

Good morning! This Sunday is Easter, or as some people refer to it, Resurrection Sunday. It is Easter---not Christmas---that is the high holy day of Christianity, because Easter is the day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I have often said that there are two resurrections that truly matter to me; the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of Dave Lambert. My resurrection is coming someday, but the resurrection of Jesus has already taken place. It is the witnessed historical fact on which Christianity is based. Paul calls it “most important”. Does it matter that Jesus physically rose from the dead? Yes! Why does the physical resurrection matter so much? To answer that question, let’s take two days to consider together what Paul says about it, using passages taken from the Resurrection Chapter, 1 Cor. 15:

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.

1 Cor. 15:3-7

In this passage, Paul begins by telling us that he is giving us information that is “*most important*”. The resurrection of Jesus is not a secondary issue over which Christians may or may not agree, like baptism by sprinkling or immersion or whether to serve Communion weekly or monthly; the physical resurrection of Jesus is the central point on which Christianity is based. Christianity is not about being nice to people or going to church; it’s about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was dead and now He is (still) alive! In today’s passage, Paul tells us that Jesus’ resurrection fulfilled ancient prophecies in the scriptures and was a witnessed event. When was it witnessed? It was witnessed by Peter and then by the rest of the twelve closest disciples. But that isn’t all---Paul says it was witnessed by more than 500 people at once! When Paul wrote these words, many of those witnesses were still alive to tell about it. By the way, this wasn’t just an isolated event. Luke (Luke 1:3) tells us that “*He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.*” After He died, was buried and came back, Jesus spent the next six weeks on earth, leading seminars. This was big news in the ancient world---and it is big news today, too. Tomorrow we will look together at what this means for us but for today, take time to consider the resurrection of Jesus. He was dead but He isn’t dead now... He’s alive and doing things!