



*Service at 10:30 with King's Kids ~ Brunch to Follow*

News:

**Wednesday Evening Classes 6:30-8:00  
Church Workday Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>**

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Today is Resurrection Sunday. Some of you may remember it as \_\_\_\_\_.

The Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre was a pagan \_\_\_\_\_ idol still worshipped by other names.

\_\_\_\_\_ has to do with the cardinal direction \_\_\_\_\_ because of the equinox.

Christians who won't say \_\_\_\_\_, prefer Resurrection Sunday. But what is Sunday?

There are \_\_\_\_\_ ceremonies, secular traditions, and \_\_\_\_\_ additions to the Christian celebration. Keep it all separate. Avoid paganism, enjoy secular traditions and additions if you like, but honor only Christ when it's time to celebrate what is Christian.

It's about knowledge and intentionality.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is the single-most important event since God said, "Let there be Light."

Without it there is simply no \_\_\_\_\_ whatsoever for anyone. For thinking people, it can only be nihilism, because nothing matters, without the \_\_\_\_\_ found in Jesus.

The Bible declares "if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still guilty of your sins... If our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world" (1 Corinthians 15:17-19).

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

I Corinthians chapter 15 is my primary source today. It opens with Paul incredulously saying in essence, "I am now going to \_\_\_\_\_ you again, what you have already been \_\_\_\_\_..."

The Gospel taught to them was that: 1) Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. 2) That Christ was buried. 3) That Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. 4) That Christ appeared to hundreds of people, many of whom were at the time of the letter, still alive and still actively bearing witness to those facts.

That was essentially the earliest Christian \_\_\_\_\_. A person must accept those facts as they are laid out by the Scripture to be a Christian.

He then said, "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you claim that there is no resurrection of the dead?" This was the crux of the \_\_\_\_\_ then. It was an idea, at least partly, due to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus (II Peter 3:8&9).

Then Paul drilled down on this unassailable fact, that the \_\_\_\_\_ is the absolute proof that your sins can be, and now are, \_\_\_\_\_ in Him through His self-sacrifice and eternal life after.

He noted that \_\_\_\_\_ came through one man - Adam. Because every human who has ever walked the planet came from Adam after he sinned, we too, all of us, are on a collision course with \_\_\_\_\_.

The cause of death in its many facets is \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus was fully \_\_\_\_\_ and as such was fully tempted in every way that humans are tempted and yet, being fully \_\_\_\_\_ as well, He overcame all temptation and never sinned.

Because Jesus was fully \_\_\_\_\_ and therefore perfectly righteous, He was able to take the sin of mankind upon Himself and yet, because Jesus was fully \_\_\_\_\_, He was able to carry that sin to the Cross where He literally died.

Forgiveness was only made possible by the defeat of \_\_\_\_\_, which was accomplished by Jesus paying the price we never could. Now, since the effect of \_\_\_\_\_ is death and since Jesus' death destroyed \_\_\_\_\_ effect, guess what...

Death had no power over Jesus. The \_\_\_\_\_ that it worked was His bodily Resurrection from the dead to live and never taste death again.

