

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

No Hope Without This
1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 35-44, 50-57

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader: Write the outline for the study on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

Tell the Good News, *The Worship Hymnal* #360; CCLI # 109876

He is Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* # 277; CCLI # 5178348

There is a Redeemer, *The Worship Hymnal* # 279; CCLI # 11483

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

No Hope Without This

Focal Text

1 Corinthians 15:3-20,35-44,50-58

Background

1 Corinthians 15:1-58

Main Idea

Because Jesus' resurrection was real, Christians have the hope that we also will be resurrected from the dead.

Question to Explore

What hope do we have of being resurrected from the dead?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to summarize Paul's teachings on Jesus' resurrection and to testify of their own hope of resurrection.

Gathering together:

Sing one or both:

Tell the Good News, *The Worship Hymnal* #360; CCLI # 109876

He is Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* # 277; CCLI # 5178348

First thoughts:

Today's passage begins with an introduction to the gospel (the word "gospel" means "good news" called by one commentator "the best news ever"). Paul refers to the gospel "as of first importance", a matter of the highest priority. The good news is simple, "***Christ died for our sins...he was buried...he was raised from the dead on the third day***" **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**. This news is attested by many eyewitnesses, including Paul (verses 5-8). This good news has been broadcast and received (verses 1, 11). The good news is always something that comes to us from someone who

already possesses it. This process must continue; it is the mission of the church – to spread the good news.

The message of Christ's death for our sins and his resurrection is the foundation of our faith. Because Christ lives we too can live eternally. This news changes people's lives when they hear it and believe it. It enables a person to stand, keeps him/her on his/her feet, and gives him/her stability. It continues to save a person as he/she continues to trust (verses 1-2).

We never tire of reading of the resurrection. The group of letters which we call 1 Corinthians has dealt with a number of serious issues for the new believers in Corinth. The last chapter affirms what makes it possible for one to live the Christian life – we serve a living Saviour!

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

No Hope Without This

Focal Text

1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 35-44,50-58

Background

1 Corinthians 15:1-58

Main Idea

Because Jesus' resurrection was real, Christians have the hope that we also will be resurrected from the dead.

Question to Explore

What hope do we have of being resurrected from the dead?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to summarize Paul's teachings on Jesus' resurrection and to testify of their own hope of resurrection.

Introduction to your personal study:

Easter is not a one time of year event. The resurrection story is to be told and embraced throughout the year. We read it in the gospels. Today we will study it in the writings of Paul. Paul has addressed many issues in the complex and meaningful book of 1 Corinthians. In Chapter 15, he affirms the resurrection of Christ and declares ***“Death has been swallowed up in victory. Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” 1 Corinthians 15: 54b, 57.***

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

In verse 2 of 1 Corinthians 15 “**you are saved**” is present continuous ‘you are being saved’. (Editor’s note – this refers to the original Greek text.) There is a sense in which salvation is once for all (as in ‘received’, v.1) and another sense in which it is progressive (cf. 1:18, 2 Cor. 2:15). We do not exhaust the meaning of salvation by our experience when we first believe. Salvation goes on from strength to strength and from glory to glory (Morris, L. **Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. 1 Corinthians**. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Revised Edition, 1990, page 200).

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly in the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain (verse 2). You have believed in vain may mean “without due consideration, in a haphazard manner. If people profess to believe the gospel, but have not given due consideration to what that implies and what it demands, they do not really trust Christ. Their belief is groundless and empty. They lack saving faith” (Morris, page 201).

We are reminded of the parable of the sower which Jesus told. ***A farmer went to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown. Matthew 13: 3-8.***

Focusing on the Meaning:

1 Corinthians 15: 3-11 – Fact of resurrection established

“These verses give us the most concise definition of the content of the gospel to be found anywhere in Scripture. Christ’s death, burial and resurrection are said to have been “according to the Scriptures” (See Isaiah 53; Luke 24:27). These events not only happened at the time, place, and in the manner described in Scriptures but also for the purpose and with the results described in Scripture. He died in our place, satisfying the demands of God’s holiness. He rose bodily from the grave. Through personal faith in Him, we can be delivered from eternal punishment and live eternally in His presence. The content of our proclamation is the Word of God” (**The Disciple’s Study Bible**, Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, page 1466).

