




Alive with Christ

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: The resurrection of Jesus is good news that changes lives and is the source of our hope for eternal life.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15

As high school students, we were assigned to read the great classics in English literature from Shakespeare to Steinbeck. While I love to read now, at fifteen I did not. But friends at school told me about these magical yellow books called CliffsNotes®. I have no idea who Cliff was or why he was so insistent on such meticulous notetaking, but I am sure that he is the reason I passed English class. CliffsNotes summarize the plot of a two-hundred-page book in about twenty pages. So within a half-hour, you can know the major elements of a book's plot, the characters, and most of the questions that would be on a test. Summaries like CliffsNotes can be helpful. They're not as good as reading the whole book, but they are helpful.

 How might you summarize the whole story of the Bible in just a few words?

Group Time

Point 1: The Good News of Christ's Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-8)

¹ Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: 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 Cephas, then to the Twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul reminds his readers of the core gospel message. What is the gospel? The word *gospel* simply means “good news,” but biblically, it means something of ultimate importance: Christ died for our sins and was raised to life again, and this according to the Scriptures (vv. 3-4)—the “CliffsNotes” version of the gospel story.



How should we view and read the Old Testament in light of Paul's explanation of the gospel in this passage?

We deserve death for our sin, but by God's grace we are given eternal life. So how do we receive this incredible gift? By repentance toward God and faith in Jesus (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21; Rom. 10:9-10). Just as with the Corinthians, the believer's faith response starts in the **past**, moves to the **present**, and looks ahead to the **future** (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

What are some details/thoughts you have about your response to the gospel?

IN THE PAST

IN THE PRESENT

IN THE FUTURE

Point 2: The Power of Christ's Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:8-11)

⁸ Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me.

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹ Whether, then, it is I or they, so we proclaim and so you have believed.

On the list of people Christ appeared to after His resurrection, Paul mentioned himself last. He witnessed the resurrection power of God when he saw a heavenly light and heard the risen Savior, and he recognized this powerful experience was the grace of God. Without grace, he would not have been a saved disciple, much less an apostle of Jesus.



What are some ways we might try to earn God's approval instead of resting in His grace?

No matter what you have done, what sins you've committed, for those who have received God's grace and believed in Christ, in His death and resurrection, your sins have been washed away by the blood of Jesus. If you want proof, just look to Jesus' empty grave and His resurrected body, witnessed physically by so many and spiritually by so many more. The resurrection story of Jesus is true, and it is powerful. This gospel has the power to save and to change sinners for eternity.



How has your life changed since coming to faith in Christ and believing in His death and resurrection?



Voices from Church History

"This is the perfect and consummate glory in God: not to exult in one's own righteousness, but recognizing oneself as lacking true righteousness, to be justified by faith in Christ alone."¹

—Basil the Great (c. 329-379)

Point 3: The Result of Christ's Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-22)

²⁰ But as it is, Christ has 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 also comes through a man. ²² For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

The resurrection of Christ stands as the **firstfruits** of the resurrection for all Christians. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we will live again after we die. Just as Christ was given a new body that will never decay or die, we'll also have bodies that will never die or sin or get sick (1 Cor. 15:50-58). All of this happens not by anything that we have done but through the work of one man—**Jesus Christ, the second and last Adam.**

ADAM	JESUS CHRIST
The _____ (Gen. 2:7)	The _____ (Luke 1:30-33)
_____ in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27)	_____ image of God (Col. 1:15)
From the earth, a man of _____ (1 Cor. 15:47)	From heaven, a life-giving _____ (1 Cor. 15:45,47)
His sin brought _____ to all humanity (Rom. 5:12)	His sinless death brought _____ to all those who believe (Rom. 5:17)
His sin resulted in _____ for all humanity (Rom. 5:16)	His perfect life resulted in _____ for all who believe (Rom. 5:16)

But what if there were no resurrection? What would we lose? Everything! If Jesus weren't raised from the dead, then our sins couldn't be forgiven (1 Cor. 15:12-19). Remember the sting, filth, and shame of your sin? Remember how hopeless you were without God? Because of the resurrection, we are assured that we have peace with God, and we're set free from the power of sin by something even stronger—the power of the gospel.

