

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 28TH - 29TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

ESSENTIAL (1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11) GETTING BACK TO THE FUNDAMENTALS

Paul has been writing about the mechanics of church for awhile, but all of the strategy in the world can't compensate for bad theology.

- Simply put, Paul reminded the church that their foundational belief is in **the deity of Jesus**, that **He was crucified for our sin, and that He resurrected from the grave on the 3rd day.**

THIS BELIEF IS ESSENTIAL

In Paul's day, this belief could have you persecuted or killed, but for one to have knowledge of Christ and deny it, is to suffer the 2nd death, eternal damnation.

- **We're saved if we have a relationship with Jesus and "hold to the message" of the Bible.** If we believe in salvation any other way, we've "believed in vain."

A GOD IN OUR IMAGE

We live in a culture that picks and chooses its spiritual beliefs like one visits a buffet. In essence, we create a god in our image. Christianity doesn't work in this manner.

- **We must not only know what Jesus did, we must know and believe Who Jesus is. Without a correct belief in the identity of Christ, we're incapable of change.**

THE IMPERATIVE BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION

This letter to the Corinthians is rooted in the teaching of the death and resurrection in Jesus. Paul says this is according to scripture, which at the time was just the OT.

- **Without faith in the miraculous power of the resurrection, all of the teaching of the Word falls apart because it really is the focal point of the entire Bible.**

THERE WERE WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION

Peter (Cephas), the other disciples, the Marys in the garden, and over 500 "brothers and sisters" and even Paul saw the resurrected Christ.

- The dramatic change in the way the witnesses of the resurrection lived after seeing Christ is substantial evidence for their claim.

HOW PAUL BECAME AN APOSTLE

Apostle by definition is one that personally knew and followed Jesus. Paul encountered Jesus near Damascus 4-7 years after the resurrection. Paul claimed to be "the least" of the apostles because he persecuted Christians.

- "By the grace of God" Paul was chosen to do amazing work. **We've all sinned, but we can all do amazing things by God's grace.**

"I WORKED HARDER THAN ANY OF THEM"

This statement was not meant to brag but to show Paul's **acknowledgment of his past and the grace God showed him.** This was fuel to do as much for God's Kingdom as possible.

- Our salvation is not works based (as Paul proves), but **we're saved to do good works that help others and glorify God. We must never forget where we came from!**

WORTHLESS? (1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-19)

LETTING DOUBT CREEP IN

Greeks denied the possibility of a bodily resurrection after death, and this teaching was creeping into the church.

- If there is no resurrection of Jesus, then we cannot believe that we will be resurrected into eternity. On the flip side, if we believe we will be resurrected, Christ must have been resurrected first.

MEANINGLESS WITHOUT THE RESURRECTION

If the resurrection isn't real, then preaching the Word would be useless, the teachers of the Word would be fools and liars, and following Christ would be a waste of time.

- It would also mean that our evil hasn't been, or even has the means to be, dealt with. **If this were true, all hope is lost and we gravitate towards nihilism.**

IT IS EASY NOW, BUT IT WON'T ALWAYS BE

We often say, "I would still live by these principles even if there were no afterlife." This is very easy to say in a society that doesn't physically persecute us.

- **The true test of our allegiance to Christ will be when it begins to cost us something.** In Paul's day, it could cost you everything, and maybe that's why the faith was growing.

RIISING (1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-28)

"FIRSTFRUITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP"

Jesus wasn't just a good man that triumphed over death. Jesus' resurrection was the foreshadowing of our resurrection.

- The term "firstfruits" is similar to the imagery used in Rev. 14 about Christ harvesting the earth like a farmer reaps the fruit from his vineyard.

WE BRING DEATH, JESUS BRINGS LIFE

Just as death was introduced into the world by mankind (Adam), another Man (Jesus) defeated death and offers us eternal life.

- This point can't be missed; **our way (Gen. 3) will always result in death, whether spiritual or even physical.** On the other hand, **if we submit to Jesus we have "life, and life more abundantly"** (John 10:10).

GIVING US A ROUGH TIMELINE

V23-28 almost mirrors John's writing in Revelation 20. Paul tells us that we will be literally resurrected when Jesus returns and He "hands over the kingdom to God the Father and abolishes all rule."

- The last of the old way to go is death (Revelation 20:14) before all people step into their eternity.

WE WILL ALL RISE, BUT...

Everyone will experience a resurrection of the body. The question is to what are we being resurrected to, judgement (eternal death) or a welcoming home (eternal life).

- **It is not God's will that any go to Hell (2 Peter 3:9), but in our freedom we have the choice as to where we spend our eternity. The choices we make determines where we go.**

MEANING (1 CORINTHIANS 15:29-34)

CAREFUL NOT TO CONFUSE THIS

V29 is not condoning baptizing people to help other people who have died without baptism go to Heaven. Paul identified a practice unique to this church that he disagreed with.

- The point was why should they do these vicarious baptisms if they don't even believe in a resurrection.

"WHY ARE WE IN DANGER EVERY HOUR?"

Paul is essentially saying that being beaten up, sacrificing comforts, and living in constant danger would make no sense if he didn't believe there was a resurrection.

- **We should not only want to do good works because Jesus saved us, but also because there is an eternal reward.** If this wasn't so, this kind of sacrifice is crazy.

GOING BACK TO NIHILISM

If there are no consequences and life is just about bursts of temporary pleasure, we might as well "eat and drink for tomorrow we die."

- The problem is that **there are consequences, both in this life and after it! Not only will we damage others with our carelessness, we may eternally damn ourselves.**

"BAD COMPANY CORRUPTS GOOD MORALS"

Simply put, who we let speak into us matters. **If we surround ourselves with false teachings and careless living, we will eventually be corrupted and compromised.**

- This phrase actually comes from the Greek poet/comedian Menander's play *Thais*. This doesn't discredit Paul, but shows all truth belongs to God.

"COME TO YOUR SENSES AND STOP SINNING"

Some of the Corinthians were letting popular "thinkers" of their day steer their perceptions on life and death, and as a result, were confused over the truth of God.

- We're **to look at the "fruit" and "come to [our] senses" by listening and applying the teachings of the Word rather than the repetitively empty philosophies of the world.**

WHAT WE BELIEVE MATTERS

- Though Paul specifically talks about belief in the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus, all of our theology (belief of the nature of God) matters because it shapes how we live.
- Without a belief in eternity and the power of Jesus to save, we drift towards one of two destructive paths: selfishness or meaninglessness.

OUR CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES

- The truth is we will all resurrect one day. The real question is what we will resurrect to: paradise or judgement?
- In a culture of careless pursuit of self, **we have to understand that the choices we make have both temporary and eternal consequences that hurt others and can destroy us. We must come to our senses.**

FOR YOUR RESURRECTION

- The good news is that Jesus came, died, and rose again for our salvation, freedom, peace, and contentment. **Jesus' resurrection was really about our resurrection!**
- **We don't only have the promise of eternity with Him, our lives can be transformed now if we will give our lives to Him daily!** This is not easy, but it is good!