



grow groups

Valley Ranch
BAPTIST CHURCH

Week 4: Faithful to Raise the Dead

1 Corinthians 15:35-58

GOAL: To have confidence in God's promise of resurrection for all Christians.

CHECKLIST

- Check in with your new Inreach Coordinator to learn more about their role, and how they can support you as you lead your group. Invite them to share about their role in your group this week.
- Prepare for your group meeting by praying for yourself and your group (feel free to use the prayer below) and reading through this Leader's Guide.
- If you have not yet signed up for your group to serve with Building for the Better, find the date that works best and have them sign up during your group meeting.
- Take attendance in Planning Center, including guests/new members. Help new members register for your group using the QR code in your room or at vrbc.net/grow.

PREPARING THROUGH PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of eternal life for those who follow you. We rejoice in the promise that one day you will return, raise us to new life, and physically dwell among us. Empower us, Holy Spirit, to live with purpose and intentionality, recognizing our calling and the urgency to do your Kingdom work. Grant us wisdom to prioritize your kingdom in all aspects of our lives—our relationships, our work, our stewardship of resources, and our pursuit of holiness. Lord, we surrender our lives to you, asking that you mold us into vessels that reflect the transformative power of the resurrection. May our words and actions be a testimony to your grace, pointing others toward the hope found in Jesus Christ. In your name I pray, Amen.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

CONNECT

- Use this time to connect with your group relationally - both formally and informally.
- Invite your group to share one way that they have seen God at work in the past week, and one way they're praying for God to move in the week to come. (If you would like for your new Inreach Coordinator to help record and share prayer requests, invite them to take notes as everyone shares.)
- Spend time praying for your group members and for your time together today, including any praises or prayer requests from your previous conversation.

COORDINATE

Spend a few minutes covering any details the group needs to know:

- Choose a date for your group to serve with Building for the Better. This year, you cannot sign up for spots in bulk. You will need to ask each participating group member to sign up themselves for the date that your group selects.
- If you haven't already, introduce your Inreach Coordinator to the group, and invite them to share about their role.

DISCUSS

- What stood out to you from the Growth Guide readings this week as we focused on the hope of resurrection? How did the Holy Spirit speak to you in your times of reading and reflection?

Leaders Note: *We're asking a question like this each week as a way of encouraging people to spend time regularly reading and reflecting on God's Word, and to give them an opportunity to share how God is speaking to them and process it together. You can help this to be a fruitful conversation by reminding your group members to bring their Growth Guide with them to your meeting so they can refer to their notes, and by leading the way in sharing.*

- What did you hear in Amy's sermon that excited you, or maybe you hadn't thought about before?
- In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul highlights the future promise of resurrection for Christians. How does the assurance of resurrection demonstrate God's faithfulness?

Leaders Note: *Not only can we trust that God is faithful in our lifespan, but this passage shows us that God's faithfulness extends even beyond that! Here are a few areas where God's faithfulness shines through in the resurrection:*

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- **Promise of eternal life** - Throughout salvation history, God has promised eternal life to those who trust in Jesus. The resurrection is the ultimate fulfillment of these promises. God is faithful to his word and we can be assured of eternal life with God.
- **Triumph over sin and death** - By raising believers to new life, God fulfills His promise to redeem and restore that which was broken by sin. The resurrection showcases God's commitment to bringing ultimate healing and wholeness to His creation..
- **Fellowship with God** - The promise of resurrection underscores God's faithfulness in maintaining an intimate relationship with his people. It assures us that death does not sever our connection with God but, instead, transforms it into an everlasting communion.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:35-49.

- What questions or doubts about the resurrection does Paul address in this passage? If Paul were addressing people today in our own community, what questions or doubts do you think they might have?

Leaders Note: For the Corinthians, Paul is addressing these doubts and questions:

- **Verse 35: How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?** The Corinthians thought that the soul was immortal and would escape the body, which they believed to be evil and corrupt. They knew that dead bodies were subject to decay, and they were horrified at the thought of these dead and decaying bodies coming to life.
- **Verses 50-53: What about those who have already died?** Early Christians expected Jesus to return within their lifetimes. Since some of them had already died when Paul was writing to the Corinthian church, before Christ's return, he assures them that God will transform Christians both living and deceased, and give them a body that is fit for the resurrection.

Let your group explore any modern-day questions or doubts about the resurrection, and protect them from any negative feedback that may arise in the group. Our groups should be a safe space to express questions or doubt, while also digging into God's word to have our faith affirmed and encouraged. Like the father in Mark 9:24, we can honestly say to God and to our group, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

- What analogies does Paul use? What do these tell us about the transformation we will experience in the resurrection?

Leaders Note: Paul uses the analogies of a seed, different kinds of animals, celestial beings, and the contrast between the natural and spiritual bodies. Through these analogies, Paul shows that transformation in the resurrection is not merely a continuation of our current state but a radical change into something new, glorious, and empowered by the Spirit.

