

## Why is the Resurrection So Important to Christians?

What a joy it was and IS to celebrate Easter again at St. John. I say it IS a joy, because we hear about the resurrection every Sunday, not just on Easter Sunday. We hear it every Sunday because it is so vital to the Christian faith every day, not even just every Sunday. The resurrection of Jesus makes all the difference in the world, not just for Christians, but for all people. And here's why: The Bible says that Jesus is the world's Savior, that He rose from the dead for all people, so that all people's sins could be forgiven. This resurrection teaching really goes to the heart of the Bible's message. Christians are just people who realize that Jesus is their Savior. The Bible's teaching about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is communicating about God at work for the world, for each one of us. And, the world teaches wrongly today that death is natural, that when we die, that's all there is!

The teaching about Jesus' literal resurrection is a foundational teaching about what it means to be human. We were meant to live with God, indeed, to live forever with God and with those we love. The reality of Jesus' resurrection is not just a truth of the faith, it's also an offer.

Jesus' resurrection is a reality that God wants for all people. The Bible says that Jesus, is the Firstfruits of all who believe ... the first One of many who put their faith in the resurrected One Who died for them. It is also an offer from God about our life with Him. Like Jesus said, **"Because I live, you will live also"** And He meant it.

The whole Christian faith really does hinge on whether Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus told His disciples several times that He would have to suffer, He would have to die, and that He would rise again. That shows the resurrection was clearly part of God's plan. So, the Bible is very clear that Jesus was crucified for our sins, and He was raised from the dead for our justification; our forgiveness before God the Father. In other words, no resurrection, no good news of the Gospel. Or, as Paul says in 1 Cor. 15, **"If Christ had not been raised our faith is futile and we are still in our sins."**

The Bible teaches that it really happened, Jesus rose. That teaching is so vital to our faith in Him. Think about those early believers, it meant everything that Jesus talked about, everything was true. So much of what He did seemed exactly the opposite of what they thought God should do for them. And here was God in the flesh saying He had to live, and die, and rise again so that they could be forgiven and live forever with God by grace! Jesus is Who He says He is for you. He's alive forever, right here, right now; that changes how a person sees everything! Those first disciples who saw Him face to face were forever changed.

Think about the emotional rollercoaster they were on. Jesus' death had to crush them. I'm not sure we can even imagine their disappointment, their discouragement. Peter says to Jesus, **"Lord, we've left everything for you."** On Good Friday, they lost Him. But all that changed because they had seen the Lord raised from the dead just as He said.

I think it's much the same for us too. If the resurrected Lord was for them, He is for us too and that means everything. Because He is alive, we can trust in His word. Because He is alive, our greatest enemies; sin, and death, and Satan himself have been overcome. Because He is alive, we can be confident that our future is secure in Him too. Jesus'

resurrection means that we can be confident not only today but every day through faith in Him. He is the risen One Who is with us always and He's coming again to judge the living and the dead. Christ is risen ... He is risen indeed!