

1 Corinthians 15 and the Resurrection – All Will Be Raised

(1 Corinthians 15:20-34)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 Paul argued for the resurrection by considering what would be true if there is *no resurrection*.
 - A. If there is no resurrection, then Christ has not been raised.
 - B. If Christ has not been raised, we are still in our sins, our faith is meaningless, and we are of all people to be most pitied.
2. In today's text, 1 Corinthians 15:20-32, Paul is going to argue for how *all will be raised!* To do this Paul considers:
 - A. How Christ is the assurance of the resurrection for all mankind.
 - B. The order of the resurrection.
 - C. How some significant events/actions in our lives are based on the resurrection.
 - D. Behavior required by the resurrection.

BODY:

I. Christ has assured the resurrection (15:20-22):

- A. Text: 15:20-22 – “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”
- B. Paul declares that Christ has been raised from the dead as the first fruits (15:20).
 1. So, Christ's dead *body* that hung on the cross and was put in the tomb was given life again—and this time never to die again.
 2. His resurrection as he **first fruits** of the dead assures us of our bodily resurrection.
 - a. For, the **first fruits** refers to the sacrifice of the **first ripened fruit** offered to God to gain assurance of the future harvest.
 - b. So, if we know Christ has been raised, then we know we will be raised.
 - c. Though others had been raised before Jesus (i.e., Lazarus, etc.), He is the first fruits because he is the first to be raised *never to die again!* His resurrection means *eternal life!*
 - d. Thus, all who fall *asleep* (stressing the temporary nature of death), are *assured* of the resurrection of their bodies through Jesus' resurrection!
- C. Paul explains why (15:21-22 – “For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”).
 1. Note that Paul sees the creation account as history—the factual account of the beginning of all things, including sin and death.
 2. Since death came through Adam (Hebrew – “man”), the resurrection had to come through *man*—the man Christ Jesus—as well.
 - a. Thus, it was only by God becoming flesh that the resurrection was to come (Heb. 2:14-15 – “Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”).
 - b. So, *in Christ* God has assured us that all will be made alive again (Jn. 5:25-29 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”).
 - i. Note that through Jesus we are presented two resurrections.

- 1) The resurrection to *spiritual life* from deadness in sin by God's grace bestowed upon those who by faith submit to Christ by baptism.
 - a) Rom. 6:3-4 – "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as **Christ was raised from the dead** through the glory of the Father, so **we too might walk in newness of life.**".
 - b) Peter (1 Pet. 1:21-22 – "Corresponding to that, **baptism now saves you**—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.").
- 2) There is the physical resurrection for all, whether righteous or wicked (Jn. 5:28-29).
 - ii. If you have not taken part in the *spiritual resurrection* from deadness in sin through biblical baptism, you will not find joy in the physical resurrection, only judgment!

II. The order of the resurrection (15:23-26).

- A. Text: 15:23-26 – "But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, ²⁴ then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet."
- B. The resurrection has already begun with Jesus, who is the *first fruits* (15:23).
 1. That is the hub of it all. If Jesus is raised, and He has been, then those who have passed are going to be raised! We are going to see them again!
 2. For note again how we see the emphasis laid on Jesus being *the first fruits* of the resurrection.
 - a. The first fruits offered to God were the *same fruit* as the coming harvest.
 - b. So, Christ the man *offered Himself to God on the cross* so that *His resurrection* (the first fruit) would be the assurance of *our future resurrection* (the final harvest).
 - c. Have you considered how amazing it is that God would do this?
 - i. God's predetermined plan meant sending Jesus to be *human* and *sacrifice Himself* on the *cross* so that sinful humans can be resurrected to life with Him!
 - ii. Why would God do this? Why would God want this?
 3. When Christ returns, His second coming, those who are Christ's will be raised!
 - a. That is the order, and this is the truth.
 - i. There is no room for error here—no room for differing opinions.
 - ii. When Christ returns, the dead who are Christ's will be raised at that time!
 - b. Paul does not address those who are not Christ's, likely because their resurrection is not to their good, but to their condemnation—which is so very sad.
- C. When those in Christ are raised, *then* comes the *end* (15:24-25 – "then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death."):
 1. The resurrection of God's people marks *the end of all things, including Christ's kingdom and rule* (15:24-25).
 - a. His return does not signal the beginning of His rule as the premillennialists teach.
 - b. Instead, Christ is ruling now (Dan. 7:14; Acts 2:31-35) and will continue to rule until His second coming when the dead are raised.
 2. For, Christ must rule until every enemy is defeated, the last of which is *death* that is defeated by the resurrection of His people to live forever with Him in Heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 – "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who

are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord **in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.**”).

