

**What If?
Easter Sunday
Pastor Kory**

If you brought a Bible, you can go to **1 Corinthians 15**.
That's where we're going to be.

And we're going to ask the question: **what if?**
What if this whole thing didn't actually happen?

On Wednesday, I was at my table doing some work, and Katie comes running in and says, "Turn the TV on."
I'm like, why?
She says, "The rocket's about to launch—they're going to the moon."

I'll be honest—I had no idea we were going to the moon. Nobody texted me, nobody told me. So I turn on the TV, and we catch it right at launch—rocket blasting off, heading to the moon, apparently orbiting it for the next ten days.

And I'll be honest—I sat there a little skeptical.
Why? Because I had just listened to a podcast explaining how the moon landing didn't actually happen.

That in 1969, it was all a hoax. That there's this radiation field you can't pass through. So I'm thinking, "They're about to hit that—this is not going to be good."

It's a good question to ask, though.
Most of us believe we landed on the moon, right?
If you ask Google—it'll say yes.
If you ask YouTube—whoo... all kinds of answers. Conspiracies everywhere.

And I think most of us land in one of three categories:

- **Gullible** – we believe everything
- **Skeptical** – we question everything
- **Reasonable** – we examine and think

Gullible people are fun—we can prank them all day.
Skeptical people? They're not even sure they're alive right now.

But here's what I hope for you today:
Not gullible. Not skeptical. Reasonable.

Because here's the point of Easter:

There's a story.
Women went to a tomb. It was empty.

They told the disciples.
Then they said—they saw Jesus.

The question is: is it true?

And more importantly:
What if it's not?

Would it change your life?
Would it change your faith?

Because that's exactly what Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 15.

We're going to ask four questions today:

1. **What is the gospel?**
2. **Did the resurrection actually happen?**
3. **Does it even matter?**
4. **Have you been raised?**

If you're able, stand with me as we read verse 17:

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins... If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

Let's pray.

Father, convince us—as reasonable people—that the resurrection is real.
Help us see why it matters.
And help us ask: **have we been raised?**
In Jesus' name, amen.

You can be seated.

So—**what if it didn't happen?**

Paul says: if Christ has not been raised—**go home**. Eat, drink, live your life.

But if He *has* been raised?
Everything changes.

1. What is the Gospel?

Paul defines it clearly:

- **Christ died for our sins**

- **He was buried**
- **He rose on the third day**

That's the gospel.

Jesus Christ is not His last name—"Christ" means **Messiah**, the anointed King.

Who is Jesus?

- Son of God
- God in the flesh
- Born of a virgin
- Lived a sinless life

And what did He do?

He died for your sins.

And let's be honest—you struggle with sin. I do too. That's the human condition.

Sin shows up in different ways:

- Rebellion
- Religion
- Morality
- Politics
- Self-righteousness

Not just wild living—sometimes it's trying to be "good enough."

But here's the truth:

You can't be good enough.

And here's the good news:

Christ died for your sins.

Why did He have to die?

Because **the wages of sin is death.**

He paid your debt.

And then—**He rose.**

Not just an empty tomb—a **living Savior.**

2. How Do You Receive the Gospel?

Paul says:

- You **receive it**
- You **stand in it**
- You **hold fast to it**
- You are **being saved by it**

That means transformation.

Because here's the reality:

If God saves you, He changes you.

So ask yourself:

- Am I being changed?
- Am I growing?
- Or am I just believing in theory?

Because it's possible to **believe in vain**.

3. Did the Resurrection Actually Happen?

Paul gives evidence:

- **Peter (Cephas)** – denied Jesus, then died for Him
- **The 12 disciples** – couldn't be fooled
- **500+ witnesses** – many still alive at the time
- **James (Jesus' brother)** – skeptic turned leader
- **Paul** – persecutor turned preacher

What explains that kind of transformation?

The resurrection.

Also—this wasn't written in a gullible culture.

There were skeptics then, just like now.

And if it were false?

Authorities could have produced the body.

But they couldn't.

Why?

Because the tomb was empty.

4. Does It Even Matter?

Paul says:

If Christ is not raised:

- **Your faith is empty**
- **You are still in your sins**
- **Preaching is pointless**
- **We are liars**

Here's the key:

The resurrection proves the payment worked.

Think of it like a check:

Jesus writes the check at the cross.

The resurrection?

That's when it clears.

Without it—you're still in debt.

With it—you're forgiven.

Jesus: Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

Jesus said things like:

- "I will rise in three days"
- "If you've seen me, you've seen God"
- "Follow me above everything else"

So He's either:

- **A liar**
- **A lunatic**
- **Or Lord**

The resurrection settles it.

If He Didn't Rise...

- You're still in your sins
- Your loved ones are gone forever
- There is no hope
- Nothing ultimately matters

So Paul says:

Go live your life—because that's all there is.

But If He DID Rise...

Everything changes.

- Your sins are forgiven
- Death is defeated
- Eternity is real
- Your life has purpose

You're either:

- **In Adam (dead)**
- Or **In Christ (alive)**

No middle ground.

Have You Been Raised?

Christ is the **firstfruits**—meaning more are coming.

That includes you—if you belong to Him.

And one day:

- Death will be destroyed
- Sin will be gone
- We will live forever

Right now—death has lost its sting.

But one day—**it will be gone completely.**

The Wasp Illustration

A wasp scares me—because it can sting.

If it has no stinger?

I'm not afraid.

But even better?

If it's dead.

That's what Jesus did:

- At the cross → **removed the sting**
- At His return → **will destroy death entirely**

Why This Matters for Your Life

Because of the resurrection:

Your life is not a sandcastle.

Everything you do matters for eternity.

Nothing is wasted.

Conclusion

So here's the question:

You might debate the moon landing—it doesn't really change your life.

This does.

Because:

- If Christ is still dead → nothing matters
- If Christ is alive → everything matters

So ask yourself:

- **What is the gospel?**
- **Did it happen?**
- **Does it matter?**
- **Have I been raised?**

Because if it hasn't changed your life—something is wrong.

What you need is salvation.

Come to the cross.

Come to the empty tomb.

Come to the risen Lord.

He will:

- Take your sin
- Give you His righteousness
- Welcome you into His kingdom

We're going to sing two more songs.

Use this time to:

- Think
- Process
- Pray

If you need to talk to someone, we're here for you.

And for those who believe—

Let's worship loudly and boldly for what Christ has done.