

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that if Christ is not raised from the dead, our faith is in vain. As our society drifts further into immorality, uncertainty and unbelief, it is our duty and joy to explain and defend our Christian faith.

The cornerstone of our faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. During the weeks of Eastertide in my pastor's letters I will be explaining various ways modern people deal with the resurrection, and I will give you some answers to their questions.

The first thing we must get clear is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was an actual historical event. The New Testament makes no bones about it. The disciples met Jesus Christ in the flesh. He was dead. Now He was alive. He was not a ghost. They touched Him. They ate meals with Him.

The first attack on the resurrection is an attack by modernist Christians who do not believe this. Instead, they say that Jesus' resurrection was a story the disciples made up to explain the fact that they still held Jesus' memory as something precious.

The theory goes like this: "The resurrection story is a way of saying that despite Jesus' tragic death His disciples still loved Him and tried to follow the beautiful teachings He had given them."

This is harder to believe than the resurrection itself! These were hard headed, sensible, working class men. They knew that when a person died, he didn't rise again. They knew the difference between a beautiful story and cold, hard facts.

Furthermore, are we to believe that these men gave up everything and eventually died martyr's deaths for a mere story or fairy tale? Don't you think when they were about to be tortured and killed that they would have said, "Hold on! It was only a story. We didn't mean for you to take that resurrection stuff literally!"

No. Jesus' disciples recorded in the New Testament what they actually experienced. There were hundreds of witnesses. If they had been making up a meaningful story about their dead friend, plenty of people would have corrected them.

Instead, we have to take the gospel accounts at face value. The disciples experienced something that had never happened before: a man had risen from the dead. This is why they went on to change the world--because the event of the resurrection really does change everything.

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker