

“Christ Has Risen, As He Said!”: Our Resurrection HOPE in Him

1 Corinthians 15

Greetings: HAPPY Easter! It is great to be together in this manner even though we're not in person. I wish we could be. Hopefully soon.

Thank you Nels for the special music. Gary thank you again for pulling this altogether. Easter Sunday and the Easter seasons has always been special for me – likely for you as well: sunrise breakfasts, sunrise services, as a child Easter baskets (even getting sick on a chocolate bunny!). It was also an exciting time at church and then with family. This year has been a big adjustment. But, by God grace we'll get through it; and, I'm confident that God is doing many good things – because of it - in my life and yours. For this morning, I've entitled my message: “Christ has risen, as He said: Our Resurrection Hope in Him.” Let me begin in **prayer**:

Easter, or **Resurrection Sunday**, is for believers in Christ Jesus the grandest celebration on the *Christian* calendar.

The **Passion** Week that began last Sunday with the Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday), NOW ends on the grandest note imaginable: the bodily **resurrection** of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the tomb the angelic messenger exclaimed, “He is NOT here! For He is RISEN!” One of the greatest proclamations ever made!

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the glorious distinctive message of the Christian faith. Our Savior, Lord and Teacher is not dead but wonderfully ALIVE! (*and soon to come again*).

1 CORINTHIANS 15 is the Bible's greatest exposition of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and of the believers' Resurrection HOPE because of it! So turn there, if you would: 1 Corinthians 15:1

The entire chapter (vv.1-58), written by Paul, deals with the resurrection of Jesus and its many implications for us. It is a chapter that, every time I read it, it thrills me more and more.

It's Paul's conclusion to a lengthy letter where he dealt with some very difficult matters in the Corinthian church and many areas where he had to corrected the believers. So, Paul ends this letter on a most glorious and encouraging note: resurrection truth, and resurrection hope!!

For this Easter message, let me walk you through this marvelous passage, follow Paul's **progression** of thought, and thrill at the resurrection HOPE that is ours in Christ Jesus:

- (vv.1-11) Christ's Resurrection is the cornerstone of the **gospel**. It is essential to salvation. (v.1 – this is the gospel both preached & believed)
(vv. 1-10a)
- (vv.12-20) Christ's Resurrection **assures** the resurrection of those who trust in Him.

- (vv. 12-14, 17, 20)
- (vv.21-28) Christ's Resurrection is the 1st (or, **firstfruits**) of a great harvest of Resurrected believers who will inhabit the kingdom of Christ, and eventually the eternal kingdom of the Father!! (He lays out the order of R.)
(vv. 22-26; Rev. 20:10, 14) [1st in spiritual, glorified body. cf. Lazarus, Jairus' daughter]
 - (vv.35-57) Christ's Resurrection, His glorified body, is the prototype of the believers' glorified bodies: from a natural body to a **glorious spiritual body**. At His return, and **blessed coming**, believers' natural bodies will be wonderfully, eternally transformed!!
(vv. 35-37, 42-44, 49)
 - (v.58) Resurrection Hope should transform our **lives everyday!** Reflecting on God's good plan for those who love Jesus should strengthen and motivate every breath we take and every work we do! For every work we do for Christ will have eternal value!! So faithfully live for Him and serve Him with great joy and resurrection HOPE each and every day!!

1 Corinthians 15:1-58 (ESV):

(vv.1-2) Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain.

* Paul reminds the Corinthians of their coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

(vv.3-11) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain.

* Christ's Resurrection is the cornerstone of the **gospel**. Essential to salvation are both the **death** and the **resurrection** of Jesus (v.1 – this is the gospel both preached & believed)

* What **proof** was there that Jesus Christ truly had risen from the died?

** What proof? First, it events in Christ life were precisely as **Scripture** had foretold. The witness of Scripture was impeccable. Isaiah's prophecies detailed the life of Christ like it was their nightly news.

** What other proof? (The OT standard was that the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses were necessary to make a testimony credible). Beside fulfilling Scripture, Paul also lists 5 eyewitness accounts, plus Paul's own personal testimony (6 total).

