

1 Corinthians 15 Vs 12-28

"So, How Does It End?"

Have you ever wondered, "So, how does it end? How exactly will the Lord wind down & wrap up human history pertaining to the fallen state of humanity?" Paul touches on that topic here in 1 Cor 15. & It may interest you to realize that it's related to the resurrection. **The resurrection of J.C. necessarily set in motion a chain of events that must culminate in the destruction of death & the establishing of the eternal sinless state. The day is coming (give God praise) when sin will cease to exist & death will be destroyed.**

I can't say it strongly enough; the resurrection is *the* heart, the life blood of each aspect, every nuance, every little glimmer of the gospel. As the heart pumps life to every area of the body, so the truth of the resurrection gives life every area, each part of the gospel. *Everything* hinges upon it. If there's no resurrection, Christianity wouldn't really be distinct from any other philosophy or ideology of man. Nothing more (ultimately) than wishful thinking/religious speculation...

Up to this point (in Ch 15) Paul has reminded the Corinthian Christians of the fundamental facts of the gospel. (Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, He was buried, & He rose again the 3rd day according to the Scriptures.) He's called forth 100's & 100's of witnesses to the resurrected Jesus beginning in order w/Peter, the apostles, over 500 people at one time, the Lord's ½ brother James, & finally himself.

He's establishing the reality of the resurrection of J.C. in a dogmatic, inflexible, absolute & assertive fashion. Why? Because it's important (in fact non-negotiable) that you & I be absolutely, unwaveringly, concretely established upon this fact. Notice.

Vs 12-13

I trust the problem is plain in your eyes. Some of the Corinthian Christians were struggling w/the reality of a resurrection... It would seem that they heard the message of the gospel, believed it, but never really stopped to consider its implications. Meaning, that they could hear & receive the message of the gospel, but they didn't do the math in how it applied to them!

You see, it was a common Greek philosophy that the body was innately sinful & the cause of all human struggle (for lack of a better way to say it). That when you died, you were finally *free* of the sin/struggles that came w/the body. You would be "pure spirit". The idea of being reunited *to* the body seemed both incomprehensible & *reprehensible*.

But listen, your body isn't sinful. What you *do* w/your body may be, but your body is like a tool, or a weapon. In & of itself it's capable of incredible good, but in the wrong hands, if utilized inappropriately it can wreak unimaginable devastation/destruction & harm. Let's remind ourselves, that Jesus wasn't only God, He was also Man. And as a Man He lived in a body, just like yours. But He wasn't contaminated w/a sin nature. He wasn't found "in Adam" (as we'll see later). God is His Father.

But back in Vs 11, Paul reminded them that the gospel was preached (including the resurrection of J.C.), & they believed! So it would seem (perhaps) that it wasn't the resurrection of Jesus that they were struggling with (Him being w/out sin), but that they couldn't conceive of a bodily resurrection that would belong to you & me...

They had no problem believing in an eternal state. They just couldn't conceive of it including the body. But again, let's remind ourselves. Resurrection isn't simply life after death. It's the continuation of life after death *in glorified bodies* (which will be the body you have currently in a glorified state) Paul will touch more on *this* topic later in the Ch.

What he's trying develop/establish for us here is the fact that the resurrection of Jesus didn't just prove something about His *Person*, but it established &/or proved a *principle*. The *principle* of resurrection is tied to the *Person* of J.C.

But here in Vs 13, Paul takes these people to the mat (& in the subsequent Vs begins a systematic ground & pound) leaving zero room for debate on this doctrine! – He says, "Listen, you realize that if you're going to take your stand upon the position that there's no resurrection of the dead, then you're conceding to the fact that Christ is not risen." Or another way to understand that? You're saying that Jesus is still dead! If you don't believe in a resurrection of the dead, then you're saying *Christ* isn't risen, & if you don't believe *Christ* has risen, that (necessarily) results in *radical* ramifications...