Life After Death: The Bible teaches that when a Christian dies, he or she immediately is with the Lord but awaiting the future _____. For those who are not in Christ, life after death results in being _____ from Christ in a state of suffering, even though future _____ remains.

Daily Study

Day 1: Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

We never move past the gospel. Ever. Paul was so certain of this fact that he took a moment to clarify the gospel for the believers reading his letter: According to the Scriptures, Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. Our salvation rests in this central event in history really happening. Believers have received this good news by faith, but they also currently stand on it in faith and know by faith that they are being saved and will be saved by it. We can never move past the gospel; we only grow deeper in it.

Paul's concern here should impact the way we interact with and encourage one another in the faith. To this point, he has spent fourteen chapters telling the Corinthian believers how they should live obediently in the church and in their surrounding community, but he returns to the gospel because apart from the gospel, all of our "good works" are just window dressing. Likewise, our encouragement to one another to live by faith can address specifics and offer sound, reasonable, biblical counsel, but we must always build one another up in the truth of the gospel. Jesus is our Savior; we cannot leave Him behind.



How can you encourage a believer with the truth of the gospel today?

Day 2: Read 1 Corinthians 15:9-11

The appearance of the risen Christ to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) was the turning point in the Pharisee's life. Put yourself in Saul's shoes: Imagine the object of your doubt, frustration, and hatred showing Himself to be real and divine before your freshly blinded eyes. Immediately, you would cower. Immediately, you would want to beg for your life. After all, you have been about the business of trying to stamp out what you now know is the work of God. But then you hear Jesus' words of grace: Get up and go, and you will be told what to do (Acts 9:6).

Paul never got over that grace that was shown to him, and Paul never forgot that God's grace was constantly with him to show him what to do and to empower him for the task. Grace is not merely for our forgiveness from sin; grace is our drive and strength for the gospel work. Now it is time to get up and go and do what God tells you to do in His grace.



How is God calling you to act in faith, in grace, and in obedience?

Day 3: Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

The resurrection of Jesus is one of those things about which the Christian faith rises or falls. We can debate ministry method, song selection, end-times schemes, and a host of other practical and theological ideas, but if we don't get this one right—Jesus died and rose again—then this is all for nought. Even the Bible and the *Daily Discipleship Guide* in front of you are pointless if Jesus has not been raised from the dead.

If there was no resurrection for Jesus, then there would be no resurrection for us. Furthermore, there would be no salvation from sin and no hope for any future. Jesus' disciples would all be liars, as would Jesus Himself be, since He proclaimed that He would rise again on the third day (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). And no liar can die for the sins of sinners.

The real, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus must be true or we should all just walk away now. But it is true! Jesus lives, people saw Him alive, and people still come to Him with the eyes of faith.



How is your belief in Jesus' resurrection challenged and/or affirmed by Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15?

Day 4: Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Jesus, the obedient, righteous, perfect Son of God, currently rules over this world and all of creation. Having been raised from the dead by God the Father, He has been vindicated. Jesus is not a liar, a blasphemer, or a criminal—Jesus is who He says He is and accomplished what He said He would accomplish, namely, our salvation. He was raised from the dead and raised to His throne in heaven at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:32-36). Everything has been put under His feet!

We don't feel that now, at least not all of it, yet. Death still holds sway over humanity. But Jesus dealt death its death blow in His crucifixion and resurrection, and the end of the reign of sin and death will come at Jesus' second coming. So for now, we believe what God has revealed about Jesus—He is King, He is kind, and He is coming—and we proclaim this good news to the world.



What are some ways your future resurrection in Christ needs to change your priorities and concerns now?

Day 5: Read 1 Corinthians 15:29-58

Scripture teaches that we are inheritors of an “Adam,” either the first Adam or the last Adam. We take on a lot from our parents: facial expressions, sayings and phrases, mannerisms, an outlook on life, a perspective of the world, and more. We may even share in the blessings or consequences of their life choices. But when it comes to the first Adam and the last Adam, we take on something much deeper. From the first Adam we receive a sinful nature and the consequence of death for sin. Along with Adam, we have been cursed to return to the dust in death. But from the last Adam—Jesus Christ—we receive a new spiritual nature, complete forgiveness from sin, and the blessing of eternal life with Him.