Paul had to make the truth of Christ's resurrection rock solid in order to proceed with where he want to go next.

(vv.12-14) Now if Christ is proclaimed as **raised** from the dead, how can some of you say that there is **no** resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even **Christ** has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our **preaching** is in vain and your **faith** is in vain.

(v.17) And if Christ has not been raised, your **faith** is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of people most to be pitied.

- * Simply put, Paul first argues that if resurrection is denied, then Christ's resurrection must be denied as well (vv.13,17; "not even Christ has been raised"). And if Christ did not raise, he is still in the grave, dead and NO Savior.
- * In other words, Paul tells the Corinthians that without the RESURRECTION of Christ there is no Christian faith; without the resurrection there is no hope beyond the grave.

HOWEVER, Paul then comes back to the truth affirmed, establish already by many witnesses. Himself included. He says (v.20):

(v.20) But in fact, **Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.** Therefore, the believer's resurrection hope is rock solid!!

- * Christ's Resurrection **assures** the resurrection of those who trust in Him, for He is the firstfruits – just the promise of the full harvest yet to come.

(vv.22-26) For as in **Adam** all die, so also in **Christ** shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the **firstfruits**, then at his **coming** those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he **delivers the kingdom** to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all things in subjection under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

- * Christ's Resurrection is the 1st (or, **firstfruits**) of a great harvest of Resurrected believers who will inhabit the kingdom of Christ, and eventually the eternal kingdom of the Father!!
- * The resurrected Christ is the **firstfruits** of a **great harvest** of resurrected saints to follow! When? At Christ's **return**. So then, Christ's bodily resurrection certifies the bodily resurrection of all those who put their trust in Him!!

Paul continues by anticipating another question:

(vv.35-37) But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it **dies**. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a **bare kernel**, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

- * What great questions to inquire about. Paul, what kind of bodies will we have in the resurrection? Paul’s simple illustration here is so enlightening: a seed that’s sown must die, then sprout and blossom with fresh new life vastly different than the seed from which it grew. It’s as different as the seed is from the full plant itself. The glory of what is grown is so surpassing to the seed from which it grew! Paul goes on ...

(vv.42-44) So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown is weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

- * The Christian’s resurrected body will be fitted for a radically new sphere of existence (NBC,p1072). Compare Paul’s 3 pairs of contrasts: 1) perishable to imperishable (*decay,dust*), 2) dishonor to glory (*Bob*), 3) weakness to power (*virus*)! “A new type of body is needed for the new conditions of the next life” (NBC,p1073)

(v.49) Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Our bodies will be like Jesus Christ’s glorified body!! How will this occur?

(vv.51-52) Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- * Christ’s Resurrection, His glorified body, is the prototype of the believers’ glorified bodies: from a natural body to a **glorious spiritual body**. At His return, and **blessed coming**, believers’ natural bodies will be wonderfully, instantaneously, eternally transformed!!

BUT, this is not truth just to know; it is truth to live by. That is exactly where Paul finally concludes:

(v.58) **Therefore**, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

* Resurrection Hope should transform our **lives everyday!** Reflecting on God's good plan for those who love Jesus should strengthen and motivate every breath we take and every work we do! For every work we do for Christ will have eternal value!! So faithfully live for Him and serve Him with great joy and resurrection HOPE each and every day!!

CONCLUSION and IMPLICATIONS:

(v.58) Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

This is where Paul wraps up RESURRECTION HOPE: it should change our lives. Such grace – and reflecting on it - ought to change, motivate, strengthen and gladden our hearts everyday. This truth revealed by God is meant to change us, sustain us, thrill us, encourage and motive us to devoted worship, wonder and works for Jesus.

So today, Easter, Resurrection Sunday, celebrate salvation in Jesus. Be glad; rejoice in Him and be thankful. “He is not here,” said the attending angel at the tomb, “for He is risen, as He said!” And soon to come again. Be ready; be serving; be rejoicing and thankful. If you have never trusted in Jesus – His death and resurrection for you – trust Him today. Make this your best Easter ever! And then live everyday with Resurrection HOPE and purpose. For: HE IS RISEN!!

Prayer: