

Episode: Heart of the Gospel Series No. 01

Narrator: Mary Magdalene

Primary Scriptures: John 20:11-18; 1 Corinthians 15:3-19

Story Summary: The resurrection of Jesus is the key tenet of Christianity

Location: Israel

Time: circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: John 20:18; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

1 Corinthians 15:3 begins with the startling claim by Paul that he is about to say the most important thing. Not something that is important, or kind of important, but the thing of very first importance. One Bible translation calls it “the heart of the Gospel.” Then, Paul says something so...familiar...to Christians: Jesus died for our sins, was raised from the dead, and a lot of people saw him.

In the verses following that statement, Paul goes on to emphasize the overwhelming importance of the reality of Jesus’s resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15:17-19, Paul says that if Jesus’s resurrection isn’t real, the faith of Christians is futile and they are to be pitied above all people.

This chapter of 1 Corinthians is toward the end of the letter. In the preceding 14 chapters, Paul tries to impart basic knowledge to the Corinthians so they can address their many problems. Chapter 15 is the final foundational piece. It’s as if Paul is saying that if they get this right, everything else will fall into place.

Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important? Why is it the foundation of the Christian faith? 1 Corinthians 15 offers at least two key reasons.

The resurrection of Jesus is confirmation that Jesus is the Son of God. That is why Paul goes to so much trouble to tell how many people saw Jesus after his resurrection, and to show that many of those witnesses were still alive and available for cross-examination. In that time, eyewitnesses established what was fact and what wasn’t.

Because Jesus is the Son of God, he has the ability to be the perfect sacrifice that suffices to pay for the sins of all his followers for all time.

Another key reason the resurrection of Jesus is important is because it shows Jesus has defeated death. If Jesus is resurrected from the dead, then the followers of Jesus will be resurrected from death, too. Paul insists that belief in the resurrection gives Christians the ability to continue to be faithful through hard times. In Paul’s time, hard times meant physical persecution, loss of jobs and family, and public ridicule.

In modern chaotic times, it’s easy for Christians to get distracted by many things. It’s important to remember the foundation of 1 Corinthians 15:3-4: Jesus died for our sins, he was resurrected from the dead, and he ascended to Heaven where he sits at the right hand of God.