

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “THE NEEDFUL REMINDERS OF THE GOSPEL”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: March 29, 2026

SPEAKER: Frank/Chad

SERIES: Holy Week 2026

PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

## Family Dinner Table

### Living in Light of the Resurrection

(paraphrased from Alister McGrath's *In the Light of Victory*)

In June 1944, the Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy. Historians agree that once those bridgeheads were established, the backbone of the enemy was broken; the outcome of World War II was objectively decided. Yet, for the captive people in occupied villages, the “VE Day” celebration was still months away. They lived in a strange tension: the war was technically won, but the battles were still raging.<sup>4</sup>

Alister McGrath suggests the resurrection is our spiritual Normandy. When Christ walked out of the tomb, God established a bridgehead in a world occupied by sin and death. The “objective change” has already occurred. The enemy’s ultimate power is shattered.

We currently live in that interval between the “now and not yet” of Christ’s resurrection victory. We still feel the sting of pain and the reach of evil, but we no longer live as a defeated people. We live knowing the long night of oppression is ending. Because the resurrection happened, we don’t fight for victory; we live and labor from a victory already won. The end is certain. The light has broken through.

- If the resurrection is our ‘spiritual Normandy,’ why is it vital for our daily faith that this is a physical, historical event rather than just a symbolic or metaphorical event?
- How does knowing the ‘backbone of the enemy is broken’ change the way you handle your current battles with sin, grief, or exhaustion? Does it make your labor easier, or simply more purposeful? (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:58)

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 is, as one commentator states, “*the Gospel in miniature. The most important sentences ever written.*”<sup>1</sup> The Apostle Paul is anchoring the Corinthian church in the objective reality of the resurrection. He reminds his readers that Christ’s physical death, burial, and resurrection are the foundation upon which the church must stand. Whether preached by Paul or the other apostles, **the needful reminders of the Gospel** remain the same: the Gospel is a historical reality, a scriptural fulfillment, and a transformative power.

#### The primacy of the Gospel: Our deepest problem has been resolved! (vv. 1-4)

At the core of the Gospel are actual, historical events. Paul emphasizes that Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection happened “*in accordance with the Scriptures,*” pointing the church to God’s plan of redemption in the OT. As theologian Stephen Wellum notes, “*Christ’s death is viewed as substitutionary and vicarious, linked to God’s plan in redemptive history as evidenced by the expression ‘according to the Scriptures.’ This latter phrase is probably not intended to point to any single text, even though such texts as Isaiah 53 come immediately to mind, but rather the larger story line of the OT rooted both in typological structures and specific verbal predictions, which ultimately finds its climax and fulfillment in the saving work of Messiah Jesus.*”<sup>2</sup> By dying for our sins and rising again, Christ fulfilled the everlasting covenant, solving the problem of our separation from God through a substitutionary sacrifice.

- This early confession, “*Christ died for our sins...was buried...and raised on the third day*” (vv. 3-4), concisely expresses key articles of faith for the church. In his letter to the Romans, Paul unpacks these truths further. Read Romans 6:6-11. How has our deepest problem been resolved? (cf. Colossians 2:12-15)
- Read Luke 8:4-15. How does the *Parable of the Sower* shed light on verse 2 and what it means to “*believe in vain?*” (cf. Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)

#### The proof of the Gospel: Our greatest enemy has been conquered! (vv. 5-8)

The proof of the Gospel are the eyewitness testimonies to the risen Christ. Just as a lawsuit relies on witnesses to establish facts, Paul lists a “cloud of witnesses”: Cephas, the Twelve, five hundred brothers, James, and finally, Paul himself. Because Christ lives, death—our greatest enemy—has been defeated. If the resurrection is a historical fact, then the Gospel is an unshakable truth.

- Paul insists that the resurrection is the foundation of our faith. Read Romans 6:4-5 and 1 Peter 1:3-4. How do these passages shift the resurrection from being just a ‘historical fact’ to a ‘living power’? Specifically, what do we gain today (Romans 6) and what do we look forward to (1 Peter 1) because the tomb is empty?

#### The power of the Gospel: Our lives are transformed by God’s amazing and empowering grace! (vv. 9-11)

Paul’s own life serves as the ultimate exhibit of Gospel power. Once a persecutor of the church, he is transformed into its greatest missionary. God’s amazing grace enables sinners to live according to the power of the Gospel. Wellum states, “*God reached down to him and took the initiative from beginning to end—an example for Paul of nothing less than God’s sovereign electing grace. And this grace, Paul stresses, did not lead to laziness of life, rather it had the effect of leading him to work harder than the rest of the apostles (v. 10).*”<sup>3</sup> God’s grace doesn’t just forgive us; it fuels us. It takes the “unworthy” and makes them instruments of God’s glory.

- In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul commands us to ‘work out’ our salvation, yet in 1 Corinthians 15:10, he credits his entire ministry to the ‘grace of God’ within him. How do we distinguish between “working for” our salvation (which is impossible) and “working because of” God’s grace?
- Read Romans 3:21-26. If the declaration of our righteousness is built entirely upon Christ’s ‘one act’ and his sacrifice, discuss how this sets us free from the burden of trying to earn God’s favor through our own efforts.

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Wilson. *1 Corinthians for You*. 2021, London, The Good Book Company. 166

<sup>2-3</sup> Stephen J. Wellum. *Christ’s Resurrection and Ours*. Fall 2002, Southern Baptist Journal of Theology. <https://www.galaxie.com/article/sbjt06-3-06>

<sup>4</sup> Alister McGrath. *In the Light of Victory*, from *The Bread and the Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter*. 2003, Walden, NY. Plough Publishing House. 275

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