

Lesson 12 20 April 2014

The Doctrine of the Resurrection

Lesson Scope: [1 Corinthians 15](#)

Lesson Focus

Paul reviewed the essence of the Gospel message that he had preached to the church at Corinth. This message included the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which had been foretold in the Scriptures.

Though they professed to believe in Christ's resurrection, some at Corinth were saying that there is no resurrection from the dead. Paul then raised and effectively answered four questions: Is there a resurrection of the dead? How are the dead raised up? With what body do they come? What will become of those who are still alive in the day of the resurrection of the just?

From the Scriptures Paul showed them that Christ's resurrection forms a solid basis for our faith. The power that raised Christ from the dead gives the Christian victory over sin today and will raise him bodily in the future. Paul wanted them to know that the resurrection is not a mysterious subject beyond human comprehension. They had already seen enough of God's power at work to believe in the resurrection as the Scriptures teach.

A firm belief in the resurrection is necessary for us to have assurance of salvation. Our assurance is based on the work of Christ, including His resurrection. This has past, present, and future implications for us. Our faith rests on Jesus' resurrection as a historic event. Our present life of victory over sin is made possible by resurrection power. The hope of being raised again at the last day is the future aspect of the resurrection. An understanding of the past and future aspects of the resurrection helps us to live right presently. May this study help us to realize how these truths make a difference in how we carry out our duties as Christians today.

The doctrine of the resurrection is foundational to man's salvation. Jesus Christ's resurrection is the basis for the Christian's hope and for the promise of his bodily resurrection.

Lesson Aim: To glean fundamental truths related to the doctrine of the resurrection.

Theme Verses: 1 Corinthians 15:20-21. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

Lesson Text

The Message

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 ¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

The Meaning

1 Corinthians 15:12-28 ¹² 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: ¹⁴ And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. ¹⁵ Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ¹⁶ For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. ²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. ²⁴ Then *cometh* 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. ²⁵ For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. ²⁷ For he

hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.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 Method

1 Corinthians 15:35-58³⁵ But some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?³⁶ *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:³⁷ And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*:³⁸ But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.³⁹ All flesh *is* not the same flesh: but *there is* one *kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds.⁴⁰ *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another.⁴¹ *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for *one* star differeth from *another* star in glory.⁴² So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:⁴³ It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.⁴⁵ And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.⁴⁶ Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.⁴⁷ The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.⁴⁸ As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,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.⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall

have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Questions for Study

The Message

1. Why is the resurrection the cornerstone of the Gospel?
2. What evidence did Paul give for Christ's resurrection?

The Meaning

3. Why would sin remain if Christ had not risen (1 Corinthians 15:17)?
4. In what way was Christ "the firstfruits of them that slept"?
5. What effects of man's Fall will be reversed in the resurrection of the dead?

The Method

6. What truths about the resurrection are illustrated by Paul's reference to sowing?
7. How is the sting of death removed?
8. How can we have victory over death?

Analyzing the Passage

The Gospel is the foundation of the Christian life (1 Corinthians 15:1). Faith in the Gospel brings salvation. Paul pointed out that in disbelieving the resurrection, the Corinthians were in danger of having "believed in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:2).

"According to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) refers to the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus' death and resurrection. These include Isaiah 25:8 and Psalm 16:10. The Corinthians should not have been doubtful about the resurrection, because it was prophesied many years earlier.

In 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 Paul showed that without the resurrection of Christ, the Christian's faith is vain, present victory is impossible, and there is no hope of life beyond the grave. But after considering briefly

the bleak scenario of such a hopeless future, Paul quickly reminded them of the reality that Christ is risen. That fact assures the bodily resurrection of all His saints (1 Corinthians 15:20-22). "The firstfruits of them that slept" alludes to the Old Testament Feast of the First Fruits (Leviticus 2:12-16; 23:9-12). Christ was the first to rise with an immortal body, and many more will follow.

Paul mentioned the final victory of Christ "when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:24). We shall share that victory (1 Corinthians 15:57) when death, the last enemy, "is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Principles and Applications

The Message

1. Our resurrected and living Lord is the life and power of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Christian assurance is based on the certainty of the resurrection. This certainty empowers and energizes the Christian. Resurrection power raises us up to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). This power gives New Testament Christians an inner spiritual resource that the Old Testament saints did not have. Their motivation for right living came from the fear of the penalty for breaking the Law.

2. Christ's death and resurrection fulfilled Old Testament Scriptures (15:3, 4). Prophets spoke of life after death. Job expressed hope in a living Redeemer that he would see, though his mortal body would be consumed in the grave (Job 19:25-27). Jonah's experience in the whale's belly also typified Jesus' death and resurrection (Matthew 12:39-40).

The Meaning

3. Not believing in the resurrection makes the Christian life utterly futile (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). The resurrection is the foundation on which the Christian's hope rests. Without it faith would be vain, all believers would be lost, sin would be unforgiven, and there would be no hope for the future.

4. Christ's resurrection guarantees the future resurrection of all saints (15:20-23). As the first fruits were tokens of the harvest that would follow, so Christ's resurrection gives all believers "a lively hope" (1 Peter 1:3). Adam's sin brought death into the human race; but the second Adam, Jesus Christ, brought life and immortality. No one but the sinless

Christ could lift the sentence of death resting upon all men.

