

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“RESURRECTION REALITIES”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: April 5, 2026

SPEAKER: Brian/Wil

SERIES: Holy Week 2026

PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:20–26

Family Dinner Table

Easter commemorates the turning point for the cosmos: Jesus' victory over death. Christ's resurrection inaugurates the Great Reversal of Genesis 3. In 1 Corinthians 15:20–26, Paul highlights the **resurrection realities** of God reclaiming and restoring all of creation through the authoritative reign of his Son. Alister McGrath offers this striking summary of the Easter message: “*The Creator becomes a creature within his own creation, in order to recreate it. In the aftermath of Gethsemane, we catch the fragrance of Eden. Jesus was betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane, in order to undo the disobedience of human nature within the garden of Eden. The resurrection is the first day of a new creation.*”¹

The resurrection is a reality (vv. 20, 23)

Paul describes Christ's resurrection from the dead as the “*firstfruits*” of a new creation. Andrew Wilson unpacks Paul's OT metaphor: “*Firstfruits, as the name implies, were the first crop to emerge every year, and they were given as an offering to God—but they were also celebrated, because they served as a guarantee that the rest of the crop was coming.*”² By labeling Christ the “*firstfruits*,” Paul establishes a definitive timeline: the harvest has officially begun, and those who are in Christ will eventually be gathered in.

- Read Leviticus 23:9–14. How does the Old Testament requirement of offering the firstfruits of the harvest help you better understand Paul's metaphor of Jesus being the first to rise from the dead?
- Read Romans 8:22–23. Contrast the “*groaning*” of the present world with the certain hope found in Romans 8, focusing on how the resurrection reality redefines current suffering.

The resurrection is a remedy (vv. 21–22)

The resurrection is the divine remedy to sin and death. In verses 21–22, Paul frames the human condition through the lens of “*federal headship*.” Just as Adam's disobedience brought the sentence of death to all humanity, Christ's resurrection brings life to all who believe. Wilson writes, “*There is federal logic at work here. All of us are united to a federal head, whether Adam (through our shared humanity) or Christ (through our faith in him). If we are in Adam, through whom death came, we will die; if we are in Christ, through whom the resurrection came, we will be made alive.*”³

- How does understanding your legal and spiritual union with Christ (being “*made alive*” in him) affect your identity when you feel weighed down by your own failures?

The resurrection is a victory (vv. 24–26)

The resurrection is the ultimate declaration of victory over every competing power. In verses 24–26, Paul reveals a King who must reign until he has toppled every rule, authority, and power, bringing them into total subjection under his feet. This cosmic takeover offers us an unshakable hope: the final enemy to be destroyed is death itself. As Kim Riddlebarger concludes, “*On the first Easter Sunday, Jesus defeated death and the grave, he destroyed our last and greatest enemy as death itself was vanquished, the new creation dawned, and we enter the final period of human history, awaiting our Lord's return when all things are put in subjection under his feet. He is risen! He is risen indeed!*”⁴

- Read Psalm 110:1–2 (which Paul is quoting). Since Christ is currently reigning, how does this truth help you navigate the competing powers or chaotic news cycles of our current world?
- Read Colossians 1:15–20. How does Jesus' identity as the Creator of “*all things*” clarify why his resurrection is the necessary remedy and victory mentioned in today's passage? In what way does his “*preeminence*” ensure that death is not just delayed, but legally and cosmically defeated?

Death, Thou Shalt Die

The Apostle Paul concludes 1 Corinthians 15 with a taunt about the coming final defeat of death and sin, “*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*” (v. 55). He references Hosea 13:14b, where the sin of Israel is great, but not greater than God's power to redeem. In the Hosea 13 passage, it is God who mocks death and the grave as defeated foes: “*O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting?*”

You may be familiar with *Holy Sonnet 10* written by 16th century poet and cleric John Donne who also scoffs at death:

*Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must
flow,*

*And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.*

*Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate
men,*

*And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally*

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Because Christ has risen as the firstfruits of a new creation, death has been demoted from an inescapable tyrant to a mere “*short sleep*.”

- Read Revelation 21:3–4. In what ways does this future promise that God will dwell with his people and remove death, mourning, and pain reshape how you can face death as only a “*short sleep*”?

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¹ Alister McGrath. *In the Light of Victory*, from *The Bread and the Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter*. 2003, Walden, NY. Plough Publishing House. 272

²⁻³ Andrew Wilson. *1 Corinthians for You*. 2021, UK. The Good Book Company. 172

⁴ Kim Riddlebarger. *Christ Has Been Raised!* The Riddleblog. 3/24/25. <https://www.kimriddlebarger.com/the-riddleblog/christ-has-been-raised-a-new-episode-of-the-blest-hope-is-posted-1-corinthians-1520-34?rq=easter>