

# Sermon: Gibsonburg

Robert Theis: 2026-04-12

## Introduction:

Hello. My name is Robert Theis. Thank you for allowing me to share with you today. It is a privilege to get to share God's word.

Today I would like to address two topics.

The first being, why was the resurrection important? Since last week was Easter Sunday, I figured it would be fun to look at 1 Corinthians when the Apostle Paul addresses the resurrection and faith.

The second topic is realizing, as a Christian, it is OK not having all the answers.

Before we start, let us pray:

Lord, thank you for allowing us to meet today and have fellowship. Please be with all those on our prayer lists, lift them up and help them in their struggles. Please bless us with discernment as we read your word. Thank you for all you do and all you provide. In Jesus name, AMEN.

## Scripture:

Let us start with the reading of scripture and looking at the context surrounding Paul's letter:

### 1 Corinthians 15:12–14 (ESV)

12. Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
13. But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.
14. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

## Context:

Some background leading to the Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians.

Corinth was at the heart of a trade route, having a large amount of shipping and commerce passing through its gates and through its harbors. Because of this, a lot of people passed through the city, and with that, so did a lot of sin.

Plato, the Greek Philosopher, used the term "Corinthian woman" to refer to a prostitute, and Aristophanes, the playwright born in 445 BC, used the term "to act like a Corinthian" to refer to someone who was sexually immoral.

A temple of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, overlooked the city.

Paul stayed in Corinth for nearly 18 months, establishing a church, before moving on. Because of the location and traffic going through Corinth, the church had a very diverse group of people and allowed God's word to spread to the surrounding areas.

It's always important to remember the context of scripture, where and when it was written and who wrote it. Thinking about the church in Corinth and its people struggling with sin, it reminds me of similar struggles we have today. We have an abundance of sinful behavior going on all around us, and social media and the internet provides an ease of access to act on any number of sinful desires. Not much has changed.

After Paul left, the church and its people struggled. After hearing this, Paul wrote letters to the church to address some

of these issues. Since much of the church were gentiles, many of them would have been unfamiliar with Jewish teachings, so Paul takes this into account when addressing the church.

The Greek influence is likely what led to the confusion in his church, which coincides with one of the topics for today, the denial of the bodily resurrection.

### The Journey:

Studying scripture and reading about Corinth, it is easy to see that people 2000 years ago struggled with the same sins that we do today! It makes me think of two things:

The first being when non-believers ask, "Why do you follow a book that was written thousands of years ago?"

We can reply by saying, "Because God's Word is TRUTH and we are still committing the same sinful acts that they did thousands of years ago!"

The second being that I'm really grateful that God is patient. If He wasn't, then all of us would be in trouble!

### The Topics:

Getting back to our two topics, being OK not having all the answers and the resurrection.

As I was thinking about these two topics, a recent conversation I had with Pastor Nick came to mind and I thought, "I know how to share while also adding a little silliness to my Google Slides."

Since my voice can be a little monotone, I like to spruce up my slides to keep people's attention. With that, I introduce you to, "Robert the Hobbit."

After the Lenten service here in Gibsonburg, I was talking to Pastor Nick, and we got on the topic of the Lord of the Rings. My wife and I had just rewatched the movies after nearly a decade.

If you have ever watched those movies, you know it starts with a few hobbits in the shire. Those hobbits were a little less wise, a little naïve, and they start their journey thinking they have things figured out.

Over the next nine and a half hours, they walk and walk and walk, and FINALLY reach their destination. During the journey, they learn humility and grow in understanding.

As I was preparing to talk about 1 Corinthians, it reminded me of when I became a Christian and was asked, "Why is the resurrection important?"

This question left me realizing, as Christians, we do not need to know the answer to every question, and not knowing something gives us the opportunity to learn and grow in our faith.

### Robert the Hobbit:

As I was thinking about growing in faith and learning along the way, it reminded me of a study I had read about a year or two ago. It is called "The Dunning-Kruger Effect."

Have any of you found, when talking to people about a topic, that those with less knowledge about a topic tend to talk with a lot of confidence? I find this to be the case with politics and religion.

