

1st Corinthians Chapter 15

Chapter 15

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Verse 1.

Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received and wherein you stand;

We can trust Paul, who was an educated, well trained, born again Christian who had met with the Lord in a special meaningful way. He was called to preach the full gospel and not distort it in any way. In fact his teaching and writings have stood the test of time and is at the forefront of the ministry in our churches today. There is no doubt that Paul explained to the churches in Asia, including Corinth, the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The resurrection is a vital part of the gospel and Paul confirms that the church received this doctrine and stood by it. We remind ourselves again that it is the foundation of Christianity. If we do not believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead then our worship is to a lifeless, uncaring, disinterested being that is of no more use to us than the images of stone the heathen worshipped and sacrificed little children to at Baal. (2 Kings 16)

It appears from this chapter and indeed from the book of Corinthians that there were false teachers in the church at Corinth who denied the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This may have been a legacy from the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection: interestingly the Pharisees did believe in the resurrection. Much of Paul's teaching was compromised by a group of Jewish believers who followed him around with the aim of undoing his teaching on grace and many others things. These people were Paul's so-called thorn in the flesh, and they may have negatively impacted the purity of the gospel in the church at Corinth.

And there are many Clergymen and church leaders in our churches today who do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. What are they preaching? What are they offering the congregations by way of hope and encouragement let alone eternal salvation through Jesus Christ? If Jesus did not rise from the dead our salvation is empty and our faith is misplaced. Verse 17 says *If Christ be not raised your faith is vain; you are yet in your sin* and He has made no atonement for sin. But He did rise from the dead, I know, I feel it in my Spirit, and you can feel it too when you accept Jesus as Lord of your life! Jesus was seen by over 541 witnesses after His resurrection; remember, you who deny Jesus rose from the dead, you also reject eternal life for yourself. For the rest of us who truly believe we will live with Christ forever, He said so.

Verse 2

By which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.

The 4 fundamentals of the gospel are that Christ died. Romans 5:6-10, Hebrews 9: 15.

The Burial of Christ, Mathew 26: 12: John 12:7, Romans 6:4. The Resurrection of Christ, Romans 14:9: 2, Corinthians 5:15. He was seen of many witnesses, John 21: 14 Verse 5 and 6.

Paul preached these principles and according to the first verse Paul confirmed that the church at Corinth received and stood in the faith of this gospel. But there were some who fell away from the faith, read Luke 8:13: *They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the Word with joy and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

We do not read of any repentance by any in the church, but right up to Chapter 14/15 Paul is still doing his best to win those who were susceptible to or who were spreading false doctrine,

misusing the gifts of the Spirit, and not treating the Lords Table with respect and so on. And now Paul spends much time telling these doubters that they are wrong to doubt that Christ rose from the dead.

Verse 12/13/14

Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 but if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

Many in the church could not understand this, 'how can a person rise from the dead and become alive again?' Many still could not have faith in this new doctrine; they were still worshipping under the Law of Moses and would not change. Paul was teaching that Christ was the first fruits of them that slept (verse 20). 'Them that slept' included all the Old Testament prophets and Patriarchs, like Abraham, Joshua, Ruth, David, Daniel, Joel, and others all of them now had died and remained dead for very many years and indeed would perish completely unless Jesus rose and became the first fruits of them that slept. So now all those that die in Christ will rise from the dead in the last day.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the Trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Verse 19

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

If we have hope and confidence in Christ and He did not rise from the dead and He is still perishing in the grave we are to be pitied more than any other man because we are sadly deceived. All our hope, our expectation of eternal life with Him in Heaven, all our fellowship and communion with the Trinity here on earth is an illusion.

Verse 20

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

First fruits mean the beginning of a thing. We are taught in the Bible to offer to God the first fruit of our income by way of tithe. The first of any increase in our income should be given to the Lord but this is not taught in our churches today.

Verse 21

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

Mortality came by Adam, back in the garden; immortality came by Christ at the cross. As sure as we all are subject to natural death so all who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour will be raised to newness of life by Jesus Christ in the last day.

Verse 24

Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

This 'end' does not refer to the time of the Rapture nor even the second coming of Christ, but rather when all satanic rule and authority has been put down and Satan has been totally defeated. Then the Kingdom shall be delivered up to God himself. All this very important part of history is made possible by the death on the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

Verse 25

For He must reign, until He has put all enemies under His feet. V26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

The book of Revelation tells of a great war between Jesus and the host of heaven and the army of Satan when he will be defeated. Verse 25 tells us Jesus will reign until He has defeated Satan and with him will go all war against the saints, all sickness, all wickedness, sin and pride and our verse says the last enemy is death. Satan brought in sin, and sin brought in death both spiritual and physical. Jesus shall reign until the last enemy death, both spiritual and physical be abolished. In the new Kingdom under the Father God we will live for ever and never die.

