

### Lesson 7—April 12, 2020

DEVOTIONAL READING: Isaiah 53:4-12

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Mark 16; 1 Corinthians 15

PRINT PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 12-14, 20-23, 42-45

**Key Verses**—If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.  
(1 Corinthians 15:19-20, KJV)

.....

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. (1 Corinthians 15:19-20, NIV)

## Hope for a Better Life



### Teacher's Resource Kit

- Townsend Press Commentary: Teacher's Edition
- Townsend Press Flashlight Commentary
- Bible Studies for Adults
- Bible Studies for Young Adults
- (Optional: Adults/Young Adults Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])

### Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, the participants should be able to do these things:

- Contrast the love of the women with the disciples' response to their actions (Mark 16:1-9 [Background Scripture]).
- Appreciate the women's preparation of Jesus for His coming death and burial (Mark 16:1-9 [Background Scripture]).
- Embrace the call to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ despite ridicule or resistance.



### \*Key Terms

**Crucified** (Mark 16:6 [Background Scripture])—Greek: *stauroo* (**stow-ro'-o**): fixed to the cross; drove down stakes; destroyed; mortified.

**Resurrection** (1 Corinthians 15:12)—Greek: *anastasis* (**an-as'-tas-is**): a raising to life again.

**Vain** (1 Corinthians 15:2)—Greek: *eiké* (**i-kay'**): without just cause, reason, purpose; empty.

\*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 4)

### Preparing the Lesson

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher's Edition* for

an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.

- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!”).
- This guide offers two options for leading your class.
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.
- See page 7 for how to plan each week’s lesson.
- See page 6 for a student *Personal Growth Plan*.
- See page 113 for the *Faith in 3-D* as it explains how to live out their faith in the world.

## WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People struggle with the probability and possibility of life after death. How can resurrection from death provide life that is different from what is experienced before death? In 1 Corinthians and Mark, only life through the resurrection of Christ engenders hope for authentic justice.

## THE LESSON IN FOCUS

Throughout the ages the hope for a better life has motivated humankind to use their ingenuity, innate skills, and even their curiosity to discover better environments in which to live. Ancient cultures, including those who came to these shores, set out across the vast oceans seeking deliverance from tyranny and injustice for themselves and their posterity. A “better life” for most people focuses on the material and access to “creature comforts”—things that will eventually decay, be lost, or be left behind when we die. We should all seek to live good lives and build foundations for a brighter future for our children and the generations following us. As noble as this is, without the surety of something beyond the experiences of this life, whether positive or negative, the search for a better life here is a futile endeavor. The real hope for a better life is not in things but in a Person—Jesus Christ—and that hope is now and beyond our physical existence on this earth. This hope is based on the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

The doctrine of the Resurrection is the most pivotal point of Christianity. If Christ was not raised from the dead, then all we teach and believe is in vain. This was the central point of emphasis in Paul’s teaching about it in 1 Corinthians 15. He was not attempting to convince the Corinthians to believe that Christ had been raised from the dead but, rather, to convince them that they would be likewise raised to new life after death. His challenge was to refute and disprove the Gnostic teaching that the body was totally evil, but the soul was good. In addition, Greek culture taught and believed the immortality of the soul but rejected any idea that the body would or could be raised from the dead. In the opening verses of chapter 15, Paul reviews undeniable evidence of Christ’s resurrection, explains its absolute necessity, and the nature of the resurrected body of the believer.

## OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below)

1. What does Paul present as the first source of evidence of Christ’s resurrection? (verses 3-4)
2. Why do you think Christ’s post-Resurrection appearance to Peter was mentioned by Paul? (verse 5)
3. How does Paul explain the necessity of the resurrection of Christ in verses 13 and 14?
4. What is the meaning of Christ’s being the “first fruits” of those who are asleep? (verse 20)

## INSIGHTS

This lesson is being studied on Easter Sunday or Resurrection Sunday as some identify it. The purpose of this special day is to reflect on the awesome sacrifice our Savior made to secure our salvation and the surety that we too will be resurrected to a better life when He returns to establish His just kingdom. As we intentionally and specifically worship and praise Him today for this life-changing event, let us move beyond our “Hallelujahs” and “Thank You Jesus” to accepting the challenge to live godly lives, confront and challenge injustice, promote justice, and proclaim to the downtrodden

and the lost that hope for a better life now and after death is still available.

