

WHAT IF?

Scripture Reading: Read 1 Corinthians 15

One of the staples of science fiction movies, books and television shows is the alternate timeline storyline. You've seen it haven't you? Something happens that allows history to be altered and a new reality is established. The main character(s) often have to go back in time and fix the problem so that the timeline is restored.

Storywriters of today, however, didn't invent this type of storyline. God did. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God by yielding to Satan's temptations, they opened the door to sin and death for the human race. They started an alternate timeline for themselves and the universe that God did not intend; one with disastrous consequences. The only solution to the problem was for God to step into time and space and correct the timeline by offering the life of His Son upon the cross for humanity's sins and raising Him from the dead on the third day. In this way, Jesus put us back on track to be with the Father forever in a new heavens and a new earth at the end of the age.

Unfortunately, the Corinthians didn't believe that a resurrection from the dead was possible. Without the resurrection, though, the alternate reality would become permanent. Paul makes this clear through a "What if" scenario. What if Jesus had not been raised from the dead?

- 1) Paul said his preaching would be useless.
- 2) Our faith would be useless and futile
- 3) Paul would have been found a false witness of God
- 4) We would still be in our sins
- 5) Those who have died are lost
- 6) We are to be pitied more than all
- 7) This life is all there is
- 8) We gain nothing
- 9) The devil still rules and sin and death are still our masters

That kind of alternate reality is a terrifying prospect, isn't it? Thank God that it's not the case. As Paul notes, "*But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*" Oh, what a glorious future now awaits us:

- 1) We have the promise of a resurrected body
- 2) Sin's penalty has been paid
- 3) The law's demands have been met
- 4) The devil has been defeated
- 5) Death has been defeated and swallowed up in Christ's victory
- 6) We have eternal life
- 7) Our labor is not in vain

No wonder Paul encouraged the church: "*Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord...*"

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Compare the two lists above. Spend some time giving thanks to the Lord that He restored God's timeline for your life.

Take-a-way: *Christ stepped into time to restore God's timeline of hope and life.*