

## Scripture and Background Information for April 21-27

To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

### Background for 1 Corinthians 15:17-20

Letters to the early churches like the church in Corinth were written for two main reasons: to encourage or to correct. Both 1 and 2 Corinthians are written mainly with the second reason in mind. Caught between a completely new worldview that came with Christ and the philosophies of the ancient world, Paul had to correct pagan thought, Greek thought, Roman thought, and Jewish thought. These early Christians brought a lot of baggage with them when they came to Christ. Paul sets out in 1 Corinthians to correct that thinking.

After spending much of 1 Corinthians correcting aspects of the Christian worldview, Paul begins speaking of the Resurrection in chapter 15. He begins the chapter by simply reminding them of what they already know—that this is the gospel by which they are being saved (v1-2).

In verse 12, it seems that some of the Corinthians have been doubting the resurrection of the dead which Christ has promised to those who believe in Him. Paul combats this faulty thinking by showing the Corinthians what it would mean if Christ had not been raised. In verse 20, Paul shows the hope, the freedom, and the promise that comes to all who believe in Christ.

In this passage, Paul makes it clear that the resurrection is foundational to the Christian faith. Without the resurrection, we are “most to be pitied.” Easter is the time each year when we celebrate this truth, and we are reminded of our future resurrection with Christ.

\*Fallen asleep (v18 & 20) is Paul’s way of saying those who have already died—much like we might say today, those who have “passed away”

\*“First fruits” is a commonly used Biblical phrase that means the first and best part of something larger. In the Old Testament, the first and best part of every harvest was sacrificed to God. Paul is saying that Christ is the first and best of those who will be raised. His resurrection guarantees a resurrection for all those who come after.

### Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

April 28

1 Peter 3:15

May 5

Colossians 4:5-6