

# 1 Corinthians 15:12-34

“Repercussions Of The Resurrection”

Jesus said, “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*” John 11:25-26 and Then He asked what we could consider to be the single most important question that we could ever be confronted with, “*Do you believe this?*” John 11:26 and That’s really the topic of discussion found in our text today, “do you believe this?” Last week we spent time developing the message of the gospel with the emphasis being placed on the *reality* of Christ’s resurrection, there’s proof positive; it’s a historical, verifiable fact. God’s Word declares it, eye witnesses declared it, the fact that there’s a church at all testifies of it (and you can grab that study if any of those things peak your interest).

But the reality of Christ’s *personal* resurrection at this point isn’t even in question (though in actuality it never was in question and we’ll develop that in a moment) but it was necessary for Paul to develop that and get us all on the same page with regards to that because the *principle* of resurrection carries with it huge implications and ramifications for you and me. You see Christ’s resurrection personally ties directly to the principle of resurrection for you and me (in fact all of humanity) collectively. You can’t have one with out the other (and we’ll get into that as well).

So Paul has reminded them that when he came to them it was with the emphasis being placed, not just upon the cross of Christ; that is the death of Christ, but upon the reality of the resurrection of Christ as well. Notice Vs 3 and 4 (read). Now jump down to Vs 11 (read).

Of course you remember the basic pattern of evangelism that we noted as we dissected last weeks text. 1<sup>st</sup> the gospel is preached, it’s proclaimed, it’s articulated and explained in the hearing of a person or a group of people. But a simple review of it won’t save anyone it’s got to be received; it’s got to be believed, not just in the head but in the heart. It’s got to be taken in, absorbed into the deep recess of who we are, forming us fashioning us, being woven as it were into the very fiber of our inner man which of course makes for a change in our outer man, the things we do, the choices we make, the things we participate in. Then having believed it, having received it we stand in it and we’re saved *by* it. Paul continues on.

## Vs12

This is what I was mentioning a moment ago, the gospel was preached and they believed it. Paul personally testified of that, and of course the resurrection of Jesus Christ is an essential part of the gospel message. So it wasn’t the resurrection of Christ that they seemed to struggle with, it was the idea of their own, it was the resurrection of the rest of the world (so to speak). It would seem as though there were some in the Corinthian church who had fallen prey to either a Sadducean sort of philosophy or more likely a common secular Grecian frame of mind that they had allowed to influence their thinking in the church.

You recall the Sadducees, you run into them along with the Pharisees all throughout the gospels, they were the religious liberals, had a real problem with the whole idea of resurrection or really life after death at all. They didn’t believe in angels, in demons or buy into the fact of a “spirit world” at all.

One day they were challenging Jesus as to this idea of resurrection, life after death and they spoke of how the law says that if a man dies being married and he had no off-spring, that the next brother was to marry the widow of the brother who'd died and the 1<sup>st</sup> son born was to be credited to the previous brother preserving his lineage. They said, "We know of a situation where 7 brothers wound up marrying the same woman each of them dying and none of them having had children. So in the resurrection whose wife will she be?"

Jesus answered and said, "You're mistaken not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. Because in the resurrection people aren't married nor given in marriage, they're like the angels of heaven." and He said, "*But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*" Matt 22:31-32 and Of course when everyone heard that they were blown away, Jesus bringing real time application right out of the ancient scriptures for them to be moved by and changed through. The Word of God is powerful; it transcends time and culture, because it speaks to the human heart which remains the same throughout the ages. But it's possible that some of the Corinthians had been influenced with this Sadducean frame of mind.

More likely still is that they had bought into a common pagan Greek philosophy which basically stated all things material are evil and all things of the spirit are pure. and So most Greeks perceived death as a welcome release from the prison of this body, and the idea of a physical resurrection was repulsive to them, it would be like being freed to be placed right back into prison. **You remember when Paul was preaching in the midst of the Areopagus there in Athens (Acts 17) things seemed to be going relatively well until he got to the resurrection, then they began to mock him and make fun of him. They just couldn't believe it or buy into it. It wasn't that they didn't believe in life after death, they did. They just didn't believe in a bodily resurrection, but rather that simply the spirit was set free.**

