

## The Proof Is in the Pudding, Isn't It?

### *1 Corinthians 15: 12-19*

<sup>12</sup>Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup>If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; <sup>14</sup>and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. <sup>15</sup>We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup>For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. <sup>17</sup>If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup>Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup>If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Once heard a preacher say that preaching Good Friday was always easier than Easter Sunday. It makes sense. There are countless examples of violence and sorrow in our world, but resurrection? Not so much. Easter's resurrection news can be met with a certain level of skepticism—even in scripture. I mean, who has ever experienced someone raising from the dead after three days? But then there are St. Paul's words to the church. "If Christ has not been raised," he says, "our faith is futile and in vain." Now, given the lack of physical evidence about resurrection, what is he saying?

If we were to go back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century church in Corinth, we would experience a vibrant worship. People were on fire. They found deep communion and healing in their relationships. Some were speaking prophetically. Others were speaking in tongues—which might make us "frozen chosen" a bit skiddish. To put it plainly: the church in Corinth rocked. But what they had a difficult time believing in was the resurrection—just like we do. They wondered why resurrection was essential to their faith, especially since it isn't something they never experienced. It's a good question...and an honest question.

So St. Paul responds by arguing that resurrection is crucial to our faith. And at first it appears he is using logical reasoning—using "if this then that" statements. On the surface, it sounds like he is promoting a central belief that we all must adopt in if we are going to be the church. But it's not what he is saying at all. If it is what he is saying it is a faulty and circular and really confusing! Just read a bit further where he starts taking about perishable and imperishable bodies.

Of course, it might appear like he trying to sell us something, but St. Paul isn't appealing to logic—resurrection isn't logical. No, what he is appealing to is our experience. He's saying, "Your worship is next level vibrant! Your passion for using your gifts to build up the church is full of talent. When you look across the communion table it is an integrative, multicultural experience, with rich and poor, with varying genders and orientations and political backgrounds." So he is asking them: who do you think is responsible for that? You see, if the energy is real, if the bonds we've formed are real, if there is a hum inside of us compelling us to seek mercy and justice and love together, then how can we think that resurrection isn't real?

Yesterday, I watched as we all soaked in the joy, and the sun during the Spring Festival. I watched the children play on the front porch—and watched the adult watching them. I watched you mingle with friends from El Buen Pastor. I saw all those goodies you baked on the table and Mel counting down the kids for the egg hunt. I must be honest: I am in awe of the way you love all our children. I'm in awe by the way you create intentional space for others. I'm in awe of talented gifts this little church has and the vibrancy and energy we feel when we come together—multi-generations and cultures, multiple genders and orientations and backgrounds. Now here's the question: Who is responsible for that?

Turns out, the proof is in the pudding. And if we want proof; if we want physical evidence that Christ is risen, I invite you sit back and watch how we are and who we are when we are together. And perhaps then we discover the real question: what more proof do we need?