

die. His solution is better! God's solution to death is the resurrection in heaven. Which would you rather have? Do you want to live forever on earth? Or would you rather rise and live forever in heaven? I know what I'd choose! We just have to wait our turn. *"But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him."*

"Christ, the firstfruits." Do you understand that? Jesus is the firstfruits. Each spring, the Sunday after the Passover was a special holiday for the Jews. It was the day of "firstfruits." On that Sunday, each family presented to God the first sheaves of their spring harvest. It was act of faith. They trusted that since God had given them their first sheaves of grain, many more sheaves would follow. Now, what day did Jesus rise from the dead? The Sunday after the Passover. On the very day that all the Israelites were bringing their firstfruits of grain to Jerusalem, Jesus rose from the dead in Jerusalem, the *"firstfruits."* When that first tulip pokes its head through your flower bed, you know that more will follow. When that first pretty yellow dandelion shows up in your lawn, you know that lots more will follow. When you see Jesus rise from the dead, you can know that more will follow. Lots more. You! You don't only live once. You will rise.

Because this is true: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! On the night before he died, Jesus told his disciples this, *"Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy"* (John 16:22). *"No one will take away your joy."* I'd like you to try to find another religion that offers you what Jesus does. We're told today that all religions teach the same thing, right? All are different paths to the same God. What a lie! My God does not tell me to blow up airports. My God died for me. My God forgives me and you. My God tells me that I will rise. There is none like him! We have an incomparable God who does incomparable things and the result is a joy that no one can ever take away. So, put all your eggs in one basket!

People talk about the Christmas and Easter Christians. You've heard that, right? "Chreasters." People who find the time to think about church things at Christmas and Easter. But there is no such thing as a Christmas and Easter Christian. Because faith isn't making God a part of our lives. Faith is making God our lives. Faith is putting all your eggs in one basket—Jesus! If all this is a lie—then there is nothing more worthless in life. If all this is true—and it absolutely is—then there can be nothing more important in your life.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Learn to depend on him. Learn to base your life on his resurrection. Because then nothing can take away your joy. What if we get a foot of snow in April? Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! What if terrorism spreads back to our country? Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! What if you never get stronger? You only get weaker? Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! There is one truth strong enough to base your life on. There is one person strong enough to carry you. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! This Easter, put all your eggs in one basket. Amen!

1 Corinthians 15:12-23
Pastor Nathan Nass

Easter Sunday
March 23, 2016

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. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 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 his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

Put All Your Eggs in One Basket!

"Don't put all your eggs in one basket." How many times has someone given you that advice? "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." In other words, don't make everything dependent on one thing. Don't base on your life on just one idea. What if it falls through? You've got to diversify. You've got to have a good back-up plan, or you will to be disappointed. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." That's normally good advice. I hope you didn't invest all your money in oil back in June of 2014. I hope you weren't basing your future on Marco Rubio being president. It's usually not good to get too wrapped up in any one thing. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket."

Except on Easter. Easter is the one time of the year when it's good to put all your eggs in one basket. Were any of you at the big city Easter Egg Hunt yesterday? The city wisely told everyone to get there on time. Do you know why? It lasts about 47 seconds. Thousands of eggs are gone in about 47 seconds. Because there are hundreds of parents yelling at their kids, "Put all the eggs in your basket. Go! Go! Go! Put all the eggs in your basket!" On Easter, if you don't put all your eggs in one basket, you're going to miss out!

That's just the way God puts it! Only not with candy. God agrees that at Easter, it's good to put all your eggs in one basket. Here's why: Jesus' resurrection is the foundation of our Christian faith. This man Jesus says he's God. He says he died for your sins. He says that when you die, you will rise to live in heaven. How can you be sure? Jesus rose again! That's something you can base your life on. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Jesus rose, and I will too! Everything we believe about Jesus—heaven and hell, sin and forgiveness—depends on the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. God wants you to base your life on Jesus' resurrection. In fact, if you don't put all your eggs in one basket, you're going to miss out!

It's just hard for us to get "Don't put all your eggs in one basket!" out of our heads. What if all this isn't true? What if I won't rise? It's not good to be so dependent on one thing, right? Isn't it good to have a back-up plan? So what we do is try to cover our bases. Diversify. Here's an example: My practice year as a pastor was at a growing church in a wealthy suburb of Atlanta. People there were looking for a church. Here's how it went: They found a good job—check! Then they found a spouse—check! Then they bought a beautiful house in the suburbs—check! Then they had two kids—check! There was just one little thing left to a well-rounded life—a church. That couldn't hurt, right?