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



# Lêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



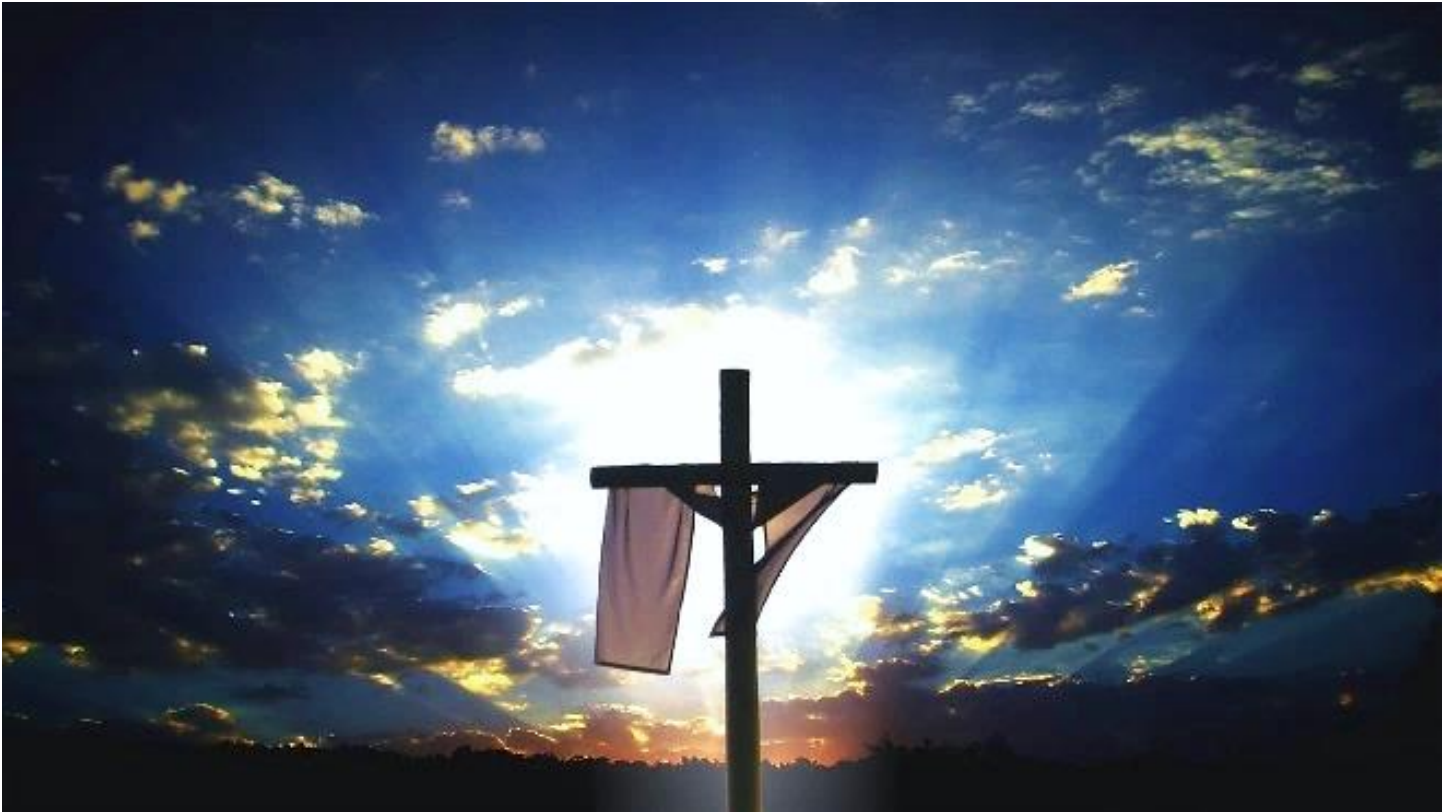
*Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>*

*Lend a Helping Hand*

# Church

## WORK DAY





Today is Resurrection Sunday. Some of you may remember it as Easter.



Conspiracy theorists have succeeded in ruining that term for us, to the point where I'm petrified to utter the word, lest some hyper-devout holy roller, burns me at the stake for consorting with the Devil.

All the talk about it being derived from a pagan goddess's name, whether it's the Akkadian goddess Ishtar, or the Phoenician goddess Astarte, or the Greek goddess Aphrodite, or the Roman goddess Venus, or the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre (ē-s-tṛä), originally pronounced üs-tṛä, then ēs-tṛä, then easter, is all nonsense.

All of those pagan goddesses, and many others, are fertility idols. They are all based upon Inanna, the original fertility goddess of the Sumerians. All such fertility idols are specially worshipped in the spring and the biggest day of that worship comes at the vernal equinox, when the sun comes up, over the equator, directly from the East.



Christians didn't get the name Easter from any of those pagan goddesses, we got it from the cardinal direction East. That Germanic word coming into Old English literally means the direction of dawn. It's all to do with the start of spring and the rebirth of new life that it brings. Everything begins growing, turning vibrant colors, flowering, and then producing fruit of various kinds. The myriad newborns and the general explosion of life, after a dark cold winter is seen all around and the hope that it brings to everyone. It's Spring because everything springs back to life each year.



To say that people named the Resurrection of Jesus after the goddess is ridiculous, they named the day after the Spring season in which it occurred. It seemed appropriate since the ultimate rebirth was that of Jesus - His supernatural bodily Resurrection from the dead to never taste death again. That's what we celebrate.

Christians who won't say the word Easter, demand that every Christian say Resurrection Sunday instead, and yet...



Sunday is literally named after the Sun god worshipped by pagans going back to before the Egyptian god Ra, the Greek God Helios, the Roman God Apollo, and the Germanic God Sol. During Holy Week, we'll say, Maundy Thursday, but Thursday is literally the day set aside by Vikings to worship the pagan god Thor. We are happy to talk about Good Friday, but Friday is the day the pagans worshipped the Norse goddess of fertility, Frigg, or, if you prefer, Freya. Again, a goddesses known by many other names, stretching back all the way to the Sumerian Inanna. What about Holy Saturday, the day named after the Roman god Saturn. I think you get the idea. But honestly, knowing



that, how is calling it Resurrection Sunday better than calling it Easter?



Eggs and bunnies became entwined because both of them were ancient symbols of fertility, which is a celebration of life. In our culture today, it's just fun stuff for kids, but because of its connection with Easter, many Christians view it as an evil plot to confuse people and distract from the real reason Easter exists, much like Santa Claus for Christmas.