Understand that when the Christian speaks of the resurrection, we're not speaking of simply a setting free of the spirit. You guys this is foundational and fundamental to your faith. We believe in a physical, bodily resurrection, when they entered Jesus' tomb was His body still present? No, it was gone, why? The resurrection, now had His body been somehow changed? **You bet, He'd been glorified, made fit (physically) for the heavenly realm. (and As we close in on the conclusion of this Ch we'll speak more of the transformation that takes place through the resurrection.)** Now, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, but we believe that the day is coming when everyone who has ever lived will be reunited with their body in what the bible calls the resurrection. Now will their body be changed? Sure it will, corruption can't inherit incorruption, mortality must be swallowed up by immortality. But you remember when Jesus presented Himself alive to the disciples after His resurrection He beckoned Thomas to touch Him, to place his hands in His wounds, He ate fish and broke bread with them. When He 1<sup>st</sup> appeared to them collectively they were all freaking out (understandably so) and He said, "*Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.*" Luke 24:39 **Jesus was resurrected and walked out of that tomb bodily, "How did He walk through walls?" I don't know that's an upgrade that we apparently get in our glorified bodies.**

Don't worry about decay, turning to dust, or being cremated, none of those things present a problem for God, we were formed from the dust of the earth, so for God to call us forth from the dust or anywhere in between won't be an issue. So Paul is saying, "If we preach Christ crucified, buried and resurrected, why do some of you say there's no resurrection from the dead?" Perhaps they thought, "Well Christ was sinless, perfect, His body wasn't corrupt with sin so we can see how *He* could rise, but as for the rest of us no way." Look at Vs 13

### Vs13

What's Paul's point? That Christ stood in the gap on behalf of humanity, and to say it can't happen for us is to say it can't happen for Christ. Because to see Jesus as anything less than 100% man is to take away from His humanity; yet to see Him as anything less than 100% God is to take away from His deity.

Jesus was both, but often times I feel (and understandably so) as though we allow His deity to overshadow, kind of eclipse His humanity. But as we developed last week if Jesus was anything less 100% human, He couldn't have represented mankind upon the cross. So if man can't rise from the dead, if there's no resurrection for humanity, than by default you have to confess that Jesus hasn't risen, because He was as human as you are and I am (fully God, but fully man). Paul is pointing out irreparable absolutely detrimental flaws in such a philosophy, you can not say there's no resurrection while simultaneously confessing that Christ rose from the dead, it's a contradiction in terms. So if you stick to your guns that there's no bodily resurrection, then Christ is not risen. Furthermore.

### Vs14

Do you understand what Paul is saying here? He's getting into this "cause and effect" type of reasoning, "If" this, "then" that, if *this* is true, then the corresponding effect of that is true as well. and Paul is saying that the resurrection is at the very heart of the gospel message, so that by removing the reality of the resurrection from the fullness of the message it's like ripping it's heart out and leaving it lying lifeless there on the floor. and Forgive me if my example seems crude and I mean absolutely no disrespect to the gospel, but if any of you have ever been deer hunting you know the drill. After you get the deer the 1<sup>st</sup> thing you do is gut it, you take out any and all of the essentials that contribute to it's life, it's left a lifeless hollow shell. and Paul is saying when you remove the reality of the resurrection from the message of the gospel; it's like taking out the essentials that make for life and taking unto yourself a hollow shell. It's empty of life, and of any life giving potential.

He says, "What the point apart from the resurrection?" Apart from the resurrection our preaching is empty, it's in vain, its pointless, it's for naught. and Apart from the resurrection your faith is with out a purpose as well. You see this is getting heavy, the resurrection lies at the heart of our faith, it's life to us. Remember Jesus was delivered up to the cross for our sins, but He was raised for our justification (Rom 4:25) apart from the resurrection it's impossible for us to stand justified before God. Paul told the Romans, "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Rom 5:10 Apart from the resurrection there's no salvation. Heb 7:25 "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

But if there's no resurrection then Christ *doesn't* live therefore He *can't* save, apart from the resurrection (Paul says) our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty, with out a point, and with out a purpose. But wait; there's more, it gets worse yet.

### Vs15

“Not only would we be preaching pointlessly, but we would in fact be found false witnesses; or another way to understand that, ‘liars.’ We would be guilty of misrepresenting God’s truth.” Now Moses was with held from the Promised Land for misrepresenting the truth about God, the heart of God toward His people. **and That was only over the fact that Moses portrayed God as angry when He wasn't. Of how much worse consequence do you suppose it would be when having been entrusted with the gospel of Jesus Christ you knowingly, willfully misrepresent the truth of God's Word to His people? Preaching the resurrection when in fact the dead don't rise...** and If you can't trust Paul on this point, then on what point can you trust him, how do you know when the apostles are being honest or not? What else is a lie, how do I discern the truth, see you open up a whole can of worms when you unravel the thread of resurrection that's woven throughout the heart of the fabric of the message of the gospel.

