



Belong

Start the group with an opportunity for community. We want this to be a place where the body of Christ can belong.

- What is one thing you are looking forward to in the fall?
- What is one thing you are worried about going into the fall?

Start the Group in Prayer, praying specifically for those worries.

Believe

As we finished up our series “Back to the Basics”, we hit on the phrase **“I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.”**

There are two aspects to this phrase in the creed. A physical resurrection and then everlasting life. But before we can even deal with these things, it is essential that we deal with the reality of death.

- Do you live with an understanding of the reality of death? Is death something that worries you, is death something that terrifies you, or do you live with a healthy perspective of death?

- What would a healthy perspective of death even be?

So looking at this past week there were three questions asked.

1. Are the dead raised?
2. How are they raised?
3. When are they raised?

Are The Dead Raised?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-22

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. **15** We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. **20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”

What is this passage telling us? The dead are indeed raised. And we know that because Jesus has been resurrected from the dead!

A proof for God is how many people believe in life after death. In ecclesiastes 3:11 it says that “God has put eternity on our hearts”. This is why 82% of Americans believe in the afterlife (not just Christians, but Americans). It is something we all have a subconscious feeling about. It is something we all think about or even cling to.

While eternal life is a reality for all, it is only a hope-filled reality for some. For some people, this body and this world is as good as it gets. But for others, this is the worst it'll get, and eternal life will be pure bliss.

In every Christian, it is common for them to go through a season of doubt. Sometimes, we can doubt our own relationship with Jesus and therefore our eternal destination. This can be a really worrisome place to be.

- Has there ever been a season in your life where you doubted your relationship with Jesus and therefore doubted your eternal security and home? If so, what are some things you did to remind you of the truth of the gospel and of the eternal security promised through it?

How are they raised?

Paul makes it very clear that this is not the main point of the resurrection, answering the questions of what our body will look like.

But we can look to the resurrection of Jesus as an example. After Jesus was raised from the dead - he still had a body, but it was different than before. He was not recognizable at first - but then people always realized who he was after he spoke. He was different - but the same.

The scripture we are given about our body is 1 Corinthians 15:53

“53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.”

All that has been messed up and all that has been hurting will now be restored and perfect. So we don't change into angels or some different type of creature, but instead, we will still be ourselves in a perfect, imperishable body.

When are they raised?

51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

So when will the dead be raised? When will all this happen? The simple answer is: When Jesus comes again.

It's easy to get caught up in the timing and knowing when it will happen. In Matthew - Jesus says no one knows the day or the hour of the coming of the Son of Man. Look, we don't know exactly when Jesus will come back. But we do know that when he does - we will be going home with him.

Paul says it will be in the twinkling of an eye. That in a moment Jesus will come again and when he does - we will be changed.

BECOME

So what?

There are a lot of implications to the reality of a physical resurrection and the reality of eternal life. There's genuine hope that can't be shaken, because the victory has already been won through the resurrection of Jesus.

However, there is a way we are called to live *because* we live in the reality of a future resurrection and hope.

Reread verses 57 and 58

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Paul gives us three ways we are supposed to live in light of our victory:

1. Be steadfast and immovable
2. Always abound in the work of the Lord
3. Remembering your Labor is not in vain

These three commands are all based on the hope we have in eternal life.

1. First, we can be steadfast and immovable now because even the worst of the worst, death, has lost its sting. Nothing can shake us as we base our life on the rock of Jesus.
2. Then looking at the last one, again we can remember our work is not in vain because we know we are fighting for the winning team! We can't count all the costs of following Jesus as worth it knowing that we have won, and our toil on this earth isn't worthless.

- The question is what is "the work of the Lord" that Paul is calling us to here?

Let us remember that everything that Paul is referring to here is based on the eternal, so we can assume the work of the Lord is one of eternal significance as well. The only thing we can work for and towards that has eternal value is loving God and loving others. Money doesn't last, the job promotion at the end of the day, as great as it is, isn't eternal. The souls of our neighbors are.

- So, what is one way I can abound in the work of the Lord this week? What is one way I can make an eternal difference in how I treat my neighbor?