That's calling the effect the cause. Both Christmas and Easter are important Christian events and people who want to take Christ out of them will always find ways to do so. My take on Easter is the same as my take on

Christmas. There are pagan ceremonies, secular traditions, and modern additions to the actual Christian celebrations of both.



What we should do is be better educated about all those factors and facets. We should never allow the non-Christian elements to intermingle, or to mix with the Christian elements and thereby dilute and profane what is about Christ. Separate out what is pagan and jettison it, separate out what is secular tradition and modern addition and enjoy that if you wish as non-Christian fun. Keep what is about Christ about Christ. You can then appreciate the secular and the Christian as you wish, apart from each other. By doing that, you keep what is honoring Christ pure, and you allow

yourself to enjoy the fun stuff of the secular side as an entirely secular thing, like watching a sporting event, or hunting, or shopping, or playing a game.

You can avoid honoring the pagan gods by knowing the background and intentionally divorcing the modern fun and games from ancient paganism. That's how I can say Sunday without honoring the sun gods, and I can say both Easter and Friday without honoring fertility goddesses. It's knowledge and intention that allow me to do that.

In other words, I have no problem letting the children enjoy eggs and bunnies, but I have a huge problem allowing them to do so without continually explaining to them the dramatic difference between enjoying the secular fun and celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus. Partake in both as you wish but know and maintain the difference. When we have that attitude it actually opens doors to explain to non-Christians the difference and who knows, maybe some will be Saved.

Right now, we're celebrating the Christian Easter, which is the single-most important event in the entire sweep of time since the moment that God said, "Let there be Light."



Without the Resurrection, there is simply no hope whatsoever for anyone. Creation itself and especially the sentient life we humans enjoy is nothing more than a cruel joke without the Resurrection. The birth of Jesus celebrated on Christmas is meaningless from a human perspective absent the sacrificial death and defeat of sin proven by the Resurrection. Everything that humans have ever accomplished, or will ever accomplish, is pointless, futile, vain, irrelevant, and without any value, or consequence, without the Resurrection.

Why? Because sooner or later we all die, sooner or later the earth itself will die and with it, all traces that

humans ever existed, let alone ever accomplished anything. For objective, reasoning, rational, thinking people there should be nothing but a philosophy of cold nihilism, because nothing, and I mean absolutely nothing, matters at all, without the hope found in Jesus. As the Bible mocks, if there is no hope beyond this life, we may as well “eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (Isaiah 22:13, I Corinthians 15:32).



What shocks me to my core is how many people, Christian people, do not know that the bodily Resurrection of Jesus is the proof that our hope has substance. My dear friends, the hope found in Jesus is a pipedream absent His return from the grave never to taste death again. As the Bible declares “if Christ has

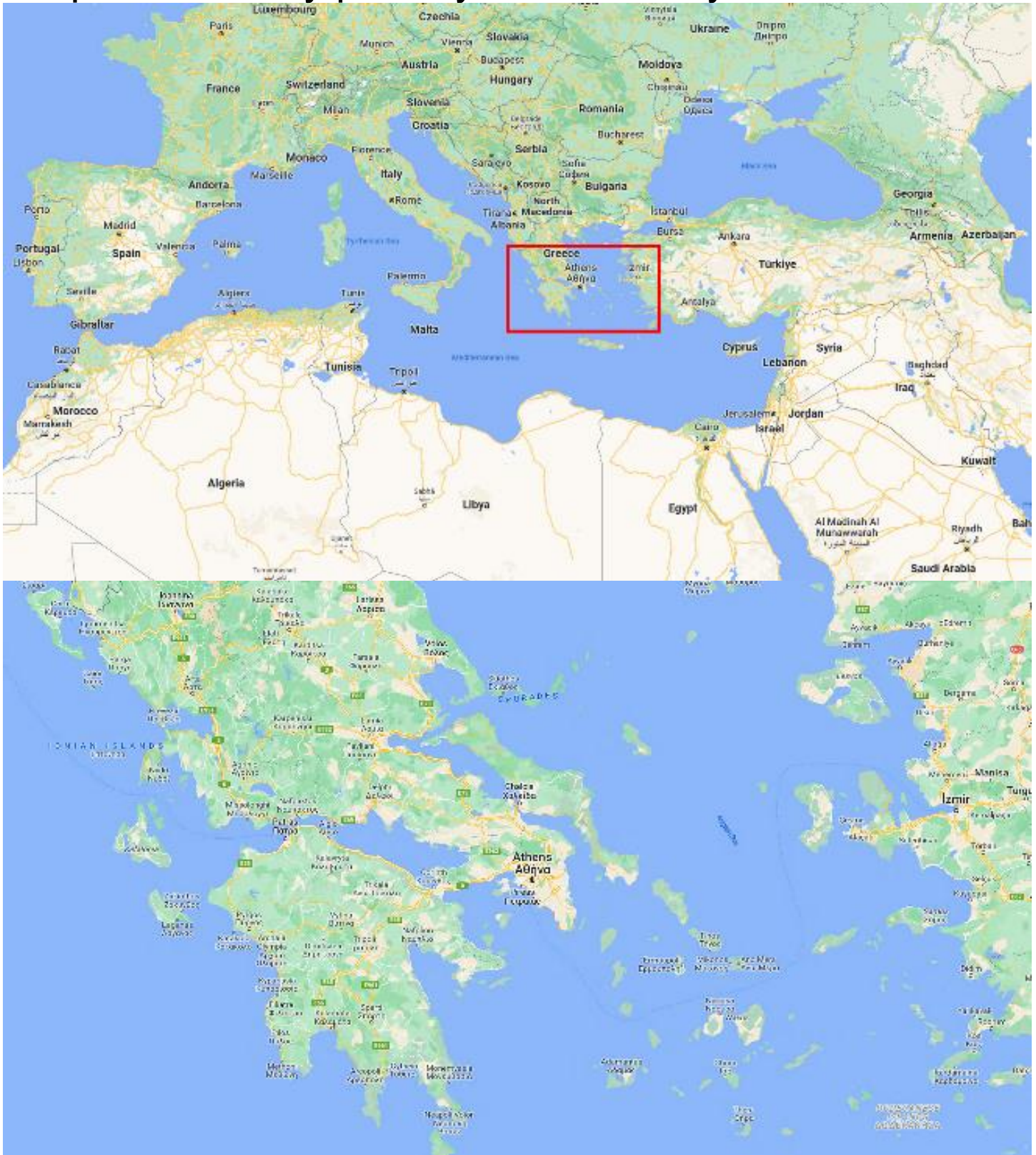
not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost forever! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world” (1 Corinthians 15:17-19).

