VALID FAITH 3: Did Jesus Really Rise?

Chris Fluitt September 20, 2026

Key Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 15:3–8, 14, 17, 20; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 1:23

BIG IDEA: The gospel is of first importance: Jesus died, was buried, rose again, and is Lord.

VALID FAITH BUMPER

Welcome **handouts**

Valid Faith Series - Week 3

Week 1: I DON'T WANT A BORROWED FAITH.

A lot of what I first believed about Jesus WAS borrowed.

I was taught: Jesus death, burial, resurrection.

Sermons… songs… Sunday school… Easter… flannel boards…

I am GRATEFUL somebody taught me.

But eventually I had to ask:

Do I believe this because somebody TAUGHT me?
Or have I actually LOOKED at it for myself?

BORROWED FAITH MAY BE WHERE FAITH STARTS. IT SHOULDN'T BE WHERE FAITH STAYS.

HOW DO I KNOW?

I do not want to stand at a graveside and say death is not the end just because it makes people feel better.

Valed Faith 3: DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Most of us know the Easter story.

But if somebody asked: "**Why** do **YOU** believe Jesus rose?"

Could you answer?
Not Mom OR Dad.
Not Pastor Chris.
YOU.

Christianity makes a huge claim:

A DEAD MAN GOT BACK UP.

How important is this?
Strip some things away.

Baptism matters.
The Holy Spirit matters.
The Church matters.
Doctrine matters.

Strip it down until you are left with…

A WHO AND WHAT HE DO.

Bad grammar. Good theology.
WHO IS JESUS?
WHAT DID HE DO?
This is Christianity.

Let's look at Scripture.

"OF FIRST IMPORTANCE"
1 Corinthians 15:3–5 NIV
"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, that **he was buried**, that **he was raised on the third day** according to the Scriptures, and that **he appeared** to Cephas (*Peter*), and then to the Twelve."

Christ died for our sins.
He was buried.
He was raised.
He appeared.

THIS IS THE GOSPEL. The Good news!

"OF FIRST IMPORTANCE"
-Baptism only matters because Jesus died and rose. (Romans 6:3–4)

-The Holy Spirit only matters because Jesus died and rose. (Acts 2:32–33)

-The Church only exists because Jesus died and rose. (Ephesians 1:20–23)

-Our hope of eternal life only exists because Jesus died and rose. (1 Peter 1:3)

These things are important BECAUSE of what is first important.

Here is the important question…

DID IT HAPPEN? 6 points of "first importance"

Let's look inside AND outside the Bible.

1. JESUS REALLY EXISTED

Some people actually claim: “Jesus never existed.”

That does NOT fit the historical record.

Outside the New Testament we have references from:
Josephus… Tacitus… Pliny… Suetonius… Lucian…

JESUS DID NOT SIMPLY APPEAR INSIDE A CHRISTIAN BOOK.
JESUS ENTERED HISTORY.

2. JESUS REALLY DIED

TACITUS - c. AD 116

Roman historian.
NOT A CHRISTIAN.
Critical of Christianity.

“Christus… suffered the extreme penalty… at the hands of… Pontius Pilatus.”
Annals 15.44

Christianity's opponent confirms:
Christ. Pilate. Execution.

Interesting contrast: Islam teaches Jesus was NOT crucified. They believe Jesus ascended to heaven, but not that he died for our sin. (A mountain of evidence disagrees with a cross-less Christ.)

JESUS IS ON THE CROSS.

According to… Christian sources.
Roman sources. Jewish sources.
Even Christianity's critics.

3. CHRISTIANS WORSHIPED THE CRUCIFIED JESUS AS GOD

PLINY THE YOUNGER - c. AD 112

Roman governor.
NOT A CHRISTIAN.
Investigating Christians.

He reports – “Christians sang hymns to Christ “as to a god.”
Letters 10.96

JESUS IS NOT MERELY REMEMBERED.
JESUS IS WORSHIPED.

ALEXAMENOS GRAFFITO - Late 2nd / early 3rd century

Ancient Roman graffiti mocking a Christian named Alexamenos.

Caption: “ALEXAMENOS WORSHIPS HIS GOD.”

Think - bathroom-stall graffiti.

Somebody finds a wall and thinks: “You know what this wall needs? My opinion.”

They are making fun of Alexamenos:
“Look at this guy.” “What an idiot.”
“His God got crucified.”

Look at Alexamenos - hand raised toward the cross. WORSHIPPER!

ALEXAMENOS - GOOD JOB.

You lived your faith openly enough that somebody knew: “THAT GUY BELONGS TO JESUS.”

They did not mock him because Jesus WASN'T crucified.

They mocked him because he worshiped:
A CRUCIFIED GOD.

1 Corinthians 1:23 NIV
“but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,”

JESUS DIED.

But what happened next? The Resurrection?