3. So, the second coming brings the resurrection of all, ends Christ’s reign, and His people rise up and ascend to heaven with Jesus and be with Him forever.

III. Actions based on the resurrection (15:29-32)

- A. Here Paul argues for the resurrection by presenting some actions that must logically lead to the conclusion that the dead are raised.
- B. Baptism for the dead (15:29 – “Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?”).
 1. There is much speculation about this passage and its meaning.
 - a. Just mention it to someone and you are likely to hear all kinds of things.
 - b. And when it comes to confusion, the Mormons have people baptized daily for those who have died that they might be saved!
 2. We must understand that whatever Paul is referring to has to be scriptural for his argument to carry any weight.
 - a. To argue from what is false proves nothing to be true.
 - b. And proxy baptism is not here nor anywhere stated or commanded to be practiced by God’s people.
 3. For, what the Bible teaches about baptism is that it is an action one must choose to do to be united with Christ’s death, burial, AND **resurrection**.
 - a. One must *choose* baptism for themselves (Acts 2:37-41 – “Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”³⁸ Peter said to them, “**Repent, and each of you be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and **kept on exhorting them**, saying, “**Be saved** from this perverse generation!”⁴¹ So then, **those who had received his word were baptized**; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.”).
 - b. When one is baptized, they are buried with Christ into His death AND raised with Him (Rom. 6:4-5, 8-9 – “Therefore we have been **buried** with Him through baptism into death, **so that** as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so **we too might walk in newness of life**.⁵ For if we have become **united with Him in the likeness of His death**, certainly **we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection**,...⁸ Now if we have **died with Christ**, we believe that we shall also **live with Him**,⁹ knowing that Christ, **having been raised from the dead**, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.”)
 4. So, Paul’s point is why would people be baptized if the dead are not raised.
 - a. People are not baptized to be united to death alone.
 - b. People are baptized into Christ’s death *so that they can be raised with Christ*.
 - c. If the dead are not raised, then why would people be baptized?
- C. Suffering for Christ and the gospel (15:30-32 – “Why are we also in danger every hour?³¹ I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.³² If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, **what does it profit me?** If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.”).
 1. As we pointed out in the last lesson, *if there is no resurrection* it is totally foolish for Paul and the other apostles, not to mention Christians in general, to suffer for their faith!
 2. Without the resurrection to an eternal and better life, there is no reason to suffer in this short life. Instead, we should enjoy life’s pleasures because tomorrow we die!

IV. Required behavior because of the resurrection

- A. Text: 15:33-34 – “Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”³⁴ Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.”
- B. We are not to be deceived about false teaching and its results (15:33).
 - 1. In other words, Paul is saying that what we believe about the resurrection matters.
 - a. I know religion downplays doctrine and doctrinal differences today.
 - b. But God’s word has never downplayed it. It matters what we believe and teach.
 - 2. So, associating with and listening to men who deny the resurrection will corrupt and turn one from Christ and the morality Christ demands.
 - a. We see this all around us. As society denies the Father, Jesus, the truth, and life by the resurrection, more and more immorality and violence appear.
 - b. Also, if you choose to live around those who do not teach the truth nor live their lives by the truth of the resurrection, your faith will be harmed!
 - 3. We need to be more than just churchgoers. We should be those who desire to be with faithful brethren because of the reinforcement of the *truth* we receive!
- C. Therefore, we are called on to sober up and stop sinning (15:34).
 - 1. Allowing ourselves to be led away from faith in the resurrection is sin and indicates we have no real knowledge of God.
 - a. Yet, how much of our daily lives do we live with little or no thought of the resurrection?
 - b. We need to think about what it is that drives us to continue in Christ!
 - 2. The resurrection is supposed to change how we live our lives because...
 - a. It makes us look soberly at our actions knowing that we will one day be raised to face their consequences.
 - b. The resurrection provides us with the courage needed to live holy and faithful lives in this wicked and faithless world.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Christ has been raised and our resurrection is coming as well!
- 2. But the resurrection to life is only offered to those of faith and obedience to Christ.
- 3. So, you need to examine your life and determine to respond to Christ today in obedient faith.
 - A. If you are a Christian but have been led away from faithful service and have forgotten that the resurrection is coming and your deeds will be judged, you need to come back to Christ in repentance, seeking God’s forgiveness through confession of sin and prayer.
 - B. If you are a Christian living faithfully, will you determine to strengthen your faith by focusing more on the resurrection and its importance in your life?
 - C. If you are not a Christian—if you have not been baptized/immersed in water for the purpose uniting with Christ’s death so that your sins can be forgiven and you can be raised with Christ to newness of life—will you trust in Jesus, confess faith in Him, repent of your sin, and be saved by submitting to baptism/immersion in water today?