Listen to me, the resurrection is the *fundamental, foundational anchor* of the gospel. *Everything* hinges upon *this* truth. So that if you are wavering/waffling on *that* fact, then you're wavering on the reality of whether you're even saved! Or if anyone can really even *be* saved for that matter... & If you're not saved, & no one can *be* saved... then what's the point of all this? That's where Paul's preparing to take us.

Family, your salvation isn't resting on a foundation of uncertainty. You're founded upon the *Rock* & that Rock is J.C. who is risen from the dead! – If not, we may as well fold up our bibles, walk out these doors & never come back. Drain this life for all it's worth because this vapor of a hopeless life is all you got... Notice.

Vs 14-19

Do you see what I mean when I say that to deny the resurrection is to tear the heart of the gospel message & leave it lying dead on the floor? There is nothing about the gospel that's not directly tied *to* & effected *by* the resurrection. Where's the hope (or the rationale for that matter) in tying your trust for everlasting *life* to a man who's *dead*? Seems a little counterintuitive!

If Christ is not risen, everything changes. Last week, pastor Russ was teaching out of the book of Ecclesiastes. A book essentially written demonstrating how to lead a life that amounts to absolutely nothing of value as it pertains to eternal issues. Everything is vanity. Absolutely pointless eternally if you're not going to honor/obey & serve God. All throughout that book Solomon shows the vanity of this, the emptiness/worthlessness of that... Here, Paul echoes the same sentiment. (Different subject, same sentiment). – “If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty.” That is, it's pointless, it's in vain, it's empty, there's nothing of substance or value to it...

“& Guess what,” Paul says, “your faith is also empty.” Why? Because you're believing in a resurrected Savior when the truth is (if these few folks were right) there's no resurrection at all! You see, Paul is pointing out the fact that you can't disassociate or disconnect the resurrection of Christ from the principle of resurrection that He (Jesus) established for us all! There's either a resurrection or there's not. You can't apply it to one Man, & then leave out all mankind... It doesn't work that way.

He says, “Still worse; if the dead don't rise, that means Christ isn't risen... Now, we testified to you that God raised Jesus from the dead, & if the fact of the matter is that He didn't... what does that make all of us apostles (ambassadors of Christ)? We're all liars! By denying the resurrection, you're calling all of us liars!”

Take it one step farther, Jesus claimed on a semi-consistent basis that He would rise from the dead. In Jn Ch 2 Jesus said (in referring to His body), “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*”¹ In Ch 10 He said, “*Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*”² When we were together last, we took the time to establish that the *Scriptures* prophesied the resurrection as well. So, now not only are you calling Jesus & the apostles liars, you're saying that the Word of God isn't true or can't be trusted...

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 2:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 10:17-18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Do you see how when you begin to tug on the string that doubts/denies the resurrection, everything unravels? *Everything* in Christianity is anchored to the reality of the resurrection of J.C. from the dead. & If Christ *hasn't* risen from the dead, then what's the conclusion (necessarily)? (Vs 17) Your faith is futile (serves zero purpose) & you're still in your sins...

In other words, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, you can only assume that His payment for sin was rejected, & if His payment was rejected; you & me... we have zero hope of rescue, we're lost eternally... Because Christ has no power to save us. There is no salvation, only alienation from God... & Not only that, if there's no principle of resurrection, not only are you still in your sins currently, your loved ones who've died before you (believing in Christ) have perished eternally! They're gone forever, you'll never see them again...

That's why he says, "If Christ isn't risen, & in this life we place all our hope in Christ... then everything we do, all that we endure, the entire Christian life is a pitiable joke..." Listen, it's true that becoming a Christian solves many problems. But let's be honest, it also opens a whole host of other problems. **Our hope doesn't lie in this world. Sometimes being a believer can make the circumstances surrounding your life really, really bad... Think about Paul; poorly clothed, consistently hungry/thirsty, often beaten, placed in prison... stoned & left for dead. For what? A lie? Deceit? Delusion?**

If it's not true... then where's the party? Let's drain this life dry! You see; for the unbeliever, this life is the only shot at pleasure or happiness they'll ever know. Such is not the case for the Christian. We read in the 16th Psalm, **"In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."**³ It's been said that this life is as close to heaven as the unbeliever will ever get. But for the believer it's as close to hell as *you* will ever get.

