

4/5/26

Sermon Title: The Meaning of Christ's Resurrection for Believers

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:1-26

### **The Resurrection of Christ**

<sup>1</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

<sup>2</sup> By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

<sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

<sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

<sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

<sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

<sup>8</sup> and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

<sup>11</sup> Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

### **The Resurrection of the Dead**

<sup>12</sup> But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

<sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

<sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

<sup>15</sup> More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

<sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

<sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

<sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

<sup>19</sup> If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

<sup>20</sup> But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>21</sup> For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

<sup>23</sup> But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

<sup>24</sup> Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

<sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

<sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Happy Easter!

In Christianity, we observe four major holy days—Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Among them, Easter is regarded as the greatest, as it commemorates how Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross and His resurrection, broke the power of sin and death, secured victory, and granted eternal life to all who believe.

On this day, believers gather together to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus, share fellowship, and fully rejoice in the joy of the resurrection.

You also have likely come to church today with joyful anticipation—having beautifully decorated the sanctuary and prepared a more abundant meal than usual for this special occasion.

But let me ask you something.

Why are you so interested in the fact that Jesus died and rose again some two thousand years ago?

Why do you commemorate and rejoice in His resurrection?

To be more direct and honest—do you truly rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus?

Or are you simply participating out of habit, because it is an annual church event?

My hope is that all of you would become the kind of Christians that God desires. Rather than doing things simply because you are told to, because others do them, or because it has always been tradition, I hope you will understand the true meaning behind what you do and act with conviction.

The same applies to the resurrection of Christ.

I hope you clearly understand what the resurrection of Jesus means and how it relates to you personally, and that you truly participate in its joy.

Today's passage is where the Apostle Paul explains to the believers in the Corinthian church the resurrection of Jesus and what it means for them.

The Corinthian church was established by Paul during his second missionary journey, and most of its members were Gentiles.

Paul stayed in Corinth for about a year and six months, planting the church.

Afterward, he entrusted the church to Apollos and went to Ephesus to preach the gospel.

He then traveled by ship, visited the church in Jerusalem, and returned to Antioch, thus completing his second missionary journey.

From Antioch, he began his third missionary journey, revisiting Galatia to strengthen the churches he had planted earlier, and then staying in Ephesus for two years.

While he was in Ephesus, Paul received troubling news about the Corinthian church.

There were divisions in the church caused by various issues—factions, sexual immorality, lawsuits, marriage, food sacrificed to idols, head coverings, the Lord’s Supper, spiritual gifts, the resurrection, and offerings.

Upon hearing this, Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers, addressing each issue with biblical teaching and practical guidance.

Today’s passage specifically deals with the issue of the resurrection.

Some Gentile believers in the Corinthian church were skeptical about the resurrection of the dead.

Although they believed in Jesus and attended church, they did not believe in the resurrection.

This was because they were influenced by Greek philosophical thought, which taught that once a person dies, they can never live again.

To them, Paul earnestly appeals: hold firmly to the gospel he preached and believe it, for by doing so, they will be saved.

15 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

<sup>2</sup> By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

What is the gospel that the Apostle Paul preached?

It is the good news that Jesus Christ shed His blood and died on the cross to atone for our sins, and that on the third day He rose again, overcoming the power of death.

Through this, all who believe in Him receive forgiveness of sins, are saved, and come to live eternally with Him in the kingdom of God.

The believers in Corinth heard this good news from Paul and became Christians on that foundation.

However, false teachers entered the church and taught heretical ideas instead of the gospel Paul had preached, shaking their faith.

Paul demonstrates that the claim that there is no resurrection of the dead is false by pointing to the resurrection of Jesus.

He declares that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day.

And he affirms that all of this had already been foretold in the Scriptures.

<sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

<sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

The phrase that Jesus' death and resurrection happened "according to the Scriptures" means that these were not spontaneous or accidental events, but were part of God's plan established long ago.

The Apostle Paul also proves that the resurrection of Jesus was a real, historical event by listing the witnesses who saw the risen Christ.

<sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

<sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

<sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

<sup>8</sup> and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

The Apostle Paul lists the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, beginning with Peter, then the Twelve, more than five hundred believers, Jesus' own brother James, the apostles beyond the Twelve, and finally himself.

In fact, among those who witnessed the resurrection were women—Mary Magdalene and the other women who went to the tomb with her (Joanna and Mary the mother of James).

However, Paul does not mention them, because in that time a woman's testimony did not carry legal weight.

Paul first mentions "Cephas (Peter)" as a witness of the resurrection.

This is not only because he was among the first to see the risen Jesus (aside from Mary Magdalene), but also because he was recognized as one of the most authoritative leaders in the early church.

Paul likely believed that if Peter testified to the resurrection, people would be more inclined to believe it.

James, the brother of Jesus, did not believe that his own brother was the Messiah during Jesus' lifetime.

However, after witnessing the resurrected Jesus who had overcome the power of death, he came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah and later became a leading figure of the Jerusalem church alongside Peter.

Paul then says that Jesus appeared to "all the apostles," using the term "apostles" in a broader sense, including figures such as Barnabas, Timothy, and Silas.

Finally, Paul confesses that Jesus also appeared to him, “as to one abnormally born.”

Paul had been a persecutor of those who believed in Jesus.

On his way to Damascus to arrest Christians, the risen Jesus appeared to him and said that He was Jesus of Nazareth, whom Paul was persecuting.

From that encounter, Paul’s life was completely transformed, and he began to live as a witness of Jesus Christ.

Paul testifies that even someone as unworthy as himself was changed after seeing the risen Christ, and by grace, he became an apostle.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

<sup>11</sup> Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

He then rebukes them, saying that when he preached this truth, they all believed it—so why are they now claiming that there is no resurrection of the dead?

He challenges them further: if there is no resurrection of the dead, then how could Jesus Christ have been raised?

<sup>12</sup> But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

<sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

The Apostle Paul explains the relationship between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of humanity.

His logic is that since Jesus Christ, who was fully human, died and rose again, other human beings can also be raised from the dead.

Conversely, if the dead cannot be raised, then even Jesus Christ could not have been raised.

Paul then goes on to list the tragic consequences that would follow if Christ had not been raised.

<sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

<sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

<sup>19</sup> If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. He says that our faith would be futile, we would still be in our sins, and those who have fallen asleep in Christ—believing in the resurrection—would have perished.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>20</sup> But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

<sup>21</sup> For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

This is the principle of representation.

Paul then goes on to explain the order of the resurrection: first Christ, the firstfruits, and then those who belong to Him.

<sup>23</sup> But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

Then Jesus Christ will hand over to God the Father the authority He exercised to destroy all evil powers in accomplishing the redemption of God's people.

<sup>24</sup> Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

<sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

<sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

To put under His feet means complete subjugation.

Christ, in order to redeem God's people, possesses the authority—the kingship—to completely destroy all His enemies, and He is now seated at the right hand of God exercising that authority.

At His return, after He has destroyed all evil powers, He will hand over the kingdom to God.

Beloved members of the Church of Godly Dreams,

If I were asked to summarize the Bible in one word, I would say without hesitation:  
**“Resurrection.”**

If there were no resurrection, and this life were all there is, then believing in Jesus Christ would be unnecessary.

We wouldn't need to attend church, give offerings, or worship God.

We wouldn't need to strive to live according to God's Word.

Morality, law, and ethics would be meaningless.

We could simply enjoy this life and die.

But we cannot do that—because resurrection is certain.

Jesus' resurrection proves it.

We, too, will be raised on the last day, following Jesus Christ.

We will stand before Him as the Judge.

Those who have believed in Jesus Christ, whose names are written in the Book of Life, will not face judgment but will enter God's Kingdom.

Those who have not believed will face judgment and be cast into the lake of fire.

May we firmly believe and uphold the gospel that the Apostle Paul preached, and receive salvation through it.

On this Easter Sunday, as we worship together, I pray that God's special grace of salvation will rest upon you and me.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.