## EXPLORATION

This doctrinal lesson produces a unique opportunity to ensure that your students understand it and its importance to the Christian faith. Emphasize that without the Resurrection, salvation would have not been possible. Also, focus on the contextual purpose of Paul's teaching—to convince the Corinthians that Christ's resurrection ensured theirs (and ours). Finally, challenge your students to list ways that the resurrection of our Savior should motivate us to work for justice here and now.

## ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

### Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

#### KJV

**MOREOVER, BRETHREN, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;**

**2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in *vain*.**

**3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;**

**4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:**

**5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:**

**6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.**

**7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.**

**8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.**

#### NIV

**NOW, BROTHERS and sisters, I want to remind**

**you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.**

**2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in *vain*.**

**3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,**

**4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**

**5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.**

**6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.**

**7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,**

**8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.**

The most extensive teaching on the doctrine of the Resurrection in the Bible is in 1 Corinthians 15. It must be understood and internalized that believing this doctrine is foundational to Christianity. In verses 1-11, Paul began his instruction by providing reminders of infallible proofs that Christ's resurrection was a fact. Paul's goal in this context was to convince the Corinthians that, like the Christ in whom they believed (verse 1), they too would one day be raised with Him to enjoy eternal life. Paul emphasized that what they professed to believe had to be the result of genuine faith or it would be worthless (verse 2) and they would not continue to believe the message of the Gospel. Like an effective lawyer, Paul next presented five pieces of evidence that Christ was bodily raised from the dead. First, is the direct teaching of the Scripture (verses 3-4). Christ's coming as the Messiah to suffer, die, and be raised from the dead was predicted and proclaimed in the Scriptures, either directly or figuratively (see Zechariah 12:10; Psalms 16:8-11; 22; Isaiah 25; 53; Job 19:25-26). Throughout the Law and the Prophets, God's eternal plan for humankind's redemption

was revealed. Perhaps Paul used the teaching of the Scripture first because he was sure of their reliability as the only true source of what was required of humankind to be in a right relationship with God (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Next, Paul listed eyewitnesses who had actually seen Christ's post-Resurrection body and interacted with Him (verses 5-8). He began with Peter (Cephas) and then the other apostles, an unidentified group of five hundred at one time, James (most likely Jesus' brother), and himself. Paul considered himself "abnormally" born because he was not with Christ during His earthly ministry, but Christ had appeared to him in His resurrected bodily form. The fact that He had appeared to these eyewitnesses verified His resurrection, many of whom the Corinthians could consult since they were still alive at that time.

The Resurrection is fundamental to the Christian hope for a better life where justice prevails. Believers who have evidence of the transforming new birth have this testimony: "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25), and are assured that His resurrection guarantees theirs.



## DISCUSSION STARTERS

*(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)*

- **Adult Question:**

*How can the first two verses of 1 Corinthians 15 be effectively used in evangelism?*

- **Young Adult Questions:**

*The women followers of Jesus played a major role in the events after His resurrection. Why do you think Jesus visited the women first? How can we as the church ensure that they are not forgotten?*

## Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:12-14, 20-23

### KJV

**12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

**13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:**

**14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.**

.....

**20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**

**21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.**

**22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.**

**23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.**

### NIV

**12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

**13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.**

**14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.**

.....