It's great that those people were looking for a church, but they needed to learn that faith isn't checking God off a list. Faith is trusting God completely. Faith isn't making God a thing. It's making God the thing! It's believing that since Jesus died to take my sins away, he is my dearest treasure, and my greatest hope is to live with Jesus in heaven. Faith doesn't need a back-up plan. Faith is putting all your eggs in one basket—Jesus!

Now, you might not be ready to say that. Some of the people in the early Christian church in Corinth weren't either. As he wrote to them, the apostle Paul asked, "*But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection from the dead.*" They liked hearing about Jesus, but all this stuff about rising from the dead was just too much. It went against two common beliefs they had fixed in their minds. One was YOLO—"You only live once," so enjoy your life now. Another was the idea that all gods are really the same, so you can't be too convinced about your god. And then here came this Christian preacher saying that true peace comes from knowing that you will rise, because the one true God—Jesus Christ—died and rose for you. It sounded impossible! People don't rise. "You only live once!" Sound familiar?

"Okay," Paul said. Let's test that argument out. Let's assume for a minute that there is no resurrection of the dead. Dead people don't rise. Where do you end up? Well, "*if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.*" I guess we should all go home. If dead people don't rise, then this Easter business is one of the biggest lies around. Christ must not have risen either. In fact, "*if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead.*" If there's no resurrection, then you won't rise, Jesus didn't rise, Paul and Peter and the prophets are all liars, and the Bible is clearly wrong. So as you go, take your Bible and throw it in the trash can on your way out. How's life looking? The truth is, this is what a lot of people do, right?

But you can't stop there. "*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.*" Now that doesn't sound so good! If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then he didn't succeed in doing the one thing we needed most—forgive our sins! So here's the result: "*Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.*" If Jesus did not rise, then every tombstone in the cemetery should say the same thing: "Lost!" You could walk through the cemetery and say, "Lost!" "Lost!" "Lost!" Anything else would be a lie. This is a

big deal! "*If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.*"

Karl Marx is famous for saying that "religion is the opium of the people." To him, religion is a made-up thing that helps people get through this life. He's wrong! What Paul says is exactly the opposite. If my faith in Jesus is only for this life, I am to be pitied more than all people! In this world, Christians suffer persecution. In this world, Christians give up lots of worldly pleasures. If there's no resurrection, what a waste! If Christ didn't rise, then let's shut up the organ, throw away the flowers, and put the ham back in the freezer. Then we better cry at funerals like those who have no hope. Then we better eat and drink and be merry because tomorrow we die. Then we better smile and lie about how good of people we are, because that's all we've got going in this life. "*If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.*"

If ever you feel sad, if ever you feel disappointed, if ever you feel afraid, in that moment you're putting your hope in this life. God has placed a Jesus-sized hole in your heart that only Jesus can fill. When you try to fill that hole with anything other than Jesus, it won't fill you up. It will just rattle around! Your heart will never be truly at peace and rest until it finds rest in Jesus. That's why believing that phrase, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket," is actually the greatest barrier to love, joy, and peace in your life.

Because it's really true! Jesus really did die for you, because he loves you that much! Then, three days later, he came back to life, just like he said he would. It's really true that God has forgiven every one of your sins. It's really true that every person who believes in Jesus will rise and live in heaven. You don't have to live in a world of "what ifs". You don't need any spiritual back-up plan. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! So, put all your eggs in one basket! I like how a different pastor put it, "I'm a simple man. If somebody predicts his own death and resurrection and then pulls it off, I'm with him!"

It's surprising that so many people deny Jesus' resurrection. It is hard to think of any event in history that is more certain. Just think about it: How hard is it to prove that someone is dead? All Jesus' enemies had to do—at any moment in the last 2000 years—was show that Jesus was still dead. How hard is that? But no one could do it. And the ones who saw Jesus, who absolutely knew the truth—like Peter and James and Paul—they were so convinced that Jesus lives that they went on to die rather than deny that truth. The fact that they were willing to risk their lives for Jesus showed how convinced they were of his resurrection. They saw him!

Paul states it pretty simply, "*for since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*" What an amazing promise! Just as certainly as people die, that's how certain we can be that we will rise! People say there's two things in life that are certain: death and taxes. That's really not true. There are three things in life that are certain. Death, taxes, and resurrection. Because Jesus rose, we too will rise. God's solution to death is not that people won't