I hope you're beginning to glean how important, just how critical the truth of the resurrection is. – It's not some "take it or leave it" nonessential doctrine that you can kind of have your own opinion on... If you don't believe that Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead, then you shouldn't call yourself a Christian. It's that essential. Either Christ is alive, or Christianity is a lie... It's what we might call a watershed (defining/divisive) doctrine.

Vs 20-23

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 16:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“Enough w/this nonsense”, Paul says, “Christ is risen from the dead, & has become the 1st fruits of those who have fallen asleep.” Paul has demonstrated conclusively the reality of the resurrection of J.C. & he’s established the *importance* of that fact!

Now he begins to explain how He (that is Jesus) serves as the firstfruits of the resurrection which speaks of a preliminary installment & a guarantee of the harvest to come.

What does it mean, Jesus is the “firstfruits” of the resurrection? Paul is referencing the festival of firstfruits (The Feast of the Harvest) found in your O.T. It took place the day after Sabbath following the Passover. It wasn’t a blood offering, there was no atoning sacrifice involved because the Passover lamb had just been sacrificed. It was a grain offering. You would bring the very 1st fruit of your harvest before the Lord. The priest would wave it before the Lord in a sheaf. The idea being that you were bringing to God the very 1st of your increase. It was a step of faith because you were saying, “God, You have provided this 1st fruit & I trust that this is just the beginning of much more to come.” So the offering of the 1st fruit was an offering of expectation/anticipation of a great harvest to follow.

Btw, this is also one reason why God desires the tithe to be the 1st fruit. We give off the top, not off the bottom. We give to God 1st (when He provides, we honor Him w/the 1st of it, not the last of it after we’ve paid everyone & everything else). It’s a step of faith saying, “God, You’ve provided this, I trust You will continue to take care of my needs so I’m honoring You w/the 1st of what You will provide. I trust there’s more to come.” Otherwise, it’s not a “1st fruit”, it’s an “only fruit” or still worse, “The last fruit, the leftover”. When we present to God the very 1st, it says, “God, I trust that there’s a great harvest, much more to come.”

So Jesus was the 1st fruit, the very 1st of the resurrection to be presented to God. It says, “There’s a great harvest, an anticipation/expectation of much more to come in the same likeness.” In the book of Romans, Paul put it like this, *“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,”*⁴ So the resurrection of Jesus anticipates the reality of the what’s to come w/the whole harvest. As He is, so you will be... When we see Him, we will be *like* Him.

& Just in case you missed it. Jesus was crucified on Passover, in the grave on the Sabbath & rose again on the day of the Feast of Firstfruits. He is the 1st fruits of the resurrection.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 6:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It doesn't mean He was the 1st to rise from the dead. Others had been raised from the dead. But they were raised in these bodies, only to die again. Jesus rose in His glorified, resurrection body, never to die again. He's the 1st fruits of the *resurrection*.

"For since by man came death..." Btw, if you believe secular science you believe that dinosaurs roamed the earth for about 165 million years & died out around 65 million years before man came on the scene. Just so you know, that both denies & defies the Word of God. The Bible says that *nothing died* before man (that is Adam) sinned. By *man* came death... The wages of *sin* is death. & Since by man came death, by Man (that is Jesus) also came the resurrection of the dead.

Paul elaborates on this in the book of Romans. If by one man's sin, death can spread to all (because all were in Adam when he sinned), then by one Man's obedience (Jesus) righteousness can be imputed/accredited to all. The key is who you're found in. If you're in Adam through your natural birth (which is where we all begin) then only death & condemnation await you... If you're in Christ (having been born again by the Spirit) (you've believed on the Lord J.C. by faith), then life & salvation are yours... "In Christ all shall be made alive." That is all who are in Christ.

