

Read: 1 Corinthians 15:12-22

A Truly Happy Ending

1 Corinthians 15:17-20

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Imagine if the following movies ended this way:

- The glass slipper was accidentally dropped and shattered. Prince Charming ended up marrying one of Cinderella's stepsisters.
- Aladdin foolishly wasted his third and final wish on a Cherry Icee. The genie remains trapped in the lamp.
- Luke Skywalker's mission to destroy the reactor system of the Death Star failed. The Empire still rules the galaxy.

What a difference it would make for some of our favorite stories if these events were how they finished. They certainly wouldn't be the feel-good movies, with a happy ending, that we love to watch over and over again.

Paul was dealing with individuals in the Corinthian church who were denying the happy ending of Easter. They were arguing that people are not able to be risen from the dead. What a devastating ending for Christians if true!

If people cannot be raised from the dead, that means Jesus did not rise from the dead. If Jesus did not come back to life that would mean our faith would be in a still dead Savior which would be pointless. We would remain lost in our sins and our hope of living eternally in heaven would be a false confidence.

Praise be to God that the message of Easter is not just a made-up story to make us feel better. It is an undeniable fact that Jesus physically rose from the dead. There were hundreds of eyewitnesses who saw Jesus in the flesh before he returned to heaven. Paul was so sure because he himself saw his risen Savior. The happy ending to Easter will never change!

The truth of Jesus' resurrection means everything for us. On judgment day, everyone who ever lived will be raised from the dead. Those who have received the gift of faith in Jesus as their Savior will be joined with him in heaven. The best part of this happy ending for believers is that

there is no ending. In the perfection of heaven, we will live forever with no end. There are still many people today who don't believe in the resurrection of the dead, but we can have complete assurance that because Jesus lives, we also will live forever.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What does it mean that people were eyewitnesses of Jesus resurrection?
- What do you think heaven will be like?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What would it mean for believers if Jesus didn't truly rise from the dead?
- Why can we be confident that Jesus did truly rise from the dead?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How does the assurance of Jesus' resurrection provide us comfort as we face challenges throughout our life?
- What can we learn from Paul as he defended the truth of the resurrection with those in the Corinth congregation who denied it?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Risen Savior, you showed your power over sin and death by rising from the dead. Work in us the confidence of faith that we will also be raised on judgment day to live with you forever in heaven. Amen.

Hymn: CW 152:7 – I Know that My Redeemer Lives

He lives and grants me daily breath;
He lives, and I shall conquer death.
He lives my mansion to prepare;
He lives to bring me safely there.