

## **The meaning of Christ's resurrection** **in our lives**

### **What does the resurrection of Christ mean to you personally?**

Asking you this question, I'm not inventing something new. It has been asked for the last two millennia. Among those who raised it, was St Paul. He put it in a different way and provided his own answers to it. Here is how he phrased his argument: "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1Cor 15: 12)

The same unbelief can be generated even today. We live surrounded with so much unbelief, the main stumbling block being, the question of the RESURRECTION. Many non-Christian people couldn't understand it, and as a result of it, they limit life only until the grave. But they are not alone in their unbelief. They have some allies in the people who count themselves as Christians but who don't believe in the resurrection. This sort of faith, in reality, lack of faith, has grave consequences on one's life morally, psychologically and spiritually. Two stories I read in a book could make this point very clear. John Buckeridge in his "100 Instant Discussion Starters" recounts the story of two different Americans regarding their decisions to freeze their bodies and brains for many centuries in the hope of getting better treatment to defeat death.

"A 47-year-old American suffering from a brain tumour wanted to put his head into cold storage for 500 years until a cure came along.

"Tom Donaldson, a computer engineer with a PhD in physics, told newspaper reporters he also plans to freeze his cat and wife in suspended animation. Cryonics is the science of freezing people- or just their heads- in liquid nitrogen after their death, in the hope that one day they can be thawed out and cured of what killed them. Legal in America, there are already scores of complete bodies and heads in the US laboratories.

"However, Donaldson wants to be alive when they cut off his head so that his brain can be frozen before it begins to deteriorate. 'I am my brain, and if that goes, there's really not much hope of reanimating me in the future,' he says. "Cryonic scientists say there is no guarantee he can be revived from suspension. But Donaldson argues, 'I've got more hope than if they put me in the ground and I turn to dust, don't I?'" (100 Instant Discussion Starters, p. 71)

Obviously, Donaldson's and his other fellow American's problem has emerged from their disbelief on the resurrection. For them, there is no life after death. Therefore, they had to live here as long as they can and they wanted it to be free from any kind of sufferings. Unfortunately, death has already been introduced because of sin, and fortunately, because of Christ's justification, it has been defeated and destroyed once for all. St Paul puts this very clearly: "It was by one man's (Adam's) offence that death came to reign over all, but how much greater the reign in life of those who receive the fullness of grace and the gift of saving justice, through the one man, Jesus Christ." (Rom 5: 17)

The deciding factor here is receiving the life Jesus has given us freely. Those who think there is no life beyond the grave cannot see the importance of belief in the resurrection of Christ. But it is this belief that makes the greatest difference in one's life. The difference is between life and death.

If there were no resurrection, all our faith in God, our belief in life after death, everything we hold as important, would have been futile. And if Christ were not resurrected, Christianity would be pointless; life, meaningless. So, the saying, "if the dead are not going to be raised, then let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall be dead" (1Cor 15: 33) would be absolutely true and even an ideal to live by.

No doubt, the person of Jesus made all the difference in the world and history. Among His great moments as a human person, His incarnation and resurrection can be held as the most remarkable and important events of His earthly life. Nevertheless, from the outset, Christ's resurrection has ever been the central message of the Christian Church throughout history.

Based on the account of **1Cor 15**, let us now see the ten consequences if Christ were not resurrected or if there were no resurrection from the dead.

**If Christ were not resurrected, then,**

1. there would not be life after death, and as a result, there would be no future for us (**vv. 14, 33**)
2. the preaching of the Apostles or the Church as a whole, would be unsubstantial (**v. 14**)
3. our faith would be for nothing (**v. 14**)
4. we would be the most unreliable testimonies and liars of all times for our false testimony (**v. 15**)
5. there would be no redemption from sin (**v. 17**)
6. the dead would be utterly lost (**v. 18**)
7. we would be total losers and the most pitiable of all people (**v. 19**)
8. baptism, and in this respect, all the sacraments, would be meaningless (**v. 29**)
9. it would mean that all our sufferings and sacrifices were carried for nothing (**vv. 30-32**)
10. our stomachs would become our gods (**v. 33**).

St Paul put this idea in a graphic way when he wrote, "They are destined to be lost; their god is the stomach; they glory in what they should think shameful, since their minds are set on earthly things" (Phil 3: 19).

Our salvation depends on our belief in the death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. St Paul wrote, "That if you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and if you believe with your heart God raised Him from the dead, then you will be saved" (Rom 10: 9).

Our belief in the death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ makes us to declare with St Paul, "Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?" (1Cor 15: 54-55)

Yes, we are Easter people and Alleluia is our song! Because of Christ's triumph over death, we have been made able to sing with the assembly of God's victorious people: "Thank God, for giving us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Amen (1Cor 15: 57).

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