**20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

**21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.**

**22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.**

**23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.**

Was Jesus Christ raised from the dead and, if so, why was it necessary (verse 12)? These were questions that were being raised by some among the church in Corinth in spite of the clear teaching of Christ and the apostle about it. Paul answered these questions by presenting negative consequences that would occur if it were not a reality (verse 13). His response is both logical and theological. Paul argues that if there is no resurrection of the dead then (1) Christ did not rise (verse 13); and (2) if He did not rise, then the preaching of the Gospel and



faith in Christ are meaningless and are of no value (verse 14). As we may have heard preachers of a past generation say, “We might as well close up our hymn books and Bibles and go home.” Paul forms hypothetically negative consequences to positive consequences (verses 20-23). He interjects an affirmative “But” to emphasize that what he previously hypothesized is not so—Christ **was** raised from the dead (verse 20). Not only did He rise, but also, His resurrection was the prototype or forerunner of the resurrection of those who will die in Him (verse 20b; see Revelation 14:13). The first fruits consisted of the first barley sheaf of the harvest offered to God, consecrating the full harvest, implying that later, like fruit would follow. Christ’s resurrection, then, was the earnest or pledge and proof of the resurrection of all who come to Him in faith. Paul explained that because of Adam’s disobedience, death came into the world and to all related to him through the natural birth (see Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 5:12). Through Christ’s obedience and those related to Him through spiritual birth, resurrection will come in the order prescribed by Him (verses 21-23). Christ’s resurrection was necessary because it is the surety of believers’ future resurrection when He comes again. It should also be the catalyst to awaken and revive the desire to work diligently to help eliminate social injustice and to proclaim hope for a better life now, while we await His coming.



## DISCUSSION STARTERS

*(Please review the appropriate student book’s related biblical exposition section.)*

- **Adult Question:**  
*How should the surety of the Resurrection affect how we live in this present age?*
- **Young Adult Question:**  
*To us believers, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a sign of hope for justice. What can we do as Christians to keep hope alive?*

## Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:42-45

### KJV

**42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:**

**43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:**

**44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.**

**45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.**

### NIV

**42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;**

**43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;**

**44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.**

**45 So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.**

Paul concludes in his teaching that our physical bodies cannot inherit the kingdom of God and that dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. Here, he describes the nature of the kind of resurrected bodies that will eternally live with God. He uses the vast differences in God’s natural universe to contrast how our resurrection bodies will be different from these earthly ones. The natural body is weak, perishable, and subject to decay. Therefore, the resurrected body will be raised imperishable (verse 42). We can attest that every decade of life brings about physical changes in our natural bodies. They grow weak and more susceptible to disease and finally to death. Thank God for the hope of a body that will be durable, undefiled, and last throughout eternity. Second, Paul explains that the resurrected body will be one of honor rather than

one of dishonor (verse 43a). Sin rendered the natural body incapable of pleasing God as He originally created it. The very desire of humankind became evil and the body became an instrument of dishonor to God. By contrast, the resurrected body is free from the very presence of sin and will be raised in glory and used to praise and please God throughout eternity. The natural body is also characterized by physical and spiritual weakness. We cannot fully protect our bodies from every possible danger and risk. Spiritually, our bodies are subject to the power of sin and we continually struggle to overcome that power. Resurrected bodies will not have to defend themselves against temptation because they will be raised in power to be just like Jesus (verse 43b). Our earthly bodies are designed for this natural or physical environment. They are endowed by the Creator to function well for living on earth. However, just as Adam gave his nature to all who followed him, Christ gave His spiritual nature to those who belong to Him (verses 44-45).



## DISCUSSION STARTERS

*(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)*

- **Adult Question:**

*How can we maintain an appropriate focus on the joy of having a better life beyond this one and not become "heavenly focused" and "earthly useless"?*

- **Young Adult Question:**

*As believers, we look forward to a new resurrected life. As a group, make a list of the things we won't miss here in our natural bodies.*

## LIFE APPLICATION

- **Refer to Adult Book**

*(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)*

— Belief in and acceptance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ can be considered a personal

challenge and call to action. He left the work of building a just kingdom for all in this present world in the hands of His people today. He has also empowered and equipped us to do even greater or more extensive works on earth than He had done. Consider making a personal commitment to use your unique spiritual gift(s) in some way this week that will give someone hope for a better life.

*(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)*

— The chaotic and decaying condition of our present world can make hope for a better life and social justice seem unattainable. Yet, the reality of Christ's resurrection is the foundation and motivation believers need to courageously strive to redeem the times by living godly lives, providing encouragement to the oppressed and suffering, and intentionally proclaiming the Good News to the lost.

- **Refer to Young Adult Book**

*(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)*

— On this Resurrection Sunday, we honor and celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As Christians, let us make it a priority to honor Him 365 days a year. He is risen!

*(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)*

— In today's society, there are many false teachings that can cause us to go astray. We must remember the Gospel that Paul preached and keep it alive in our hearts and in our daily walk with Christ.

## NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, April 19, 2020, is "Justice Prevails." The Devotional Reading is Luke 19:11-26, the Background Scripture is Esther 3; 5; 7, and the Printed Text is Esther 7:1-10.



## Closing Prayer

Dear God, thank You for the hope of a better life secured by the resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We praise You for the knowledge and assurance that Your just kingdom will come, and we will be a part of it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

<b>MONDAY</b> , April 13	"Mordecai Refuses to Bow to Haman"	(Esther 3:1-6)
<b>TUESDAY</b> , April 14	"Haman Sets a Decree to Destroy the Jews"	(Esther 3:7-11)
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> , April 15	"Haman Builds Gallows to Hang Mordecai"	(Esther 5:9-14)
<b>THURSDAY</b> , April 16	"The Decree against the Jews Is Struck Down"	(Esther 8:3-8, 16-17)
<b>FRIDAY</b> , April 17	"Festival of Purim Established"	(Esther 9:18-23, 29-32)
<b>SATURDAY</b> , April 18	"Mordecai Advances Welfare of the Jews"	(Esther 10:1-3)
<b>SUNDAY</b> , April 19	"Esther's Plea and Haman's Punishment"	(Esther 7:1-10)

## INTERACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH

### YOUNG ADULT FOCUS

This lesson plan is designed to provide a more interactive approach to the teaching of today's lesson. The focus is on student-teacher involvement. It can be formulated to use with the *Bible Studies for Young Adults* quarterly.

#### Materials needed:

- The movie *The Hurricane*
- Computers/Speakers
- Wi-Fi

#### **Interaction—Introducing the Lesson** (10-15 minutes)

- Introduce today's topic: "Hope for a Better Life."
- Have someone read the "Life Happens" section on page 37 aloud and then, as a class, discuss the corresponding questions.
- Share the Unifying Principle: "People struggle with the probability and possibility of life after death. How can resurrection from death provide life that is different from what is experienced before death? In 1 Corinthians and Mark, only life through the resurrection of Christ engenders hope for authentic justice."

#### **Exploring the Word** (25-30 minutes)

- Show the clip "Take You Home" from the movie *The Hurricane*, directed by Norman Jewison. This can be found at [www.wingclips.com](http://www.wingclips.com). Share this: "Rubin gets a phone call from supporters, who are now devoted full-time to

his cause that gives him the hope of freedom." Discuss how hope in Jesus gives others hope for justice.

- Have someone read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.
- Discuss the Gospel as it is presented here, being sure to list foundational tenants of the Gospel.
- Have someone read Mark 16:1-8 and discuss how the story of the Resurrection relates to Paul's teaching about the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15.
- Have someone read 1 Corinthians 15:12-14, 20-23.
- Unpack the meaning of the resurrection of Christ as a sign of hope for justice.
- As a class, create a list of ways the Resurrection motivates us to work for justice with hope.
- Have someone read 1 Corinthians 15:42-45.
- Explore what it means that Jesus is a life-giving spirit.

#### **Life Application** (10 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your Life" section on page 42.
- Discuss ways that we can honor Christ's resurrection through acts of justice.

#### **Life Response** (5 minutes)

- Read aloud the "Your World!" section on page 42.
- Close in prayer and remind the students to prepare for next week's lesson.