5. The resurrection will reverse the effects of man's Fall (1 Corinthians 15:22). "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). Believers die with assurance of being resurrected at the last day. At the final resurrection, death will be abolished forever. All bodily infirmities and the debilitating effects of age will no more affect the saints after the resurrection.

6. Our resurrected Lord will have the ultimate victory (1 Corinthians 15:24, 28). At His Second Coming, all the dead in Christ will be raised. All of God's enemies will be defeated. We are delivered from the power of sin now. Then, we will be delivered from the very presence of sin. Our resurrected Lord will remove from us all consequences of sin.

The Method

7. Nature illustrates the manner of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42, 44). A seed sown in the earth perishes, but it springs up in a new form. The new plant that grows is far better than the seed that was planted. The seed must die for the new plant to grow. Spiritually, self must die so that we can become new creatures.

8. Resurrected saints will have new, incorruptible bodies (1 Corinthians 15:50-52). This change will happen in a moment. The saints who are alive when Christ returns will receive new bodies without dying. Bodies of flesh and blood are corruptible; therefore they cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. Incorruptible bodies will be free from sin, sickness, and death. They will be like Christ's glorious body.

9. The resurrection overcomes the sting of death (1 Corinthians 15:55-56). Since the power of Jesus' resurrection removes sin, the sting is taken out of death. The believer can face physical death with confidence, knowing that it is the gateway to eternal life. Those who die in Christ will rise to die no more. On them the second death will have no power (Revelation 20:6).

10. Resurrection power gives God's people victory in this life and in the life to come (1 Corinthians 15:57). Believers can live in victory over sin because Jesus conquered sin. They have hope of everlasting life because Jesus conquered death. Our redemption will be complete when we re-

ceive new bodies that are not subject to death. We anticipate living in that world where the sin and temptations of this present world are absent.

Important Teachings

1. Our resurrected and living Lord is the life and power of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
2. Christ's death and resurrection fulfilled Old Testament Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
3. Not believing in the resurrection makes the Christian life utterly futile (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).
4. Christ's resurrection guarantees the future resurrection of all saints (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).
5. The resurrection will reverse the effects of man's Fall (1 Corinthians 15:22).
6. Our resurrected Lord will have the ultimate victory (1 Corinthians 15:24, 28).
7. Nature illustrates the manner of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42, 44).
8. Resurrected saints will have new, incorruptible bodies (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).
9. The resurrection overcomes the sting of death (1 Corinthians 15:55-56).
10. Resurrection power gives God's people victory in this life and in the life to come (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Answers to Questions

1. Why is the resurrection the cornerstone of the Gospel?
Christ's resurrection provides victory over sin and death. It gives the believer power to live in newness of life. It validates our faith and grants hope of everlasting life. Without it we would have no hope beyond this life.
2. What evidence did Paul give for Christ's resurrection?
He referred to the Scriptures, which prophesied of Christ's resurrection. He showed that the Gospel rests on the fact of the resurrection. Without resurrection power, the Christian would be unable to stand. He would have no power to overcome sin, and his faith would be in vain.

3. Why would sin remain if Christ had not risen (1 Corinthians 15:17)? Since sin is the reason for death, the failure of Christ to rise would have indicated that He had not had victory over sin. But since He was sinless, death had no hold on Him. His resurrection showed that He was victorious over sin and had the power to take away the sins of the world (Matthew 1:21; John 1:29).

4. In what way was Christ "the firstfruits of them that slept"?

Israel was commanded to bring the first fruits to the priests as an act of worship, acknowledging what God had done for them, and rejoicing in everything God had given them (Deuteronomy 26:1-11). The first fruits were a token of the greater harvest to follow. Christ's resurrection likewise gave a promise of many more who would rise from the dead. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will also raise all the saints to life again.

5. What effects of man's Fall will be reversed in the resurrection of the dead?

The curse of death will be forever removed. There will be no more sickness or pain. The saints receive bodies that will not be subject to the infirmities of age. All that was lost in the Fall will be restored.

6. What truths about the resurrection are illustrated by Paul's reference to sowing?

Seed that is sown dies (1 Corinthians 15:36). That which springs forth has a different form (1 Corinthians 15:37). The natural body is sown in the earth; it is raised a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:44).

7. How is the sting of death removed?

When Jesus took away our sins, He removed the cause of physical death. Our souls are redeemed when we believe and are saved. The redemption of our bodies will occur when Jesus comes again. The anticipation of receiving a body that will not die removes the sting of physical death.

8. How can we have victory over death?

We can have victory over death as we gain daily victory over sin. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead raises us spiritually to a new walk of holiness.

Summarizing the Lesson

The resurrection is an essential part of the Gospel. The prospect of being raised from the dead breathes hope into our present life. It provides incentive to be faithful to the Lord no matter what happens. It gives us the power to overcome sin every day. The grace of God teaches us that "we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Research Guide

1. Read Job's thoughts about life, death, and the hereafter in Job 14.
2. Notice Jesus' inseparable connection with the resurrection (John 11:21-27).