No other person in history has ever been Resurrected. His tomb is, and forever will be, empty! Praise God!

Oh, there have been people like Enoch who were taken into the next life without dying and there are people like Lazarus who have been brought back from death, only to die again, but only Jesus has been bodily Resurrected, and it is the proof that He was the “I AM” that He said that He was - the proof that God’s holy and perfectly righteous wrath was propitiated and that human beings who throw themselves headlong with complete abandon onto that Grace are Saved - are transformed and transferred as children of the Living God and members of His eternal family.

This is the single-most important doctrine in Christianity. I would say that it is vital to fully understand and fully embrace this profound Truth.

I have been using and will continue to use I Corinthians chapter 15 as my primary source today.



The Christian community at Corinth was one of the most thoroughly Greco-Roman cities to ever exist. It's 40 miles west of Athens, perhaps the only city to rival Corinth in Hellenistic culture, philosophy, science, and sophistication.

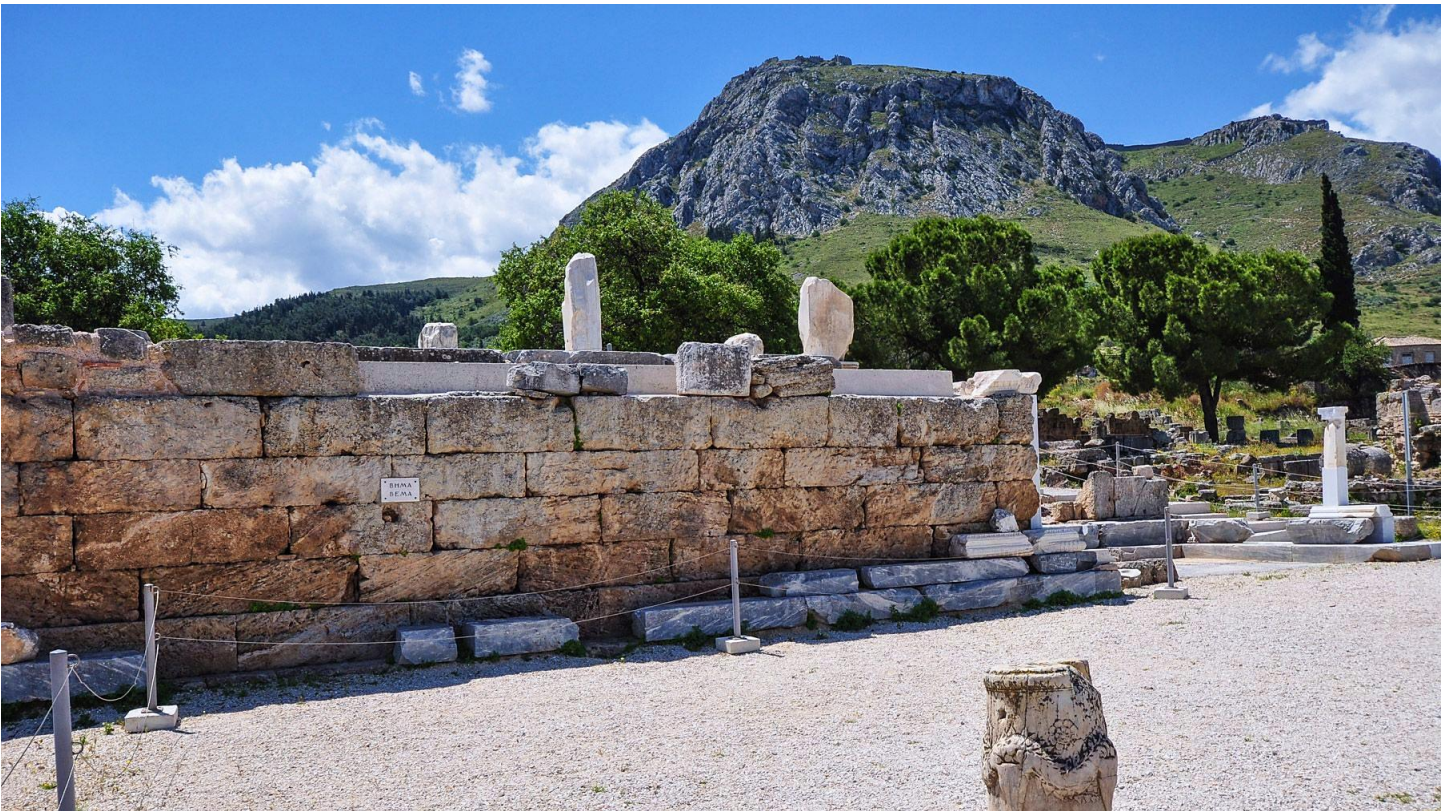


Corinth lies on the isthmus of the Peloponnesian Peninsula and as such was a strategic city. The Romans conquered it in 146 B.C. and rebuilt it as the capital of the province Achaëa Ἀχαΐα in 44 B.C. In ancient times they had a track system to move ships and goods from one side of the isthmus to the other, making it a center for commerce. So, not only a cultured city, but also a very wealthy city of 250,000 people. Today there is a canal cut through the isthmus.





Street where Paul worked.



Bema where Paul spoke.

Founded the church in spring of 51 staying on for 18 months.  
 1<sup>st</sup> Letter winter 55, I Corinthians spring 55,  
 “Painful” visit fall 55, “Severe” Letter spring 56,  
 II Corinthians winter 57, 3<sup>rd</sup> visit spring 57