- **The Analogy of a Seed (Verses 36-38):** Paul compares the human body to a seed that is sown in the ground. The seed undergoes a transformation, resulting in a new and different form – a plant. There is continuity—the plant is the same species as the seed. But the plant is much

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- *more glorious and useful. Similarly, our physical bodies, when sown in death, will be transformed into a new, imperishable form in the resurrection.*
 - **The Analogy of Different Kinds of Bodies (Verses 39-41):** *Paul talks about how humans, animals, birds, and fish all have different kinds of bodies. And sun, moon, and stars differ from one another too. Each is uniquely made for a different kind of environment. This diversity illustrates that the resurrected body will be suited for its new existence.*
 - **The Analogy of the Natural and the Spiritual (Verses 42-49):** *Paul contrasts the first earthly man, Adam, with the first heavenly man, Christ. Adam was the prototype for the earthly body, which is perishable and subject to earthly limitations. Similarly, Christ is the prototype for the spiritual body, which is imperishable, glorious, and powerful.*
- **Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-57.** What is the significance of Jesus' resurrection in providing victory over sin and death? How does Jesus' triumph over sin and death give you hope?

Leader's Note: *Scripture tells us that the "wages" or natural consequence of our sin is death. Ever since the fall, humans have had a limited lifespan and our bodies have been subject to limitations, illness, and death. Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate victory over death. Death no longer the last word over believers. It is not the end. In Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, he took on our punishment for sin and died on our behalf.*

On that first Easter morning, God's power over sin and death began to undo the effects of sin and death as Jesus inaugurated God's Kingdom on earth. Christians no longer have to offer sacrifices to atone for our sins. The price has already been paid on the cross. Believers are set free from the guilt and condemnation of sin through Christ's redemptive work. On top of that, Jesus left us with the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us to resist temptation and to show us how to live like Jesus.

But the full and final victory over sin and death will come when Jesus returns. At that time, Jesus's victory will be fully manifest, the power of sin and death will be completely undone, and those of us who follow Jesus will experience resurrection and life with God in the new heaven and new earth.

Believers can face the reality of death (for ourselves or for our brothers and sisters in Christ) with hope and confidence, knowing that the power of death has been overcome by Jesus' resurrection. We no longer need to fear death, because Jesus has promised us eternal life and resurrection.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58.

- What does Paul mean by "Stand firm. Let nothing move you"? Share examples of how the hope of resurrection has brought you comfort or strength in challenging situations.

Leader's Note: *The phrase "stand firm" implies a resolute and unyielding posture in the face of challenges. Paul is encouraging the Corinthian believers to remain steady and unshaken in their faith. Here are a few examples of how the resurrection might bring comfort or strength:*

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- **Facing Illness:** For those who are battling illness, it can provide comfort and courage knowing that their suffering is temporary and that they can look forward to eternal life in an imperishable body.
 - **Perseverance in Serving Others:** By serving others who are going through difficult times, we give them a glimpse of the abundant life that Christ offers and the glorious future that awaits those who follow Jesus. When we struggle with the motivation to share God's love and truth with others, we can remember what a profound difference it makes, not only in this life but in the life to come.
 - **Enduring Hardship for the Sake of the Gospel:** When we face opposition for our faith, the hope of resurrection becomes a source of strength. We can stand firm in our convictions, knowing that the ultimate victory belongs to Christ and that our commitment to him will be rewarded in the resurrection.
- Paul concludes with a call to give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord. How does living with the reality of eternity in mind influence our daily choices and priorities?

Leaders Note: *The anticipation of our future resurrection can greatly affect our lives in the present, including in the following ways:*

- **Sense of Purpose:** *Recognizing that life is not confined to the present moment, we seek to align our actions with the eternal values and purposes outlined in God's Word.*
- **Investment in Kingdom Work:** *Knowing that our labor in the Lord is not in vain encourages us to focus on activities that contribute to God's kingdom. We are motivated to engage in acts of love, service, and evangelism, investing our time and resources in activities that have eternal significance.*
- **Generosity:** *The promise of a glorious eternity diminishes the importance of material possessions in this life. The hope of resurrection helps us recognize that true treasure lies in heavenly rewards rather than earthly possessions.*
- **Relationships:** *One day, we will enjoy unending fellowship with God and with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Knowing this, we are more likely to treat one another now with God's grace, love, and forgiveness. We are more likely to value and pursue unity and reconciliation.*
- **Pursuing Transformation:** *Paul's description of the resurrection gives us a beautiful and compelling vision of the transformation we will experience. As we look forward to that final transformation, we experience a greater desire to live a life now that honors God and reflects God's character.*
- **Hope in Uncertain Times:** *When we face uncertainty, such as changes, challenges, or even death, we can find hope knowing that God holds our future in his hands. As we follow Jesus, we can have peace and confidence in God's sovereign plan, knowing that God is working all things for our good.*

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PRAYER

Leaders: *As we close, please lead your group through these three opportunities for prayer.*

- 1. First, invite your group to voice prayers of thanksgiving for the promise of a future resurrection for those who are in Christ.*
- 2. Next, in light of the promised resurrection, let's ask God to help us to be steadfast in our faith and diligent in our Kingdom work during this life.*
- 3. In the third section, give your group members an opportunity to pray silently for those who do not yet know Christ and thus do not have the hope of resurrection.*

Please close your time of prayer by reading this Scripture as a final benediction:

"Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:20-21 (NIV)

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