loved grace. He was saved by grace, and he served by grace. If Christ has saved you, please know that He saved you so you can serve Him.

We learn from this a couple of things about ministry.

1. *Ministry involves our effort.* “I worked,” says Paul. Are you working for Christ? Not to earn His favor, but to show your gratitude for it. And of course...

2. *Ministry is made possible by His grace.* “Yet not I, but the grace of God,” said Paul. “To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me (Col. 1:29).” Oh, what a difference grace makes! In His grace the risen Christ reaches unlikely people, saves them, and transforms their lives. In His grace, Christ also works through unlikely people to reach more unlikely people.

Paul concludes in verse 11, “Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.” In other words, it’s not about the messenger. It’s about the central figure in the message we preach.

C. The risen Christ deserves honor from all His people (11). It’s all about Him.¹³

¹⁰ Craig Bloomberg, p. 308.

¹¹ We find the same word in Matthew 25:45, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the *least* of these, you did not do for me.”

¹² The words “without effect” come from the Greek word *kenos* which means ‘empty’ and ‘without result or purpose.’ It appears in 1 Corinthians 15:14, “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is *useless* and so is your faith.”

We've learned three things about Christ's resurrection day this morning. One, it is a day to remember. Two, it is reality. And three, it is producing lasting results.

Implications: It truly is a day that changes everything.

Let's talk about three implications.

1. *It's now called 'the Lord's Day'* (Rev 1:10). That's what John says in Revelation 1:10. "On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit." We often talk about *what* happened to John on the island of Patmos (the visions he received), but notice when it happened. John refers to the day as the Lord's Day. What day is that? It's Sunday, the day that Jesus rose from the dead.

Unfortunately, we often think of Sunday as the weekend, sort of the end of the weekend, but the Bible presents a different perspective. Sunday is not the end of the week, but the beginning, the first day of a new week.

And it's not a day for me, nor even a family day. The Bible calls Sunday the *Lord's Day*. Doesn't every day belong to the Lord? Yes (Rom 11:36). But this day particularly is His day, for this day is the day He did what no one else has ever done. He rose from the dead.

2. *It's the day that prioritizes everything else we do in life* (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2). For some people, Easter is a big day, and rightfully so. But for Jesus' followers, Easter occurs every week. Sunday is resurrection day, and every Sunday should be a big day.

It was for Jesus' first followers. Listen to Acts 20:7, "On the first day of the week, we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people...until midnight." What did they do on Sunday? The Christians met together to remember Christ (that's what breaking bread is all about) and learn His Word.

They did something else on Sunday, according to 1 Corinthians 16:2. "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income." Notice the pattern. Do this on the first day of *every* week.

So God has given us a day that reminds us of what His Son did for us, and that we now belong to Him. We gather on this day every week to prioritize Him for everything we will do in the six days that follow. Next week, we do it again, then again, and then again. This is the rhythm of life for the people of Jesus.

3. *It's the day that assures us we have a living hope* (1 Peter 1:3). "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" says Peter in 1 Peter 1:3. "In his great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

What do we have? A living hope. How did we obtain it? Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When did He rise from the dead? On this day, the first day of the week, Sunday.

Brothers and sisters, this is the day that assures us that we have a living hope. And every time we gather, and break bread, and open His Word, we are making a statement. We are saying, "We have hope because of what He did on this day. We exist because of Him, and for Him."

¹³ 1 Cor 8:6 "There is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came, and for whom we live."