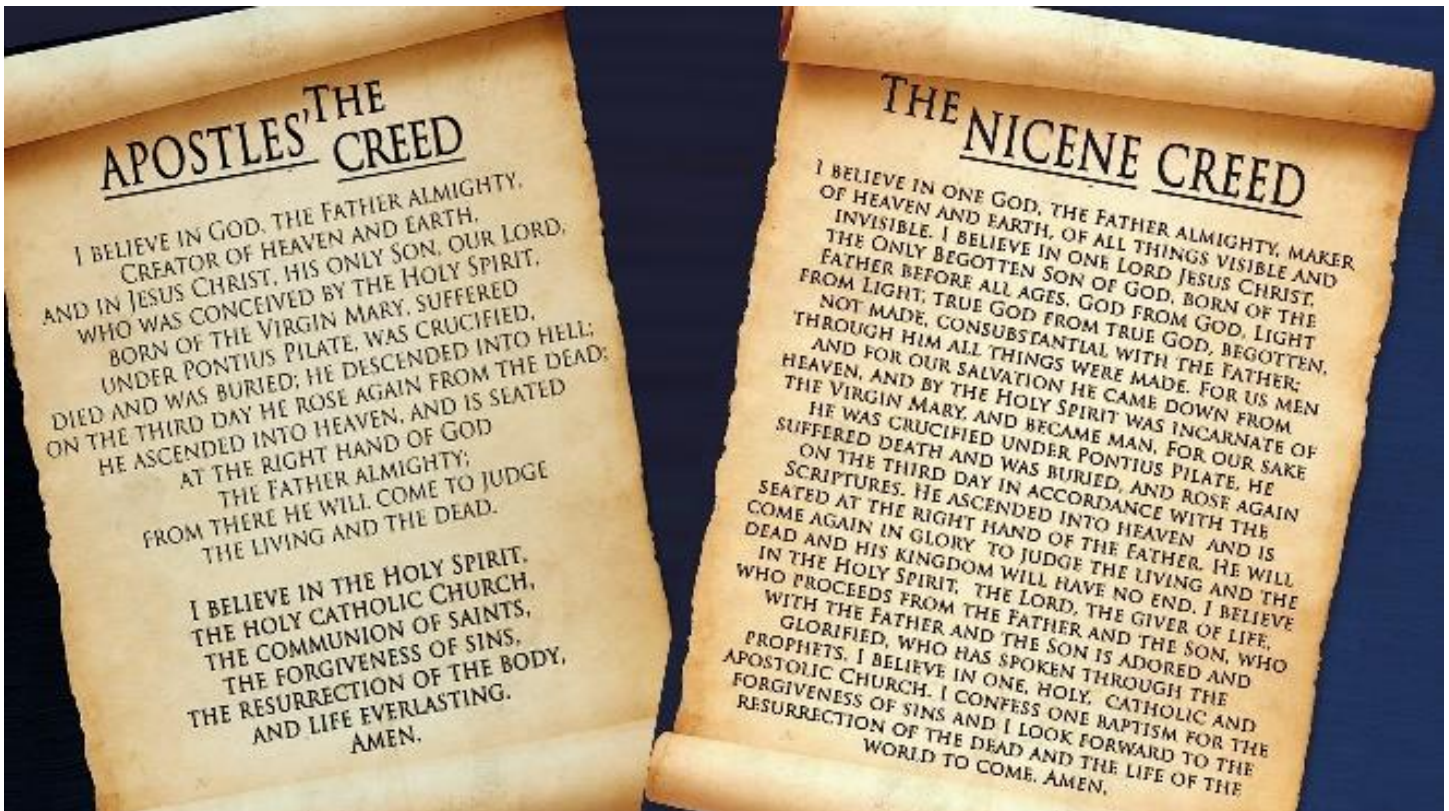


What's most important for us is that the Christian community in Corinth had problems. As a cosmopolitan center of wealthy, educated, philosophically minded elites, along with their working-class neighbors, they were people who caused a lot of trouble for the Apostle Paul and Christian leaders after Paul. The writing that came the closest to being accepted as a Bible Book that didn't make the cut is I Clement. A generation later in 95 Clement the Bishop of Rome wrote a letter to the Corinthians trying to correct the same basic problems that the Apostle Paul addressed.

In Paul's second letter to them, that we call I Corinthians, he tackled another of their grievous

misunderstandings in the 15th chapter. It opens with Paul incredulously saying in essence, “I am now going to teach you again, what you have already been taught, because evidently, it’s necessary. So, my dear brothers and sisters, I’m going to restore to you, your full knowledge of the Gospel that I proclaimed to you and that you accepted, and that you embraced, and that you activated in your lives, and that which you’ve taken your stand upon as Christians. It is that which is saving you, should you hold fast to it and stay the course... I mean, is it possible, that you didn’t understand the Gospel at all? He asked.

Paul then went on to say that the Gospel that he carefully and clearly taught them was that: 1) Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. 2) That Christ was buried. 3) That Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. 4) That Christ appeared to hundreds of people, many of whom were at the time of the letter, still alive and still actively bearing witness to those facts.



That was essentially the earliest Christian creed. You had to fully buy that, or you could not be a Christian. Nothing has changed. A Christian must accept those facts as they were laid out by the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture.

As time went on, additions were made to that simple creed in order to clarify Truths inherent but unstated. Things that are implied, but not explicit.

As an example, it was necessary to clarify the nature of Christ as fully God and fully human. That is implied by His ability to pay for the sins of the world and proven by

