

Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

Easter: Title (1 Corinthians 15:12–28)

Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- Do you have a favorite Easter tradition or memory? Share it.
- Name something you thought could never happen that did happen, or something once unheard of that’s now ordinary.
- What is your favorite movie, and does it have a happy ending or a sad ending?

Dig

After reading 1 Corinthians 15:12–28 together, discuss these questions.

1. In this chapter Paul is addressing Christians who have come to question whether God ever raises the dead. Look at the preceding context, 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 (the group might read this silently or you can have someone read it aloud). What is Paul saying there? What evidence does he give for what he says?
2. In verses 12–16, how does Paul apply his point from the beginning of the chapter? How does this address those who question whether God raises the dead?
3. Verses 16–19 lay out a stark alternative. What is it? What importance does this give to what Paul is saying in the larger discussion?
4. In verses 20–28 Paul says Christ’s resurrection makes him the “firstfruits” of our resurrection, that is, a thing that guarantees the rest, like a down payment. How does this add to the point Paul is making? What special assurance does it give to readers?
5. Verses 20–28 frame the resurrection of the dead as a key part of God’s total victory over evil. What does that tell you about God? About your place in God’s plan? About the significance of your life?

Summary: Many in Paul’s time believed the body was a limitation for human existence. But Paul knew Israel’s Scriptures taught that God created the physical universe, including human bodies, and pronounced it “very good.” So God’s plan to redeem the world means not just preserving the spirits of his people but ultimately raising their bodies from the dead. Christ’s resurrection begins that process. Christ’s followers are living a raised-from-the-dead life now and can be confident God will raise them from the dead to live together in his recreated world eternally. This addresses our deepest needs and hopes!

Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- Some think the Christian belief in God raising the dead is a matter of wishful thinking. How might this passage address that idea? (You might reflect on Pastor Bryan’s comparison of the story of Jesus’ resurrection to a “true fairy tale,” something we want to be true and is true.)

- In the New Testament, Christ's people are promised life in heaven when they die but ultimately, as in this passage, to be raised from the dead with new bodies for eternal life in the new heavens and earth. Do you think God's plan of resurrection makes a practical difference in how we view the Christian life?
- Has the assurance of resurrection from the dead ever been especially important to you? What were the circumstances that made it so?

Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
- What are some needs we can share for which God's promise of resurrection life is very important?
- Are you or someone you know dealing with discouragement? Let's pray for the good news of Christ's resurrection to be felt in the middle of that.