“If there is no resurrection” (verse 3) has been called “the world’s blackest assumption”. If dead people do not come alive again, that means Christ was not raised from the dead (verse 16). If Christ is not alive, we have no forgiveness of sin and no hope of life after death (verses 17-19). We who have believed Christ lives are to be most pitied because we have given up much of what the world calls fun (verse 19).” (Rainey, F. Professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Cochrane, Alberta, Canada, 2009. Dr. Rainey has made other contributions to the study of 1 Corinthians).

Verse 3 declares that it is of “first importance” that Christ died for our sins, was buried and resurrected on the third day according to the Scriptures. This is the heart of the Christian message. It is not enough to accept the wise teachings of Jesus; we must affirm the reality of his death, burial and resurrection.

Paul recounts the resurrection appearances: to Peter (John 21: 15-24) and to the Twelve (Luke 24: 36-49; John 20: 19-21) and later to five hundred of the believers (this is likely the occasion mentioned in Matthew 28:16). He appeared to James and all the apostles and then to Paul in a vision on the road to Damascus (Acts 9: 4-5). Some of those who saw Jesus have died, but others were still alive when Paul wrote.

1 Corinthians 15: 12-20 – Denial of resurrection refuted

Paul asks how some could say that there was no resurrection of the dead (verse 12). These believers who had once accepted the resurrection as true may have been influenced by their earlier heritage.

The Jews had a limited understanding of life after death. The Sadducees (one of two powerful Jewish groups who gave leadership) believed there was no life after death. Barclay quotes J.E. McFadyen as saying “There are few more wonderful things than this in the long story of religion, that for centuries men lived the noblest lives, doing their duties and bearing their sorrows, without hope of future reward; and they did this because in all their going out and coming in they were very sure of God” (Barclay, Wm. **The Daily Study Bible**, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954, pages 154-155).

This is a rather radical thought for evangelical Christians who may focus on an eternal reward in heaven to the exclusion of an emphasis on living a holy life on earth.

Other Jews believed in Sheol which was the land of the dark and of the forgotten dead (Psalm 115: 17; Isaiah 38:18; Psalm 39:13) (Barclay, page 154).

Throughout the long Jewish history which included much defeat and captivity, the Jews began to assume that, as they were God’s chosen people, there must be another life to be anticipated. Basically, Old Testament thought about the afterlife is not clear. However, powerful declarations do exist such as David’s declaration quoted by Peter in Acts 2: 25-28 ***My body will live in hope because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with the joy of your presence.***

Another group in the Corinthian church were the Greeks. Greek thought had no difficulty with the idea of immortality of the soul, but the Greek would never have thought of believing in the resurrection of the body (Barclay, page 156).

The immortality of the soul involved for the Greek the obliteration, the extinction, the complete dissolution of the body. The body was matter, the source of all evil. After death, the spark of divine nature valued by philosophers was returned to God and was absorbed in the divinity of which it was a part. This view is quite alive today in many expressions of spirituality.

Paul's view was very different. "If we begin with one immense fact the rest will become clear. The Christian belief is that after death individuality will survive, that you will still be you and I will still be I. Beside that we have to set another immense fact...to the Christian the body was not evil. It could not be after the incarnation (Jesus coming to earth as a man – writer's note) . To the Christian therefore the life to come involves the total man, body and soul." (Barclay, pages 156-157).

Paul meant that a person's personality would survive. We will have a spiritual body. Through the body our personality will be expressed. We will survive as the person we are on earth. At the same time, all things will be new. These are difficult, but wonderful concepts.

So for Paul the resurrection of Jesus was supremely important. Paul declares that if there is no bodily resurrection, then Christ had not been raised and the whole Christian movement collapses.