His Resurrection. Only God can live perfectly and pay for universal sin; only a human can die on a Cross.

Another example, it was necessary to clarify that there is no other way to Heaven except through Christ Jesus. That merely elucidates the fact that He is the only One Who actually did pay the sin debt owed. Salvation is therefore found in no one else. “There is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved,” as the Apostle Peter put it (Acts 4:12).

All the other additions over the first couple of Christian generations are like that, they are agreed upon clarifications of what was already implied, necessitated as people pushed the boundaries. Nearly all of the work done by the early Christian Councils was to combat heresies that kept springing up, by more carefully, more thoroughly, defining Christianity.

In I Corinthians 15, Paul went on saying that it didn't matter whether it was him, or whether it was any of the other Apostles, or James the brother of Jesus, or any other Christian preacher, who announced the Gospel, the Gospel was always the same.



He then said, “Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you claim that there is no resurrection of the dead?” This was the crux of the issue then. Paul was combating an erroneous belief that was swirling around in the churches of Corinth. The concept was that of the Jewish Sadducees, that of many Reformed Jews today, that of many pagans and atheists then and now... That when you die, you cease to exist - that there is nothing after physical death.



It was an idea for the Corinthians that was at least partly due to the delay of Jesus. Here it was, more than 20 years after the Resurrection and Ascension, and nothing had happened - Jesus had not returned. The thinking was, maybe, Christianity was just about Jesus showing us how to be better people, teaching us how to get God on our side so that we could ask Him for stuff and have a better life now, but that there would be nothing after death. Again, the Apostle Peter explained, “with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. He is not slow, “but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance” (II Peter 3:8&9).



Peter went on to say that the Day of the Lord would come suddenly and without warning and that the earth would be utterly destroyed, and all mankind would stand before the eternal Judgment.

Many people throughout the centuries and especially today, reject Christianity because of the delay of Jesus. It's easy to think that a thing won't happen when it hasn't happened yet, but then when it does, it's too late.





The Apostle Paul's argument hinged on the concept that if the dead are not raised, then Christ, Who was dead, could not have been raised either and therefore "if Christ has not been raised, it follows that our proclamation of the gospel is hollow, and empty, (and therefore) also, is your faith." In addition, we, too (all of us who proclaim the Gospel), "shall be exposed as liars in what we have declared about God, because we gave testimony against God that he raised Christ when, if, as they say, it was the case that the dead are not raised, he did not raise him after all."

Then Paul drilled down on this unassailable fact, "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is without effect,

and you are still in your sins.” That is absolute proof that the Resurrection of Christ Jesus our Lord is the absolute proof that your sins can be, and now are, forgiven in Him through His self-sacrifice and eternal life after.

Paul doesn't want to leave his argument theoretical so in verse 20 he plainly states, “In reality, however, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of the harvest of the dead.”



He noted that death came through one man. Eve was deceived and ate the forbidden fruit; she then offered the fruit to Adam. Adam, with his eyes wide open, also ate. As a result, the two of them instantly died in

several senses. Sin immediately killed them spiritually and relationally. Their connection with God was ruined - they were expelled from the Garden and cursed with pain and frustration. Their connection with each other was also ruined, Adam threw Eve under the bus to mitigate his intentional sin. They also instantly died physically in the sense that the decomposition of their physical bodies began. The aging process had started and would not be interrupted until there was nothing left of them, but dust.

Because every human who has ever walked the planet came from those two individuals after they had sinned, we too, all of us, are on a collision course with death. We are born to die. We begin our process of death at the first moment of our life.

The cause of death in its many facets is sin. It is the effect of sin. Where there is sin, there is the stench of death.



God promised to send Himself to us in order to take away the effect of sin as only He could. God kept that promise by sending the Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus was fully human and as such was fully tempted in every way that humans are tempted and yet, being fully God as well, He overcame all temptation and never sinned.

Because Jesus was fully God and therefore perfectly righteous, He was able to take the sin of mankind upon Himself as the Father imputed that totality of sin to Him. Because Jesus was fully human, He was able to carry that sin to the Cross where He was brutally

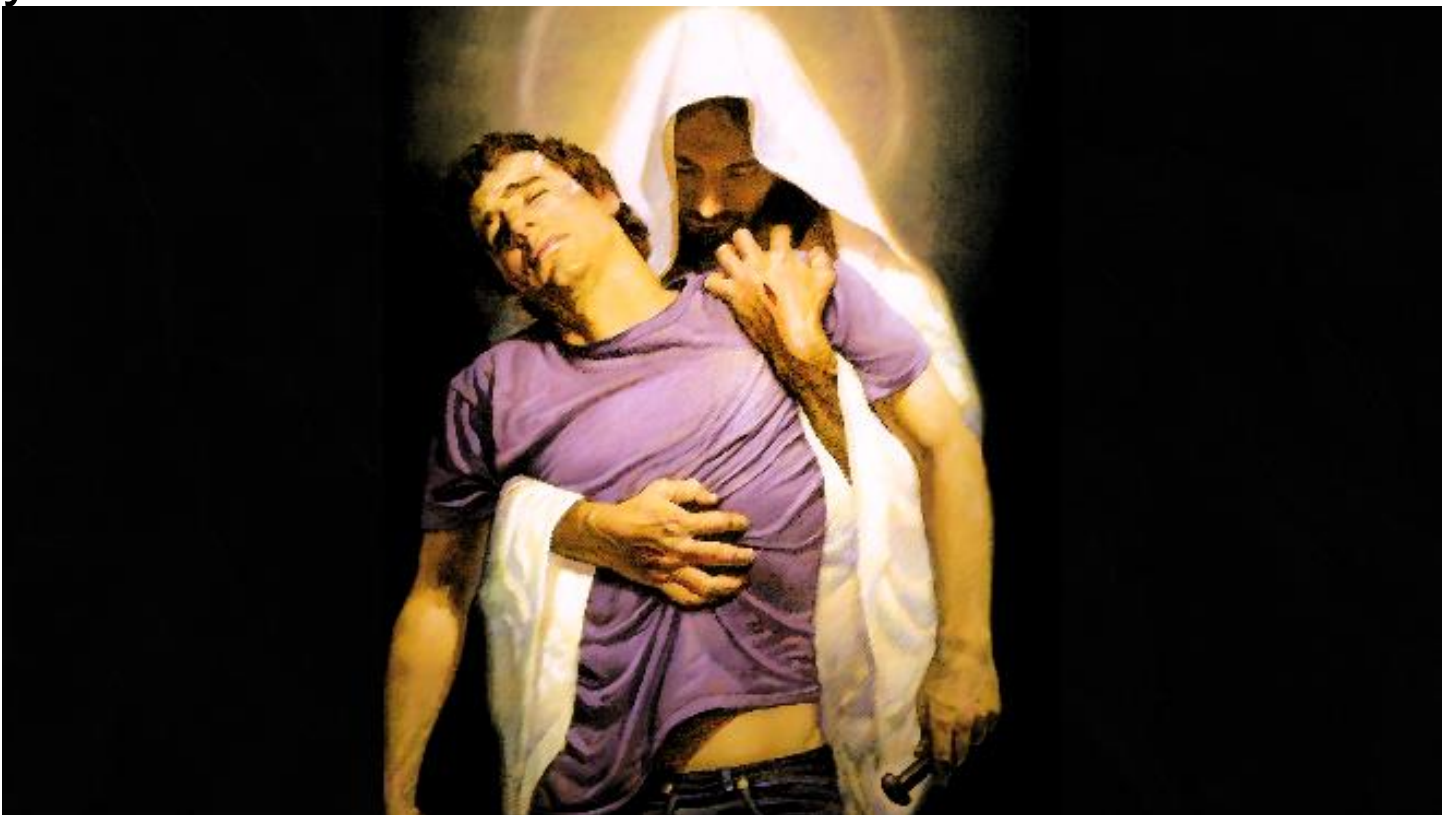
murdered in horrific fashion dying as the once and for all sacrifice entirely obliterating the effect of sin.