### Vs16-17

You take the resurrection out of the equation and you're left headed down an irrecoverable slippery slope of destruction. If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile. Now this is a different word than the one used in Vs 14 describing our faith as “empty” or “vain.” In Vs 14 Paul is saying our faith is hollowed out, no substance to it, it's with out a point apart from the resurrection. **Here in Vs 17 he's saying that it won't bear any result either, apart from the reality of the resurrected Christ faith in Christ will serve no purpose and bring about no result. You're still in your sins if Christ is not risen. Now last week we broke it down saying perhaps we could reason the cross as subtracting our sin, and the resurrection as adding Christ's righteousness.** But understand that what this is telling us is that those things work congruently, harmoniously with one another. One is contingent upon the other; a dead savior can't save anybody, reconciled by His death, saved through His resurrection life.

**You go to the store to claim a gift with out a receipt, they're not going to give it to you no matter what you may say or how big a fit you may throw. No proof of purchase, you can't have it. You can claim reconciliation to God all day long, but with out proof you're not going to get it. What's the proof, where's the receipt, proof of purchase, the resurrected Christ is the receipt, the proof of purchase, reconciliation granted through faith in Jesus Christ** But if Christ isn't risen, our faith is futile; we're still in our sins. Because if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then death has power over Him, it's defeated Him, and if it has power over Him then He can't be God, if He's not God He was less than a perfect sacrifice, if He was less than a perfect sacrifice than my sin isn't completely atoned for, if my sin isn't completely atoned for/paid for then I'm not clean before God, my faith has been futile and I'm still in my sins.

### Vs18-19

**Not only are you and I still in our sins, but all those who've died before us having faith in Christ have perished, the sting of death remains in tact full force. and If in this life we place our only hope in Christ, then we're to be counted as fools to be pitied because our life is a joke. The unbeliever would be correct in his assessment of the cross as foolishness.**

Oh sure apart from the resurrection the Christian life may have a few advantages, you learn to be a better dad or mom, better husband or wife, how to relate to people more effectively. But lets be honest, often times it invites more problems than it solves. If you believe and your spouse doesn't it can become a contentious occasion, you often become hated in the work place or at school because of what you stand for. **You become a thorn is the political perspectives side because you don't consent to any and everything that anyone wants to do under the banner of "freedom." You sacrifice certain things that would make for an advantage in this life because you're counting on the resurrection life, so if there's no resurrection we're a joke and should be pitied.** Think of all the things Paul suffered and so many suffer because of their faith in the resurrected Christ, if it's not true, what a sad life for nothing. So you see how much hinges on the reality of the resurrection, it's no small detail that you can take or leave, if you don't believe in it you're not a Christian according the standard of God's Word. It's an essential non-negotiable doctrine of the Christian faith.

### **Vs 20**

Enough with the, "If that were true, this would be the result," trail. It's been followed far enough, the fact is that Christ is risen from the dead and has become the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits of those who've fallen asleep. This word, "1<sup>st</sup> fruits" speaks of the offering of the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits, but in it's secular usage it spoke of an entrance fee, Christ fulfills both.

Last week we spoke of several places the resurrection is seen in the OT. This is another. In Lev 23 God is giving the law regarding various feasts. and There you'll find that the feast of 1<sup>st</sup> fruits was to be observed on the day after the Sabbath following Passover whereby a sheaf full of grain would be waved before the Lord, it was to be the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits of the harvest and it was dedicated to the Lord. **and In presenting it to the Lord you were saying, "By faith I realize that this represents the 1<sup>st</sup> of a full harvest of like grain that's yet to come, that You're bringing about."** It was just the 1<sup>st</sup> installment (so to speak) but it spoke of much more to come. **Now follow me here; Jesus (the Lamb of God) was sacrificed when?** On Passover, the next day was what? Sabbath, on the next day (the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week) Jesus rose from the dead on the very day of the Feast of 1<sup>st</sup> fruits. His resurrection anticipates a much larger harvest; His is the guarantee of ours to follow.

