

## Aim of lesson

Part of a series about resurrection, this lesson offers the opportunity to study a passage of scripture which deals at length and almost exclusively with the subject in hand.

At the same time this lesson will provide experience in the methods and objectives of Bible study.

A further objective is to note the carefully reasoned arguments of the Apostle Paul, and to recognise that God expects us to use the minds he has given us to reason and examine doctrine and teaching so that we can have a firm foundation to our faith. This may be contrasted with an approach which is based on emotion alone (without, of course, denying the importance of emotion based on truth).

## Bible background

Although there are many passages of scripture relevant to this subject, it is recommended that the chapter in 1 Corinthians is used exclusively and in its context. This will provide ample material for the lesson and will emphasise the value of listening to scripture with careful attention to each word.

## Preparation required

Work through the chapter as the young people will, thinking about the impact that the subject has on your own life.

## Suggested outline of lesson

### Background

The background to 1 Corinthians can be described briefly indicating the difficulties and the questions they were experiencing. It can be emphasised that despite their difficulties Paul still viewed them as beloved brethren and sisters, but that he was very concerned that they be fully informed and convinced about fundamental doctrines such as resurrection.

It should also be noted that Paul chooses to base his whole argument on the resurrection of Jesus, thereby putting the Lord at the centre of his teaching.

### Review of the text

The first part of the chapter will have been dealt with in lesson 24, but it is worth pointing out that in verses 1-2 Paul makes it clear that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is an essential part of the gospel of salvation.

The main section is from v12 to the end of the chapter. Suggestions for what the students might write follow, but encourage them to think not only about what the text says but about the implications on their own lives.

### Verses Summary

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| 12-19 | Everything undertaken by the disciple is ineffective, purposeless and futile, if Christ is not raised. (So how does school work fit into this pattern?).  |
| 20-28 | The whole purpose of God rests on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. (What does this say about the importance of this life compared with the next?)  |
| 29-34 | All the efforts and service of discipleship are to no effect, if Christ did not rise.   |
| 35-49 | Belief in resurrection raises many detailed questions but the most important thing is to realise that resurrection is far more than just being restored to life - it also involves a change of nature and glorious association with the purpose of God. |
| 50-57 | Resurrection means that death has been conquered, and the victory is by the grace of God and through the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.  |
| 58    | This is not only a fundamental doctrine; it is also an encouragement to hold on to the Faith and to service, which will not be in vain.   |

### Baptism for the dead

During the verse by verse consideration this particular 'difficult passage' will arise. It is used by the Mormon church as justification for their practice of being baptised for their dead relatives, thereby, they believe, assuring their salvation. This

doctrine is incompatible with the teachings of scripture and it may be pointed out that no fundamental and essential doctrine of scripture rests on just one verse. The following is a suggested explanation of this passage.

Paul has been talking, up to verse 19, about the implications if Christ did not rise from the dead. In verses 20-28 he has gone on to emphasise that Christ really is risen. Then in verse 29 he reverts to considering the situation if Christ is not risen, but is dead. What then is the point of baptism - a symbol of death and resurrection? The AV is rather clearer than the NIV here:

## **Conclusions**

Towards the end of the lesson it will be useful to draw together the conclusions and perhaps to ask the young people to enter them in their notes. This is particularly important for this lesson because the work is demanding and involved and must not be allowed to obscure the essential doctrine.

1. The Lord Jesus rose from the dead physically, restored to life.
2. This reality is essential to the claims of Christianity.
3. His resurrection is the guarantee of the disciples' hope.
4. We can expect people to deny, ridicule or try to get round this belief.
5. As Christ's so the disciples resurrection will be glorious.
6. The resurrection will be when Christ returns to the earth.
7. Resurrection is the answer to death.

## **Relevance to our lives**

1 Corinthians 15:16-17 shows how fundamental the resurrection of Jesus is to our faith and without it we have no hope at all.

## **Prayer**

'Lord, grant us faith in the resurrection of your Son so that we may have confidence in your promise of resurrection for all disciples. Help our faith to grow so that the hope of Paul may become our hope too. Thank you Lord for giving your Son and for raising him to glorious life. Amen.'

## **Other suggestions for activities**

1. Write a letter to someone who believes that the resurrection of Christ was not a real event, but simply refers to the sense in which, when someone believes in Jesus, Christ can be said to live on.
2. Young people often want to know what we shall be like when 'raised imperishable'. Although it is not important to know, they may like to discuss what Jesus was like: he appeared normal, but could pass through doors, etc.