Without the resurrection, our faith is fruitless and futile, because we will have trusted in that which was false. The preaching of Paul and others would be lies. And those believers who died in faith had been left to eternal condemnation and misery, because they had trusted vainly in falsehood.

Occasionally one may hear it said that one should accept Christ because they have nothing to lose. If the message of the resurrection is real then they will live with Christ in heaven; if it is not real, their eternal destiny will be what it would have been anyway. This view negates what Paul is teaching here. We can be sure of the resurrection of Christ and we can be sure that we will live with him after death.

The belief in the resurrection of the believer and the resurrection of Christ are intertwined. If there is no resurrection of the believer, then we are miserable creatures to have placed our hope in something that will not happen. We live in the firm assurance of life after death with Christ.

Paul declared belief in the resurrection of Christ an essential condition to salvation in Romans 10:9 ***That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.***

1 Corinthians 15: 35-44 – The Resurrection Body

In these verses Paul undertakes “to express the inexpressible and to describe the indescribable” (Barclay, 175).

Paul uses the common illustration of a grain being buried in the ground and growing into a plant which is radically different from the seed planted, but it is related to the seed and is far more glorious and abundant.

We cannot begin to imagine what our resurrection body will look like, but we can be assured that it will be more wonderful than anything we can envision. The resurrection body will be suited to our heavenly existence.

Thomas could see the nail prints in the hands of Christ following his resurrection, yet Jesus needed no open door through which to enter the upper room (Luke 20: 24-29). The believers on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35) did not recognize the resurrected Christ as he journeyed with them until he was ready for them to do so. Then he disappeared from their sight. Yet other disciples and believers had no trouble recognizing him.

We need not worry about our resurrection body. It will be just right for us!

1 Corinthians 15: 50-57 – Victory over death

“The sin of man initiated a sequence through which all mankind has gone. The law of God clarified what sin is and pronounced God’s judgment on it. God’s declaration to Eve about the consequences of sin (Genesis 3:3) has been confirmed throughout history. Sin has led to death. However, Christ has removed both the pain (sting) and power (victory) of sin through His resurrection” Harbour, B. ***Bible Book Study Commentary, 1 Corinthians***. Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board, October, November, December 1991, pages 130-131).

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ (verse 57) is one of the greatest praise affirmations in the entire Bible. We cannot even read the sentence without singing or shouting it. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ. Amen and Amen.

The praise of verse 57 is completed in verse 58: ***Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.***

The victory is ours; therefore we can stand firm. We can give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord knowing that what we do has eternal consequences. Sharing the gospel – the good news is our life’s work. It is the great, overwhelming purpose of every Christian’s life.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

This study should affirm and solidify the belief of those who study it that Christ was indeed resurrected and that believers have the assurance that we will live with him after death.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

No Hope Without This

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

1 Corinthians 15:3-20,35-44,50-57

Background

1 Corinthians 15:1-58

Main Idea

Because Jesus' resurrection was real, Christians have the hope that we also will be resurrected from the dead.

Question to Explore

What hope do we have of being resurrected from the dead?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to summarize Paul's teachings on Jesus' resurrection and to testify of their own hope of resurrection.

Connect with Life:

Open the study by sharing this thought: The hope of immortality is a reality for most people even those who profess no religious belief. For some that hope rests in the work accomplished – art; literature; service to mankind. For others, it rests in their children and grandchildren.

The hope of heaven is a comfort to Christians especially in times of illness and the loss of a loved one. Yet confusion exists about how that heavenly existence will be. Much energy has been expended in explaining the last times. Paul states ***We will all be changed - In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet (verse 52).***

Today's lesson will not answer all of our questions about eternity, but it should reassure us that our hope for eternity has its basis in the resurrection of Christ. It is a true and sure hope.

Guide the Study:

Write the outline for the study on a whiteboard or large piece of paper or newsprint.

