



Study questions

following the sermon

on April 19th '20

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15 ...

Make a list of what Paul says would be the case if Jesus *hadn't* risen from the dead, and what he says *has resulted* from Jesus conquering death.

Look at how belief in these things enables us to "stand firm" (v58) in the situations we're facing right now.

2. In v5-8 Paul lists some of those who Jesus appeared to after His resurrection.

i) Think about Paul's own experience. Look up Acts 9:3-6,17 & 1 Cor 9:1.

What changed in Paul's life because of that encounter with the risen Jesus?

ii) Think about James' experience (Jesus' half-brother). (Look up the references in the footnotes to track through references to James in the New Testament. **)

His conversion gives testimony to the overwhelming power that came from being a witness of Jesus' resurrection: James turned from being a skeptic to a leader in the church.

What encouragement & challenge do you draw from these two examples?

3. v20 says that "*Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*" Jesus was the first one to rise from the dead to immortal life – in other words – He would never die again. (The compares with Lazarus & the widow of Nain's son who would have died for a second time.) Dwell on this promise for all of us who believe! How is the "sting of death" removed for us (see v55-57.)

Read v58 again. Reflect on the *value* of all that we can do for the Lord (even in lockdown!) and pray for yourself and all other believers that we would live in the good of the resurrection.

** James was a son of Mary and Joseph and therefore a half-brother to Jesus and brother to Joseph, Simon, Judas, and their sisters (Matthew 13:55). (Two of Jesus' disciples were also called James – James the son of Zebedee and John's brother, and James the son of Alphaeus.) In the gospels, James is mentioned a couple of times, but at that time he misunderstood Jesus' ministry and was not a believer (John 7:2-5).

James becomes one of the earliest witnesses of Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor 15:7). He then stays in Jerusalem and forms part of the group of believers who pray in the upper room (Acts 1:14). From that time forward, James joins the growing church. James is still in Jerusalem when the recently converted Saul arrives to meet with him and Peter (Galatians 1:19). Several years later, when Peter escapes from prison, he reports to James about the miraculous manner of the escape (Acts 12:17). When the Jerusalem Council convenes, James is the apparent chairman (Acts 15:13, 19). He is also an elder of the church, called a "pillar" in Galatians 2:9. Later, James again presides over a meeting in Jerusalem, this time after Paul's third missionary journey. It is believed that James was martyred about A.D. 62, although there is no biblical record of his death.

James is the author of the epistle of James, which he wrote somewhere between A.D. 50 and A.D. 60. James identifies himself by name but simply describes himself as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1). Notice his humility—he doesn't use the fact that he was Jesus' blood relative as a basis for authority.