The Dunning-Kruger effect documented this. Two psychologists named Dunning and Kruger conducted experiments using humor, grammar and logic, and the findings showed that the least

skilled and knowledgeable participants rated themselves highest. As people increased in skill and knowledge, their confidence went down, eventually working its way back up as they continued to grow.

It reminds me of the saying, "The more you know, the more you realize you do not know."

Seeing this graph and the results, I found myself following the path as I grew in faith.

I came to faith late in life, in my early 40's. Prior to becoming Christian, I very much fell into the that "I know everything" spot.

Once the Holy Spirit softened my heart and the Lord humbled me, I fell into that "There's more to this than I thought."

Once I came to faith, I was very much in that, "I'm never going to understand this." As I continue to progress through seminary, I still find myself falling into this spot.

It was during my first few years that someone asked me, "Why is the resurrection important?"

At the time, I had a few answers, most of which involved talking about sin. How Jesus paid for our sin. How, because of sin, we need a savior. How the wages of sin is death.

1 Peter 3:15 tells us, "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." Knowing this, I felt I understood things well enough where I could provide answers.

But the person then asked, "I get that Jesus is your savior and He paid the debt for your sin, but why is it important that he was resurrected? Couldn't He have just stayed dead?"

I remember when that was asked, I moved somewhere between "imposter syndrome" and "valley of despair." At the time, I did not know how to answer. If Jesus died on the cross and paid our debt, why was the resurrection necessary?

The Apostle Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised, then our faith is in vain." Here I am, claiming to be Christian, knowing I should have a defense for my faith, yet I did not know the answer to his question.

It left me in that "valley of despair." Did I know anything???

### The Answer, 1 Peter:

So, what have I learned since that time and how would I answer that question today?

First, I'd like to address 1 Peter 3:15, "Be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."

When I was new to faith, I took that as saying we needed to know an answer to EVERY question a non-believer would ask!

The fact that I could not answer my friend's question tripped me up and I thought I was failing what it tells us to do in 1 Peter.

Fast forward to today, I know that's not what 1 Peter is saying. 1 Peter is not calling us all to be apologists or theologians, but it is calling us to be able to explain why we are Christian.

That might be something as simple as being able to share our testimony. Sharing the effect Christ has had in our lives. It took

me a little while to realize, no matter how much truth we share with someone, it's not up to us to change a person's heart, that is God's.

When my friend was questioning me, although I did not know the answer to his exact question, I would have been able to share the following:

1. God **IS** real.
2. God **IS** the standard of goodness and morality.
3. God **IS** love, but He **IS** also just. Because He is **JUST**, my sin brings a debt I cannot pay.
4. And Jesus paid that debt so I may have life.

So, despite not having an answer to every question, that was OK. I was able to share the hope I have in me, and that hope is Jesus Christ.

#### The Answer, Resurrection:

Regarding the resurrection, how would I answer that question today? The resurrection is essential for a great many reasons, a few of which may have been discussed leading up to and during Easter. I want to conclude by sharing these points, which I would share with my friend today:

Scripture tells us that the wages of sin is death. Although tempted, Jesus lived a sinless life. Jesus knew no sin.

Jesus was the perfect, sinless lamb who **FREELY** gave **Himself** to pay our debt. Because of this, death has no dominion over **Him**.

If Jesus had remained dead, that statement would not be true.

If Jesus had remained dead, it would have showed Jesus was not the sinless lamb.

**Sin** brings death, and because **Christ** was sinless, death had no hold.

Lastly, I would share Romans 14:7-9 with my friend:

**Romans 14:7-9 (ESV)**

7. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.
8. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.
9. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. This is such a powerful passage.

Jesus **Christ** is **LORD** over death **AND** over life. He is **LORD** over the dead **AND** the living.

So, to the question, "Couldn't He have just stayed dead?" No, because death has no hold over **Him**. It has no dominion over **Him**. He is **LORD** of all.

Closing:

When we turn to Christ, repent and believe in Him, making Him our LORD and Savior, death has no hold over us either.

Through Christ, we have eternal life BECAUSE we have a loving, living God who is LORD over death and over life. AMEN.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you today. Tonya will bless us with a song. It is "What an Awesome God," by Phil Wickham. We invite you all to join in as she sings.