Jesus said it like this, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*"⁵ Now that's not to say that unbelievers won't experience a resurrection, they will. But it's a resurrection unto condemnation. Everyone receives a resurrection body, but not everyone enters heaven in that body... many will enter hell. Which is another reason we preach this message, that men might be reconciled to God through faith in J.C.

But notice, "Each one in his own order." We don't receive resurrection before Jesus, He was 1st, then we receive it at His coming. Again, the reference is to your glorified body. To be absent from the body is to be present w/the Lord. But you'll take part in the resurrection (being reunited w/your body as was Christ) at the rapture of the church. (More on that later in the Ch).

Vs 24-28

God's ultimate/eternal purpose in history. Eph 1:10 says it this way, "*...that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.*"⁶

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 11:25-26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Eph 1:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

All things will be “summed up” in Christ. & When everything is resolved, Christ reigning over all, Jesus will deliver (or present) the Kingdom to God the Father that God might be all in all. That God might be glorified as the Author of the eternal plan of the ages.

When he says, “Then comes the end.” What’s he talking about? He’s talking about the end of the age. When after the resurrection (in the rapture) there is the 7 yr period that the Bible refers to as, “The Great Tribulation”, then Jesus returns to put down the wicked rule of man, the Satanic regimes & reigns over the earth for 1,000 yrs. “For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.” (Ps 110:1)

At the end of the 1,000 yrs (I’d encourage you to research all this, time forbids me to go in depth on the issue), Satan will be released again for a time. Why? Because during the 1,000 yrs righteousness has reigned. People have had no choice but to serve Christ. The bible teaches us that during this time, longevity of life will be restored. Isa 65 informs us that the one who dies at 100 yrs old will be as the tragic death of a child... **But when Satan is released after the 1,000 yrs, he will again deceive as many as the sand of the sea (Rev 20). They’ll come to make war w/Jesus, surrounding the city of Jerusalem in one final satanic rebellion. God will reign down fire upon them & they’ll be consumed in a moment. What follows is the Great White Throne judgment. Satan & his demons will be cast into the lake of fire & anyone who’s name is not found written in the Lamb’s book of life will be cast into the lake of fire...**

All things being summed up in Christ & Jesus will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, thereby ushering in the eternal state... In raising Christ from the dead, God has set this chain of events in motion culminating in the final destruction of death, & the eternal sinless state for all who are found in Him.

Ladies and Gentlemen: don’t be deceived, death is your enemy. Some are encouraged to embrace death, as if it’s a friend. That’s not Biblical thinking. Death is an enemy. It’s ok to be uncomfortable around it... We don’t *fear* death, death was defeated at the cross of J.C. But make no mistake, it’s not your friend. It’s your enemy that will one day not only be defeated – but destroyed.

Never again will it haunt anyone — or burden anyone. Think about this, not only will death be destroyed physically, but emotionally as well. The death of joy (destroyed), the death of peace, of everything that brings about hopelessness, heaviness, and sorrow.

Now... when we read that the Son Himself will be subjected to the Father. Again, allow me to emphasize it has nothing to do w/superiority/inferiority...

What's in view is the administrative order of the Godhead that Jesus willfully subjected Himself to that we read of in Phil 2 out of His great love for me & you. You can't be less God, you're either God or you're not. So completely equal in substance, but the Father remains the Father, the Son remains the Son.

That God may be all in all. – As we read in Rom 11, *“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”*⁷

Prayer Points:

God we stand in awe of the resurrection & all that it implies. All that it speaks of, testifies to... the expectation & anticipation of a great harvest, the destruction of death, a sinless eternal state... Jesus we believe that You are the resurrection & the life. We thank You for the promise of Your word & we give You praise.

If you've come here today uncertain, unsure of all this. Not knowing exactly what to believe. Let me encourage you, believe on the Lord J.C. who was crucified for you sin, buried & raised to life the 3rd day for your justification. God will robe you in the righteousness of J.C. through simple faith in Him.

⁷ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [\(Ro 11:36\)](#) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.