1 Corinthians 15: 3-11 – Fact of resurrection established

1 Corinthians 15: 12-20 – Denial of resurrection refuted

1 Corinthians 15: 35-44 – The resurrection body

1 Corinthians 15: 50-58 – Victory over death

1 Corinthians 15: 3-11 – Fact of resurrection established

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 15: 3-11.

Inquire: Are the people to whom Paul writes this letter believers? (Yes, Paul says he preached to them; they received the message and took a stand on it. By the gospel they were saved and are being saved.)

From the **Teacher Preparation** materials (Verse 2 is discussed in the background material) share with the group that we can consider salvation as both a point-in-time experience and a process.

Comment on the importance of understanding rather than just learning Bible facts. Emphasize the importance of Bible study for those who profess Christ.

Say: Knowledge (knowing words, ideas, even facts) is necessary for truly understanding something. However, knowledge without understanding something does not lead to a change in a person's attitude regarding something or acceptance of its value. To truly value something like scripture, we must first understand it.

Have someone reread verses 3-4.

Ask: How important was the message Paul preached? (Of first importance).

Then question: What are others words that might be used to describe the importance of the message? (highest priority, Number 1 issue, etc.)

Say: "These verses give us the most concise definition of the content of the gospel to be found anywhere in Scripture" (*The Disciples' Study Bible*, page 1466).

Seek an answer: What is that definition found in verses 3 and 4? (Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried and was raised on the third day.)

Comment: Consider the number of eyewitnesses to the resurrection which Paul mentions. Can that many eyewitnesses be ignored?

1 Corinthians 15: 12-20 – Denial of resurrection refuted

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 15: 12-10

Comment on the statement “If there is no resurrection” is the “world’s blackest assumption”.

Give time to consider: What would it mean for us if there had been no resurrection?

From the Teacher Preparation material explain the Jewish and Greek views toward life after death.

Add: This knowledge should help us to understand why the Corinthians were questioning the resurrection.

Emphasize this: Let’s look at how the Christian belief about immortality differs from these beliefs. A well known and much read Christian writer said: “If we begin with one immense fact the rest will become clear. The Christian belief is that after death individuality will survive, that you will still be you and I will still be I. Beside that we have to set another immense fact...to the Christian the body was not evil. It could not be after the incarnation (Jesus coming to earth as a man –writer’s note). To the Christian therefore the life to come involves the total man, body and soul.” (Barclay, pages 156-157.)

Encourage a brief discussion: How important to the Christian belief is the reality of Christ’s resurrection? (Totally important – our faith would be meaningless without it).

Have someone read Romans 10:9.

1 Corinthians 15: 35-44 – The resurrection body

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 15: 35-44.

Inquire: What illustration does Paul use in verse 36-38? (The seed is planted and comes up in another form which is related to the seed, but more abundant).

Ask: How do we apply the illustration of the seed to our resurrected body? (We will not be the same yet we will more complete. Admit that this concept is a difficult one to comprehend.)

Have someone reread verses 42-43.

Allow the group to identify characteristics of the resurrected body.

Suggest that our bodies may be like the body of Jesus after he was resurrected.

Assure the group: We need not worry about our resurrection body. It will just right for us!

1 Corinthians 15: 50-58 – Victory over death

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 15: 50-58.

Examine with the church how Paul describes the end of time in verse 52.

Comment: Sin always has a consequence. We begin teaching children this at a very young age. We experience it throughout our life. Bur the message of the resurrection is that the consequence of our sin no longer exists after death. ***“Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”.***

Ask: How do reading or hearing these words make you feel?

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Say: Verse 58 tells us that if all this is true we are to stand firm and give ourselves to the work of the Lord. What we do for Him has eternal consequences.

Conclude by saying together ***“Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”.***

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

No Hope Without This **1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 35-44, 50-58**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Discuss the following statement:

“If we begin with one immense fact the rest will become clear. The Christian belief is that after death individuality will survive, that you will still be you and I will still be I.