We are all born into the family of the first Adam. We all stand condemned in sin before the holy God and Creator of all. But that same God sent the last Adam to die in our place so we could be adopted into His family, where every believer stands free from sin and in loving relationship with our heavenly Father.



What differences would you expect from those born into the first Adam and those born again into the last Adam by faith?

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Trevin Wax

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AUTHOR OF MULTIPLE BOOKS, INCLUDING
*This Is Our Time: Everyday Myths in
Light of the Gospel*

With this volume of *The Gospel Project*, the storyline of the Bible shifts from the Old Testament to the New, and we enter the era in which God begins to fulfill His promise of salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the sessions that follow, you'll take a closer look at the context surrounding the birth of Jesus, the theological parallels between Adam and Jesus (the last Adam), as well as the early ministry of Jesus.

Some of these stories will be familiar to you and the rest of your group—the Christmas story, for example, or the story of Jesus' temptation. In the familiar stories, we want to help you see aspects of the Gospel accounts that you may have overlooked. In the less familiar stories, we want to help you see the beauty of Jesus' interaction with all kinds of people with all kinds of needs and all kinds of backgrounds.

Our hope as you study the Scriptures is that you will be drawn to worship Jesus as the Savior and Lord who fulfills God's original intention for us as His people. Here we see a Jesus withstanding temptation, calling disciples, loving the unlovable, and battling the evil one. May your worship of this Savior lead you to faithful obedience to His call in extending grace and mercy and the message of salvation to those around you.

UNIT 19

SESSION 1

1. "Sin," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, gen. eds. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III (IVP, 1998) [Wordsearch].
2. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1992), 376.
3. Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans 10, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 2

1. Thabiti Anyabwile, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Luke* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 40-41.
2. Jen Wilkin, *In His Image* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 107.

SESSION 3

1. John Piper, "God Is Always Doing 10,000 Things in Your Life," *Desiring God*, January 1, 2013, www.desiringgod.org/articles/god-is-always-doing-10000-things-in-your-life.
2. Martin Luther, *The Magnificat*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
3. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 690.

SESSION 4

1. C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 168.
2. Thomas Becon, *The Sermon of Simeon in the Temple*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 5

1. Bernard Gilpin, *A Sermon Preached in the Court at Greenewich*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
2. Gloria Furman, *Missional Motherhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 200.

UNIT 20

SESSION 1

1. Eric Mason, *Manhood Restored* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013), 1.
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (SCM Press, 2015), 91.

EASTER SESSION

1. Basil, *On Humility* 20, quoted in 1-2 *Corinthians*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VII in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Russell D. Moore, *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 75.

SESSION 2

1. Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 171.
2. Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, trans. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1959), 9.

SESSION 3

1. Trip Lee, *Rise: Get Up and Live in God's Great Story* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2015), 47.
2. Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance* 1.12.53, quoted in *John 1-10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 4

1. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 14.44, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Jerry Bridges, *31 Days Toward Trusting God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2013) [eBook].

UNIT 21

SESSION 1

1. Fred L. Horton Jr., "Exorcism," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2003), 533.
2. Dexter Maben, "Mark," in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1290.
3. Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning* (Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2000), January 14.
4. Dacher Keltner, "Hands On Research: The Science of Touch," *Greater Good Magazine*, September 29, 2010, http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands_on_research.

SESSION 2

1. See *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C. S. Lewis (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 89.
2. St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. and ed. A Religious of C.S.M.V. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 35.
3. Kim Cash Tate, "Rejected by Friends, Loved by Jesus," *Desiring God*, December 29, 2015, www.desiringgod.org/articles/rejected-by-friends-loved-by-jesus.

SESSION 3

1. "Kawasaki Disease and Heart Transplant: Kendall's Story," Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, April 2012, www.chop.edu/stories/kawasaki-disease-and-heart-transplant-kendalls-story.
2. Andrew Murray, *Humility, in Humility and Absolute Surrender* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 42.
3. "John," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International LTD, 2016), 1534.

SESSION 4

1. Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on John* 24.23-24, quoted in *John 1-10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Samuel Ngewa, "John," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1286.