

Truth Matters: Is Heaven for Real?

Wylie United Methodist Church

Pastor Jeff Hatcher – April 24, 2011 (Easter)

1 Cor 15:12-22,32

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23-31... 32 ... If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

I believe in the resurrection because...

1. JESUS WAS CONFIRMED DEAD

John 19:33-37 (Apostle John's eyewitness account at the cross)

33 When they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. 36 These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken,"

37 and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

I believe in the resurrection because...

2. STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY

Matt 27:59-60

59 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.

I believe in the resurrection because...

3. GUARDS WERE NO SISSIES

Matt 28:4

The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

I believe in the resurrection because...

4. TOMB WAS EMPTY

The body of Christ paraded through the streets would have been the fastest and most effective way to disprove Christianity (yet it never happened)

I believe in the resurrection because...

5. OVER 500 EYEWITNESS TESTIMONIES

1 Cor 15:3-8 (Paul attests to the resurrection)

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

I believe in the resurrection because...

6. THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS DIFFER

If the resurrection was a manufactured story, don't you think that the authors would have been more consistent in their versions?

I believe in the resurrection because...

7. LIVES WERE TRANSFORMED

The Bible reveals embarrassing accounts of disciples

From scared children, to courageous disciples dying for their faith

"Jesus gave His life away so that He could be with you."