Beside that we have to set another immense fact...to the Christian was body was not evil. It could not be after the incarnation (Jesus coming to earth as a man – writer’s note) . To the Christian therefore the life to come involves the total man, body and soul (Barclay, pages 156-157).

3

Copy this section for the Worship Time leader.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

No Hope Without This **1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 35-44, 50-57**

Beginning the Service:

There is a Redeemer, *The Worship Hymnal* # 279; CCLI # 11483

Offering:

Praying for the World:

Home churches in Uganda are using the materials from homechurchonline.com. The writers and editors of homechurchonline.com were greatly encouraged by this news. As a user of homechurchonline.com materials, pray for others to know about the availability of these materials. Pray also for those who write and edit these materials on a volunteer basis. Pray that they are faithful to the task.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Thanks be to God

Paul wrote exuberantly in 1 Corinthians 15: 57 ***But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

That same exuberance was expressed by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2: 22-39.

Peter spoke of the purpose of God in the crucifixion, and in the resurrection.

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witness to this fact, Peter affirmed. He continued, **Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.**

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.

That day about three thousand accepted this message, were baptized and were added to the group of believers.

Peter’s relationship to Christ was an interesting one. Peter was one of the first called to be a disciple. **As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him Matthew 4: 18-20.**

Peter was with Jesus throughout his earthly ministry. He heard the Sermon on the Mount and the parables. He received the teachings of Jesus to large crowds and to the small group of disciples. He had been sent out by Jesus to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness (Matthew 10: 1). He had seen Jesus heal countless people even his own mother-in-law.

He had seen Jesus walking on water and had himself walked on water until his faith failed.

He was called Blessed when he affirmed **You are the Christ, the Son of the living God** when Jesus asked **Who do you say I am?** (Matthew 16: 17).

Yet Peter fell asleep during the time Jesus had asked him to pray while Jesus agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to his crucifixion.

At the last supper, Peter had stated **Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.**

Jesus said that Peter would, in fact, deny him three times that very night and that terrible prophesy was all too soon a reality.

Peter was not at the foot of the cross when Jesus died.

He went to the tomb after hearing of the empty tomb from Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James and others with them. **Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away wondering to himself what had happened.** He wondered to himself what had happened.

Later that day Jesus appeared to the disciples who were together in a locked room. Luke recorded **Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them. This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things Luke 24: 45-48.**

In that locked room, Jesus opened the minds of the disciples in a way they had not experienced before. Even though Peter had said, **You are the Christ, the Son of the living God** he still had not grasped the reality that the kingdom of God was a spiritual one, not an earthly one. He did not understand the necessity of Christ's death nor have the capacity to believe in the resurrection.

But the presence of the resurrected Christ in the midst of the disciples changed all that. Now Peter could understand and he was given the power to preach which resulted in many, many people coming to Christ.

In the Bible study today, we considered Paul's words **By this gospel you are saved.** The gospel was that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day.

The Greek word used here for saved indicates an ongoing process as well as a completed act. We are saved in a declaration of faith and we go on being saved as God works in our lives.

Peter certainly believed what he said when he declared **You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.** He had been in the constant presence of Jesus for three years. Yet it was the presence of the resurrected Christ which led him to an understanding of the purposes of God in the world.

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Call to Commitment:

It is our understanding of the resurrected Christ that enables us to enter into both a relationship to Christ as Saviour and as the ongoing, abiding One who guides us ever deeper in our spiritual walk. We rejoice today in the resurrection of Jesus and in the hope of eternal life which that gives to us.

Concluding the Service:

Read the following scripture as a benediction or, from the copy on the next page, have someone else read it:

***¹I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.***

***²Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.***

***⁵The Lord is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.***

***⁶The Lord protects the simplehearted;
when I was in great need, he saved me.***

***⁷Be at rest once more, O my soul,
for the Lord has been good to you.***

Psalms 116:1-2; 5-7

For a person to read as the benediction at the conclusion of the service.

***¹I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.***

***²Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.***

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Psalms 116:1-2; 5-7