4. THE RESURRECTION CLAIM IS THERE FROM THE BEGINNING

Remember 1 Cor 15?
“What I RECEIVED I passed on to you of first importance”

1 CORINTHIANS - c. 55 AD
Crucifixion - 30-33AD

Paul says: “What I RECEIVED I passed on to you…”

What he received is OLDER THAN THE LETTER.

Paul is repeating an earlier Christian confession. (Some call this the first Creed.)

Many scholars date that tradition extremely early - possibly within the FIRST DECADE after the crucifixion.

So resurrection is not:
Jesus dies…
100 years…

200 years…
Somebody adds resurrection.

IT IS THERE AT THE BEGINNING.

Flavius Josephus - AD 37–c.100

Jewish historian.
Writes Antiquities c. AD 93–94.
Same decade Revelation written…

We are still in the FIRST CENTURY.
Still have original witnesses.

Josephus says "Jesus, a wise man…"
"a doer of wonderful works…"
Pilate "condemned him to the cross…"
"he appeared to them alive again the third day."
Antiquities 18.63–64

A Jewish historian records:
Jesus.
Remarkable works.
Pilate.
Crucifixion.
Followers.
Appearance alive again.

SOUND FAMILIAR?
PAUL CALLED THESE THINGS: OF FIRST IMPORTANCE.

Some scholars question whether Christians altered portions of Josephus.

A 2022 study found NO MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE OF MEANINGFUL TAMPERING.

5. THEY CLAIMED THEY SAW HIM

Who is they?

1 Corinthians 15:5–8 NIV
"and that he appeared to Cephas (*Peter*), and then to the Twelve. 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. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also…"

WITNESSES: PETER / THE TWELVE / 500+ / JAMES / PAUL

Peter.
The Twelve.
More than 500.
James.
Paul.

“MOST ARE STILL LIVING.”
GO ASK THEM.

JAMES
Jesus' brother.
Not presented as a believer during Jesus' ministry.
Later leads the Jerusalem church.

Paul: “He appeared to James.”

What convinces you your brother is Lord?

APPARENTLY… RESURRECTION HELPS.

PAUL
Paul was not searching for Jesus.

Paul was PERSECUTING people who followed Jesus.

Persecutor becomes preacher.

Why?

“HE APPEARED TO ME ALSO.”

Meeting a resurrected Jesus will change you!

6. THE DISCIPLES WENT FROM HIDING TO PROCLAIMING

BEFORE: afraid… scattered… Peter denies

AFTER: “GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.”

Then persecution comes:
threats… arrests… beatings…

Some of Christianity's earliest witnesses are killed.

Important distinction:

PEOPLE CAN DIE FOR SOMETHING FALSE THEY BELIEVE IS TRUE.
BUT PEOPLE DON’T WILLINGLY DIE FOR SOMETHING THEY KNOW THEY MADE UP.

The original witnesses knew whether they had:
stolen a body…
fabricated appearances…
invented the story…

Through persecution:
THE RESURRECTION PROCLAMATION DOES NOT CHANGE.

No record of Peter finally saying: “Okay. We made it up.”

No: “There was no appearance.”

No: “Jesus is still dead.”

THEY KEEP PROCLAIMING: JESUS IS ALIVE.

Let’s put it all together…

6. THE DISCIPLES WENT FROM HIDING TO PROCLAIMING

Jesus existed.
Jesus died by crucifixion.
Christians proclaimed resurrection EARLY.
Named people claimed to encounter Him alive.
Skeptics became believers.
A persecutor became a preacher.
Frightened followers became public witnesses.

WHAT BEST EXPLAINS IT?

You need to answer that.
That answer is of FIRST IMPORTANCE.

Maybe you have been living on borrowed faith.

Mom's faith. Dad's... Grandma's...

A WHO AND WHAT HE DO.

Who is Jesus?
What did He do?
And what are YOU going to do with Him?

Paul does not just say Christ Died…

He says: **CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS.**

This is not only history.
THIS IS THE GOSPEL.

Jesus died for your sins.
He was buried.
He rose again.

Because Jesus lives:
forgiveness is real…
new life is real…
hope is real…
eternal life is real…
death does not get the final word.

Because Jesus lives… we should do something.

IF JESUS IS ALIVE... ACT
1. CONFESS HIM

IS JESUS YOUR LORD?

Romans 10:9 NIV
"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Not borrowed faith. **YOUR FAITH.**

If you confess Him: **TELL SOMEBODY.**

Write it on the connection card:
"I confessed Jesus as Lord today."

Come to the front and tell somebody:
"I just confessed Jesus as Lord."

2. TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP

If you believe, do not leave wondering what comes next.

Come pray with someone.
Use the connection card to start a conversation.
We'll help you take it.

3. LIVE WITH HIM

Jesus is not only alive on Sunday.

LIVE LIKE HE IS ALIVE THIS WEEK.

Talk to Him.
Follow Him.
Trust Him.
Walk with Him.

JESUS IS ALIVE.