1 John 2:2

"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

It is, as I mentioned earlier, propitiation. God's perfectly righteous justice was satisfied with the payment and so His just wrath was propitiated. It means that God is satisfied. That's an important concept because it doesn't merely mean that God won't punish, or even that God isn't upset, it means that God is pleased - He's happy. It's like hiring a guy to remodel your kitchen. While the bill is still owed, there might be some slight tension between you, but once you've paid the bill in full, he's happy.

All a person must do to complete the transaction by accepting the payment made by Jesus that propitiates God. Once that's done, it's exactly like the Bible declares in Romans 8:1&2, "Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."



When I met Jesus, it was just hours after my entire life had played before me. I remember being stunned by how far I had fallen into sin and depravity. By that point I was exhausted to the point of collapse by my exertion trying to nail Jesus to the Cross. When He approached me, I recoiled away from Him much like Simon Peter who said to Jesus "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a

sinful man!” (Luke 5:8). I said out loud as I literally backed up into a corner of my office, “We can’t be friends. I know that I can’t be Saved. I know who I am. Don’t worry, a deal is a deal, and I’m a man of my word, so I’ll serve You, but right now, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.”

The overwhelming presence of Christ Jesus continued towards me without hesitation and embraced me in a warm hug. What I felt was absolute love and complete acceptance. I felt total forgiveness for everything without a hint of disappointment, displeasure, or condemnation. That’s the power of Jesus.

I’ve tried to share a foundational reality in many ways over the years and most recently I did it by talking directly about forgiveness. I said that “A person can only appropriate for themselves the amount of forgiveness that is commensurate with their recognition of their own failure.” What that means is that forgiveness from the Father by way of Jesus is complete. Instantly complete, without any lack, or anything held in reserve. His forgiveness is total, absolute, entire, and perfect - it is finished.

That is propitiation. There's another technical term called expiation. Where propitiation is about satisfying God, expiation deals with the guilt aspect. In a very real sense, expiation is our ability to forgive ourselves.

In that sermon a couple of weeks ago, I also said that forgiveness comes in layers. Well, that applies here too. We can only forgive ourselves at the deepest levels if we comprehend the vileness of our depravity - the evil of our sin.



If a Christian can fully embrace the heinousness of their self-absorbed rebellion against God and others and then allow God's forgiveness to percolate all the way down to that place and by that actually forgive



themselves then they will not be able to look at the sin of others and not see themselves, right there. The result will be a Christian who is forgiving because they see - really see - that they have been forgiven.

For such a Christian, forgiveness has had its full effect. God is propitiated, they are expiated, and the proof is that they are, like their Heavenly Father, forgiving as well.



All of that is only made possible by the defeat of sin, which was accomplished by Jesus paying the price we never could. Now, since the effect of sin is death and since Jesus' death destroyed sin's effect, guess what...

Death had no power over Jesus. The proof that it worked was His bodily Resurrection from the dead to live and never taste death again.



Where Jesus is now there is no such thing as death. One day we will be where He is. Paul closed out the chapter we've been looking at by saying, "When this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. 55Where, O death, is your power? where, O death, is your sting?" 56The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; 57but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."



Now, since that is true there is an implication and that is what Paul wrote next, “Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”