Verse 28

And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall The Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

The Father God is the expected one and the Son and His millennial earthy kingdom which will not cease to exist will be handed over to God and the Father and Son will reign forever now the earth is rid of all rebellion. Daniel 2:44-45. Daniel 2: 13-14. Luke 1: 32-33. Revelation 11: 15.

Verse 29

Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead?

The Corinthians were into many false doctrines and baptism for the dead was one of them. Baptism in water will not save a living soul— ours or anyone else. It is through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and an acceptance that Jesus is Lord that salvation comes. Baptism is an outward sign to the world that you wish to follow the Lord and walk close to Him. Salvation is a personal matter and cannot be obtained by proxy. (Mark 16:16. Luke 13: 1-5. John 3: 16. Acts 3: 19) Paul is showing the inconsistency of the false teachers at Corinth in denying the resurrection and yet accepting the fallacy of baptism for the dead.

Verse 31

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.

Paul was very annoyed at the church for their absurd and foolish beliefs gained by listening to false teachers having once heard the truth, believed the truth and then turned away. Paul had to fight for the truth of the gospel with beasts at Ephesus, refer to Acts 19:28-31; Titus 1: 12; 2 Peter 2: 12; The church had cheapened the gospel by all this rebellion to God's word.

I die daily. This refers to Paul being in constant physical danger of death for the gospels sake even every hour according to verse 30. He had also died to his former life and to his own personal desires and now lived 100% for Jesus. He also says what good is living on the edge in danger of death daily if there is no resurrection, if there is nothing to look forward to after you die. He says we may as well eat and drink and be careless for tomorrow. The church disappointed Paul that his efforts to bring the gospel to man was so cheaply ignored, and easily perverted, I wonder if Jesus feels the same!

Verse 33

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. 34. Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

Verse 34

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

‘Some have not the knowledge of God’, the original says ‘some have an ignorance of God’. There is a vast difference in having a knowledge of someone and really knowing that person. I saw this pretty girl once walking down a wide path in Eastbourne in the UK arm in arm with

about 6 or so other girls all laughing and enjoying themselves. As I walked towards them I saw Pauline in the middle, I knew of her, seen her in the choir at the local Christian rallies, but that was all. I thought she was someone I would like to know better. After a while we got married and from that time on we have got to *know* each other.

After 60 years of being together we both know each other! Now I know when she feels unwell, or has an off day, which is not very often I might add. She knows me in the same way, she just knows when I am in pain and my back is hindering me, and she will come alongside me and pray for me, and claim the blood of Jesus. We didn't do that when we saw each other in the Town of Eastbourne for the first time. This is a poor example of what it is to get to know God. Many in the church at Corinth had not given themselves time to get to know Jesus and such ignorance prevents the light of God from penetrating the soul. Paul was probably speaking of those who were once enlightened, once had followed the Lord but were corrupted by bad company.

Paul warns the church not to be deceived by these sceptics who teach an easy life and to live for today as though today is all that there is, remember eternity is at stake here.

Verse 36

You fool, that which you sow is not quickened except it die: and that which you sow, you sow not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain.

It is believed this is addressed to the false prophet who had set up his own wisdom, magnified his own beliefs and thoughts above both God and man, and none but a fool would do such a thing. Paul has to tear down these false teachings and condemn the false teacher, restoring the truth he preached earlier. Just as a seed is planted in the ground and must die before it brings forth fruit.

Romans 6: 6

Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is free from sin.

Who is 'our old man'? our old self, inspired by none other than Satan himself, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2; 4:22-24). Christ died on the cross to pay the price of our sin and redeem us back to God. We to must die to sin and be raised up by Christ into newness of life and stay dead to sin.

Verse 42/ 44

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body raised a spiritual body, there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.

Paul uses the word sown 4 times to illustrate the burial of the body. There is finality in the word 'burial', the natural the body is put into the ground in a state of degradation, decay and corruption. The apostle uses the word *sown* to intimate that the body shall rise again as a seed dies and then springs forth into new life. He says the body is sown in dishonour stripped of the glory and wonder of creation and being fearfully and wonderfully made by the hand of God, this wonderful being is consigned to death and destruction because of sin. But although sown in weakness, although corruption and decay have prevailed over it, it raises in power a spiritual body, a body wholly moulded by the Spirit.

Verse 45

So it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last man Adam was made a quickening spirit.

First came the natural complete and whole as God intended but sin entered into the world and it was necessary to bring in the spiritual, so the first man is of the earth and the second man is the

Lord from heaven.

Verse 48

As is the earthly such are they also that are earthly, and as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly.

We followers of Christ know this, Adam was created from the earth, and so are all his descendants: frail, decaying, sinful and subject to death. The heavenly subjects of the second Adam Jesus Christ are reborn or born again, into a life immortal such as He now enjoys in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 50

Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither dose corruption inherit incorruption.

Man in his present state cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Even a born again Christian is prone to sin, that is why we ask forgiveness and claim the blood of Christ every day, or should do.

That is why Paul tells the church that he dies daily to sin and the flesh as a necessary condition to his regeneration for the hereafter. John 3: 6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* Galatians 2: 20. *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.*

The death of Christ on the cross shows that there is no salvation by the law, or the death of Christ would be unnecessary, it took an innocent man to take my place so it is now not my life but His life I am a partaker of. The life I now live in the flesh is one of faith in Jesus Christ who loved me so much as to make it possible to live by faith in Jesus.

Verse 51

Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep (or die). But we shall all be changed. In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.

Even as Christians we cannot enter heavens glory in a present state of corruption. We would not be able to handle such weight of glory and splendour in a natural body, so we will be changed like unto His body. We will not all die but will be changed to the likeness of them who have died in Christ. What a wonderful mystery!

1 Thessalonians 4: 13.

But I would not have you ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep (or dead).that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

So we see the need to believe in the resurrection of Christ and that He is the first fruit of them that die. He must show the way that gives those that live in Christ hope and expectancy that we shall all be raised up to meet the Lord in the air.

Verse 52

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Stop what you are doing for a moment. Blink your eye and register just how quick that blink was. If you look in a mirror you will not be able to see how fast it was. The Bible says that is the speed at which you will be changed from your natural corruptible body to a spiritual incorruptible body like that of Jesus at the last trumpet call. This mighty work is done by the power of Almighty God. The resurrection of all the dead from the foundation of the world to that time and the change of all the living then upon the earth shall be the work of a single moment.

At the sound of this trumpet the graves shall be opened and the dead in Christ shall rise incorruptible and the living saints shall be changed to the same incorruptible state.

Verse 54

So when this corruption shall have put on incorruption and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory

The Prophet Isaiah said in his book chapter 25 verse 8;

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces: and the rebuke of his people he shall take away from off all the earth: for the Lord has spoken it.

When Jesus rose from the dead He fulfilled that very verse. He removed, abolished, cancelled and caused the triumph of death to cease. This is for all the Godly saints from Able, (1 Cor. 15:23, 51-57; Phil:3:20-21:1 Thess.4:13-17: Rev. 20:4-6). Death will not be destroyed for the sinner they will continue to die during the Millennium and when the second resurrection takes place and all the wicked, those that reject God, are given immortality of the body to be tormented day and night for eternity. (1 Cor. 15: 24-28. 35-45; Rev.20:4-6).

Christ has already conquered death and as the scripture tells us He holds the keys of death and Hades (Heb: 3:14-15. Rev: 1:18) but death will exercise its power over sinners.(1 Cor. 15:24-28).

Verse 55

O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? 56. The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

I am sure we all have experienced the pain of losing a loved one. Like me you have stood around the bed, the tears have flowed not knowing what to say. There is greater sadness when the person passing rejects the Lord even at such a last moment. But there is great joy and hope for the Christian whose next breath will be taken in heaven in front of Jesus and all family that has gone on before. The pain and sting of death is brought about by sin, it is sin that goads its victims to death and everlasting separation from the love of Jesus.

What the law could not do by giving us power over sin and death, Jesus Christ did for each one of us who accepts Him as our Saviour, and He did that by dying on the cross and the rising from the dead and thereby, as verse 57 says has given us the victory over death.

Verse 58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Amongst the many subjects the church at Corinth had to be taught, probably the most important is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. As we have said, and as we have read in the reports in the newspapers there are many Vicars, Priests and Ministers who like some in the church at Corinth do not believe Christ rose from the dead. In the light of what we have studied my prayer is that you live in the knowledge and rejoice in the fact that Jesus had to rise from the dead to give us the victory over death, being the first fruit of them that sleep. Paul says be steadfast, unmoveable in your faith in God and be assured of eternal life.

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Be blessed

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