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## The Sunday School Lesson

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 1950

### THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION Easter Lesson

**Golden Text.**—Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 15: 57.

**Lesson Text.**—1 Cor. 15: 1-8, 20-21, 57-58.

**Exposition.**—I. The Gospel Paul Preached, 1-4.

These verses give a remarkably clear and full statement of the Gospel which Paul preached and the Gospel by which believers are saved (Rom. 1: 16). Gospel means "glad tidings" or good news. There were three parts to the Good News. (1) "That Christ died for our sins" and thus made perfect atonement (Gal. 3: 13; 2 Cor. 5: 21; Isa. 53: 6; 1 Pet. 2: 24). On the ground of the perfect atonement thus made, any one who believes in and receives the One who made the atonement, at once receives forgiveness for all his sins and is justified from all things and obtains eternal life (Ac. 10: 43; 13: 38, 39; Jno. 3: 15, 36). (2) "That He was buried." He was buried as our representative and we were buried with Him. In His burial our sins are buried, our old self is buried, and the way is open for us to be raised to an entirely new life (Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 11, 12; 3: 3). The burial of Christ is not merely incidental to His death but an essential and deeply significant part of the Gospel. (3) "He hath been raised" (v. 4). That is a fact and it is a fact full of meaning. It proves His Deity (Rom. 1: 4), that God has accepted the atonement which He made (Rom. 4: 25) that we shall rise also and have no longer a mere speculative hope of immortality but a certain hope, resting upon a solid fact (2 Cor. 4: 14; 1 Thes. 4: 14); it presents to us a Saviour who not only saves from the guilt of sin by His atoning death, but from the power of sin also by His resurrection life (Rom. 6: 4, 11-13; 7: 4; 5: 10; Heb. 7: 15). All believers are identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (2 Cor. 5: 14; Rom. 6: 1, 2, 4; Eph. 2: 5, 6).

**II. The Certainty of the Fact of the Resurrection, 5-8.**

Paul proceeds to give some of the conclusive proofs of the third part of the Good Tidings. He does not give all the instances in which Christ appears to people after the resurrection, but leading and typical instances, quite enough to prove the fact of His resurrection beyond the possibility of honest doubt. The First Epistle to the Corinthians is one of the epistles of which the Pauline authorship has never been denied, even by rationalistic critics. It is admitted by all that Paul wrote this book. This testimony therefore has very great weight. Peter's own testimony of the resurrection of Christ is found in his epistles (1 Pet. 1: 3). Notes especially Paul's statement about the appearance to the 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part were still living at the time Paul wrote. Either then Jesus had risen or else Paul was the most conscienceless liar. But men do not give up every earthly ambition and prospect as Paul did for a lie, and endure 30 to 35 years of hardships and untiring toil, and finally die for a lie. Moreover, if it were a lie, it was a lie that could easily be proven to be a lie at that time. It is then simply impossible for it to be a lie. If then anything can be proven by testimony, it is proven that Jesus arose from the dead. If that is proven, the whole system of Christian doctrine and all the miracles go with it.

**III. Christian Hope, 20-22.**

Our Lord's resurrection from the dead is the pledge and earnest of all Christian hope. That it should be the corner-stone of Christian doctrine strikes at the root of all religious theories which ignore the miraculous and supernatural in Christianity. When Paul says "by man" he refers to Christ; only taking advantage of the fact that since the Son of God incarnate is become a proper man, it is permitted to regard the power of salvation as included in humanity itself. Both the Adam and Christ are in us: the Adam with his "offence," the Christ with His gift of righteousness. And we have to choose between them. Yielding to the Adam, we die; but reign in life through Christ.

**IV. Christian Victory, 57, 58.**

Paul brings his great exposition of the doctrine of the resurrection to a close with a song of triumph and a call to service. God, he declares, gives us the victory over sin, over the law, over death, and the victory is achieved through our Lord Jesus Christ. Even for believers, death has a partial sting inasmuch as our bodies are under its power. The sting of this universal enemy is sin; but with sin abolished there can be no sting, no defeat at the hands of death. It is swallowed up in victory. What is the conclusion of the whole matter? That we should be "steadfast," that is settled in our faith and character, knowing that our labor will have a full and sure reward.

To be steadfast is the opposite of being undependable. It is character we must have in the face of circumstances that seem to test our faith (1 Pet. 5: 7-9). "Unmovable"

means not to be moved from faith in our resurrection. Let the skeptics who deny the resurrection howl and rage, we should not be moved. God has given abundant proof of reasonable grounds for belief in Christ's resurrection and therefore in our own. Note the practical end of this doctrinal argument—"abound in the work of the Lord." Christian service is the best answer to doubt (Rom. 12: 1, 2).

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