



# WOODLAND HEIGHTS

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CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Good News in a Divided World Part #1 – Did Jesus Really Rise from the Grave?

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### Small Group Discussion Guide on 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 21-22

#### Woodland Heights Christian Church Core Value Connection

This sermon aligns with the core value of **Outreach** at Woodland Heights Christian Church. We believe that the Great Commission is at the heart of God's work. Our goal is to cultivate a heart for evangelism to the extent that it causes ministries and strategies to be created, resources to be released, and people to find fulfillment in Christian service as the world is impacted by the message of salvation.

The sermon's call to see the resurrection not as an old religious story but as the living reality that explains our past, transforms our present, and secures our future echoes the heart of true outreach: carrying the hope of the risen Christ to a skeptical, wounded, weary, and divided world.

This message challenges us to deepen our outreach beyond Easter attendance, aligning with our church's mission to "Reach, Teach, and Serve others for the Cause of Christ" as we testify that the empty tomb still changes lives, answers despair with unshakable hope, and calls us to invite others into the lasting life found only in Jesus.

#### Section 1 – ENCOUNTER

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##### Observing God's Word

Imagine a world still shadowed by death, guilt, division, and disappointment – people searching for meaning, trying to rewrite the headlines of their lives, wondering whether hope can really outlast the grave. Then into that darkness comes the triumphant declaration of the Gospel: Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and He was raised on the third day. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul does not offer religious sentiment or motivational therapy; he anchors the soul in historical truth, eyewitness testimony, and the unshakable promise that because Jesus lives, lasting life has arrived.

Start your study by anchoring yourself in Scripture. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 21-22 as a group, family, or individual, letting God's Word sink in.

##### Core Questions

- What stands out to you about the repeated emphasis on Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and appearances in this passage? Why is this relevant?
- What are key words, phrases, or themes that grab your attention in this text?

- What do you learn in these verses about the Gospel, the character of God, and the certainty of the resurrection?

## Section 2 – EXPLORE

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As we dig deeper into 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 21-22, we discover that the resurrection is not a side issue in Christianity; it is the foundation that holds everything together.

Paul writes to believers in Corinth, a confused and compromised culture filled with competing worldviews, moral chaos, and spiritual confusion, and instead of beginning with opinions or trends, he takes them straight back to the Gospel.

The sermon opens with sobering and revealing statistics: 92% of Americans believe Jesus was a real person who actually lived, 65% of Americans believe in the biblical accounts of the literal resurrection of Jesus, and only 42% of Americans associate Easter with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

These numbers remind us that many people still respect Jesus historically, but far fewer understand or embrace the power of His resurrection. That gap creates both the burden and the opportunity for outreach in our day.

**Quote** – “As a cold-case detective, I’ve learned that the most reliable accounts are eyewitness accounts that have been tested—and that’s exactly what we have in the Gospels.” – **J. Warner Wallace**

- What do these Easter statistics reveal about the spiritual confusion in our culture today, and how should that shape our outreach?
- Why is it important that Paul roots the resurrection in eyewitness testimony rather than personal feeling?

### **Result #1 – The Resurrection Proves the Gospel is a Historical and Saving Reality (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)**

Paul says he delivered what was “of first importance”: Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. These are not inspirational slogans but the non-negotiable center of the Christian faith, showing that the cross was God’s redemptive plan and the resurrection was His victorious declaration that sin and death were defeated.

- Why does Paul’s phrase “of first importance” matter so much for the church today?
- How would you explain the Gospel in the simple three-part pattern Paul gives in these verses?
- Why is the resurrection necessary if Jesus already died on the cross for sin?

### **Result #2 – The Resurrection Replaces Doubt with Tested Truth and Lasting Hope (1 Corinthians 15:5-8)**

Paul points to eyewitnesses—Cephas, the twelve, more than five hundred brothers at one time, James, all the apostles, and finally Paul himself. The sermon stresses that Christianity is not built on myth or private imagination but on a risen Savior seen by real people in real history.

In a world filled with skepticism, this matters deeply for outreach because we are not inviting people to believe a fairy tale; we are calling them to trust the risen Lord of history.

- Why do you think Paul listed eyewitnesses so carefully in this passage?
- How does the evidence of the resurrection help answer the skeptic, the wounded person, or the weary soul?
- Who in your life needs to hear that Christianity is grounded in truth, not blind faith?

### **Result #3 – The Resurrection Rewrites Your Future and Sends You with Hope (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)**

Paul declares that “by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead,” and that “in Christ shall all be made alive.” The sermon’s Big Idea says it plainly: “The Resurrection is the Pivotal Point of History that Replaces Despair With Unshakable Hope.”

- How does the contrast between Adam and Christ help you understand the power of the resurrection?
- In what ways does the resurrection replace despair with hope in real life today?
- How can the promise of lasting life make you bolder in inviting others to Jesus?

## **Section 3 – EMBRACE**

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### **Applying God’s Word**

Go deeper into the Word of God by applying what you’ve learned to your life today. Reflect on these action steps and discuss how you can live out the truths from 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 21-22.

#### ***Examine Your Confidence in the Resurrection***

Ask yourself honestly: Do I live as though the resurrection is the central truth of my life, or just an Easter tradition I revisit once a year? Write down one area where fear, doubt, or spiritual drift has weakened your confidence, and surrender it to the risen Christ this week.

#### ***Practice Gospel Clarity***

Using Paul’s pattern in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, write out the Gospel in your own words: Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and He was raised on the third day.

Then share that simple Gospel message with at least one person this week—a family member, friend, coworker, or neighbor who needs the hope of Jesus.

#### ***Live with Resurrection Hope***

The sermon reminds us that the resurrection explains our past, transforms our present, and secures our future. Identify one current burden—grief, fear, regret, anxiety, or discouragement—and pray specifically that the risen Lord would replace your despair with unshakable hope so your life becomes a testimony others can see.

#### ***Reach One Person Intentionally***

Since many people believe Jesus existed but remain uncertain about His resurrection, ask God to place one spiritually open person on your heart this week. Invite them to read 1 Corinthians 15 with you, share why Easter matters, or tell them how Jesus has changed your life through His victory over sin and death.

### ***Memorize and Reflect***

Memorize the sermon's memory verse, John 11:25 (ESV): "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." Reflect on how this truth turns fear into faith, death into hope, and personal gratitude into public witness.

### **Closing Challenge and Prayer**

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As a group, pray for one another to live in the power of the resurrection and to carry that good news into a divided world. Ask God to help you move beyond simply celebrating Easter to actively sharing the message of the empty tomb with people who are skeptical, hurting, lonely, or far from God.

- Pray that the risen Christ would use your words, your invitations, and your daily witness to help someone else discover that lasting life has arrived in Jesus.