



THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION

1 Corinthians 15:1-34





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WEEK 11

The Fact of the Resurrection

There is a major shift in tone when we arrive at chapter 15. The first 14 chapters of this letter have primarily been a response. In chapters 1-6, Paul responds to the report about the church from Chloe's people. In chapters 7-14, he responds to questions about marriage and church worship. Up to this point, the concerns of the Corinthian church have set the agenda for Paul's letter. But, chapter 15 begins with, "Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you..." One can almost get the sense that Paul has patiently dealt with the others issues and now gets to direct the conversation. And what is his focus? It is "the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand" (verse 1).

Paul sees the gospel as central to the Christian faith because it is the foundation of our salvation. This gospel is good news about a historical event, and it is spelled out in verses 3-4. Central to Christianity is the good news that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. This good news forms the heart of the Christian faith. The cross has a theological purpose, "Christ died for our sins." The death of Jesus was not just a tragedy or a great example of love (though it is both). The death of Jesus atoned for the sins of all who would place their trust in Him. The greatest problem we face as humans is not from without—but from within. We must be saved from ourselves.

- 01 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
- 02 1 Corinthians 15:9-11
- 03 1 Corinthians 15:12-34
- 04 Psalm 16
- 05 Romans 4:18-25
- 06 2 Corinthians 11:23-27
- 07 2 Timothy 1:6-12

Further, Paul points out the connection of the resurrection to the formation of New Testament leaders. Jesus ascended to heaven, but not before He called a group of people to be His leaders, or messengers. He called these messengers His “apostles” which means something like “sent ambassadors.” These people proclaimed His message and represented Him to the world. Paul lists these apostles: the 12, James, the rest of the apostles, and last of all, Paul. This important passage creates an end date for the ministry of apostle. The ministry of these apostles created the missionary foundation of the church and written words of the New Testament as inspired by the Holy Spirit. While we still represent Jesus today, we stand on the foundation established by Jesus and His apostles.

Finally, Paul responds to the claim made by some that there will be no resurrection of the dead. Paul points out how serious a problem this is with a concise argument. Theologian, David Garland, compares it to a series of dominoes that fall if the resurrection of believers is denied. First, if no one is raised from the dead, then that would imply Christ was not raised either (verse 13). However, Paul sees the destiny of believers closely tied to Christ. Where Christ goes, we go. If Christ did not rise, then the apostles are liars and the believers’ faith is useless because their sins are not paid for and death is not defeated (verses 14-15; 26). But, Christ has been raised! So we will be also (verses 20-22).

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ 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. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹ Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead

are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.²⁷ For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.
²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

²⁹ Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?³⁰ And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour?³¹ I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord.³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

“Let us eat and drink,

for tomorrow we die.”

³³ Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

³⁴ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

Discussion Guide

WARM UP

Have you ever had to “take a stand” for something you strongly believed in? How did you feel after gathering the courage to stand up for your beliefs? Share this with your group.

Have you ever had to “take a stand” for the gospel or your Christian beliefs? Was it difficult? If so, why?

Most of us want to be remembered for something. At the end of your life, how would you like to be remembered?

EXPLORING 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-34

What proclamations do verses 1-8 make concerning the gospel? List a few you find interesting.

Paul is a bold spokesperson for the gospel of Jesus Christ, but what does verse 9 say about his humility? How did Paul persecute the church of God (Acts 22:4; 1 Timothy 1:15-16)? What does verse 10 tell us about how we should view our personal sin and His forgiveness?

Some Corinthians asserted that there was no resurrection of the dead (verse 12). What are a few of the ways Paul counters their assertions (verses 13-28)? Why does Paul mention Adam?

What does fighting beasts at Ephesus have to do with the broad theme of the resurrection (verse 32)? What beasts do you fight to be faithful to your calling?

Call to mind the Corinthian culture and Paul's reasons for writing this letter. Regarding verse 33, How do we balance being "in the world, but not of the world?" Is this a problem only experienced by the young?

In verse 34, Paul returns to the reason for writing this letter—prevalent sin and division in the Corinthian church. Do you think verse 34 is a rebuke intended to awaken them? What do you imagine were the influences and behaviors that took the Corinthians down the path of deserving such a correction?

APPLICATION

Write down a few ideas about how you can be bolder and more courageous in your faith this week, without being offensive or obstinate.

THINK

"We should live as if Christ died yesterday, rose today, and is coming tomorrow."

- Martin Luther

PRAYER

List one or two prayer concerns to share with your group.

Pray for one another's boldness in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