Now as far as the entrance fee is concerned that goes with out say, Jesus is our entrance fee into Heaven. He paid the way for you and me.

### **Vs21-22**

**I'd refer you to our studies in Rom 5:12-21 for the long of this. As for the short of it what this is saying is that by default we're identified with Adam because we all ultimately come from Adam. and Through our identification with Adam we have everything that was his, sin, death (and apart from faith in the atoning work of God on our behalf) destruction.** Through 1 man's disobedience came sin and death. But even so through 1 Man's obedience came righteousness and resurrection life. So if in being identified with Adam we inherit death and ruin, in being identified with Christ (through faith) we inherit deliverance and resurrection. In Adam all die, in Christ all are made alive.

Now keep the context he's not speak of universalism whereby all will be saved no matter what (when he says "all will be made alive"). The context is all those who by faith identify, receive and believe in Christ. However you should know that all of mankind will experience resurrection, the bible is clear on that. Just as our bodies aren't fit for Heaven, neither could they remain in hell apart from total annihilation. Jesus spoke of 2 resurrections, one unto life and the other unto condemnation. Even the wicked will be resurrected, reunited with a body that's been transformed, but only to be cast in the lake of fire not having their names found written in the Lamb's book of life.

#### Vs23-24

When he says, "Each one in his own order." The word "order" is a military term that speaks of various bands of troops. and As you read through the scriptures you get the idea that the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection takes place in multiple intervals. After Jesus rose from the dead, before He ascended we read in Matt's gospel that the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints were raised and they went in to the holy city and appeared to many (Matt 27:51-53). In Eph 4 Paul tells us that when He ascended on high that He led captivity (those who were held in Ab's bosom prior to the cross) captive. It would seem to me that the OT saints were resurrected at that time (unless I've missed something), the resurrection of the NT saints seems to take place at the rapture when the dead in Christ are raised and then those of us who are alive and remain will be called up to meet with them in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Then of course there's the resurrection of the tribulation saints (Rev 7). Then of course the millennial kingdom whereby Christ will rule upon the earth for 1,000 yrs (Rev 20) If you die as a believer in Christ during any of those periods of history (or future history) you take part in what the bible calls the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection.

and We read, "*Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power,*" Rev 20:6 Now the bible doesn't actually use the term 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection, Jesus called it the resurrection unto condemnation, Rev 20 calls it the 2<sup>nd</sup> death when the dead both small and great stand before the Great White Throne of judgment, the sea gives up it's dead, and the books are opened, and another book called the book of Life and anyone not found written in the Book of Life will be cast in the lake of fire, the 2<sup>nd</sup> death, the resurrection unto condemnation.

Of course that signifies the end, when Christ will deliver the kingdom to God, having put an end to all rule and all authority and power. Right now man has limited rule, authority and power, Satan has limited rule, authority and power, but it's all coming to an end as per God the Father. and Christ will reign sovereignly at His right hand until it all comes to pass.

#### Vs25-26

Now is death your worst enemy? No, but make no mistake it's not your friend, sometimes we wonder why if death is the means by which we're ushered into God's presence why it seems so strange or uncomfortable to be confronted by it. Because death itself isn't your friend, it's an enemy and the day will come when God will destroy death and we'll forever dwell His glorious presence, no more pain, no more tears, no more sorrow and no more death, the former things having passed away.

## Vs27-28

Now this can be a bit confusing when you just read through it but allow me to read it for you amplifying it a bit to hopefully help clear it up a bit. (Re-read placing the Father and the Son in appropriate place). Vs25-28

So we see the beautiful Father/Son relationship continuing throughout eternity even as it always has. Jesus said in regards to the Father, *“I always do those things that please Him.”* John 8:29 He willfully subjected Himself to the Father on earth and likewise He will in Heaven.

Doesn't make Him any less God, it's just the beauty of the Trinity, the Father subjecting all to the Son, the Son subjecting Himself to the Father, and the Spirit seeking to magnify the Son and the Father and Son working through the power of the Spirit. Each always looking to uphold the other, what a novel idea each one looking out not for the thing of Himself but for the things of others.

## Vs 29

There are multiple, multiple explanations of this, I'm not sure any are satisfactory. Couple things quickly, 1<sup>st</sup> of all to establish solid doctrine what do we need to see? #1 Jesus teaching it, #2 practiced in the book of Acts, #3 reinforced in the epistles. Communion, Jesus taught it, it was practiced in Acts, reinforced in the epistles. **Water baptism, taught by Jesus, practiced in Acts, reinforced in the epistles, nowhere under the pretense of being necessary for salvation, but a valid church ritual nonetheless whereby we identify outward with the death and resurrection of Christ even as we have inwardly in our heart already.** Foot washing, Jesus did it, don't see it in Acts, not mentioned in the Epistles, we don't recognize it as something the church needs to do, it's not wrong, but it's not really scripturally sanctioned. As for baptizing for the dead, Jesus didn't teach it (because it presupposes baptismal regeneration and that I can be saved vicariously for someone even against their will while they lived) it's not in the book of Acts, and only mentioned here in all the scriptures. **So we reject it as church practice, but this is where the Mormons get the idea, and often times they'll seek to contact their dead relatives to seek their permission, something expressly forbidden by scripture. So it's not a biblical practice at all.**

The other thing I'd have you notice is that Paul makes a distinction here. He doesn't say, “Why then do we baptize for the dead?” Or, “Why then do you baptize for the dead?” He says, “Why then to they baptize for the dead?” It seems most probable that there was some pagan practice in the city of Corinth whereby they practiced baptism for the dead. **Baptism didn't begin with Christianity, all kinds of people were baptized into all kinds of things as a way of identifying themselves with a certain sect or set of beliefs. and So it seems that Paul is saying, “How is it that these pagans in some way seek to prepare for resurrection life, or life after death this way not having the knowledge that you do and yet they have a closer grip on reality on this point than you do!”** It's a rebuke, “There are people that don't even know the Lord that suppose there's a resurrection of some sort and you know Jesus and don't even consent to the reality of the resurrection, hello, you serve risen Lord! He's the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits, the sample and the surety of the harvest that's to follow.”

**Vs30-31**

Now it's true that we do well to reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus everyday. But that's not what Paul is saying here, he's saying that his life is in jeopardy everyday, why place himself in harms way if there's no hope of the resurrection?

**Vs32**

Every now and then we'll use the argument that if we're wrong when it comes to eternity we have nothing to lose by believing, but they have everything to lose if they're wrong by *not* believing. and We say that knowing we're right, but Paul is saying it would be more accurate to say that if there's *really* nothing beyond this life, then we're truly idiots for subjecting ourselves to such discipline. Or risking our lives for the sake of the gospel, better to just go for the gusto, live it up, he who dies with the most toys wins, because this life is as good as it gets. How sad if that were true, how meaningless life would be to be with out hope being with out God in the world.

**Vs33-34**

Perhaps we'll pick up here next time, but do yourself a favor, underline and memorize Vs 33. How many lives I've watched slowly picked apart and destroyed because of a refusal to submit and take heed to this single Vs. **Don't be deceived, bad company will corrupt good morals, you can fight it, not like it, stand in opposition to it, it's the Word of God. Be careful whom you select as your friend and peer, safeguard that sphere of influence, hang with people that will build you up, encourage you in your walk and relationship with the Lord. Not tempt you to lower your standards and compromise your walk.**

**Vs34**

He's saying, "Sober up, snap out of it, you're living a life that's really undistinguishable from the world around you, people can't see Christ in you." You see if there's no resurrection there's no accountability, it justifies me living anyway I please. **Christ is alive, and He's alive in me, He's alive in you, let people see Him through you; come into the knowledge of God by Christ in you. The repercussion of the resurrection *should* be practical holiness in our lives, if you deny it; it leads to ungodliness, to acknowledge it lends itself to holiness, to righteousness, let God be glorified in your life, lead your life in the light of the reality of the resurrection.**

### Prayer Points:

God we're so thankful for the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ Help us Lord to lead our lives in a manner that reflects that reality, in holiness and righteousness, that we be not given over to sin, but truly sanctified; not just in our position, but in our practice. Thank You Lord for loving us and giving Yourself for us as a perfect sacrifice, with out spot and with out blemish, rising again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day that we might be justified before the Father.

If you've never given your heart to Christ, Jesus wants to justify you as well, right here, and right now. Jesus died for our sins, He was buried and rose again the 3<sup>rd</sup> day that we might be seen as righteous before God by faith in Him. He was the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits of a harvest to follow, it's God's heart that you be apart of that harvest, the question is, is it your heart? If you're willing to open your heart and receive Jesus Christ as Your Lord, and as Your Savior, saving you from the penalty of your own sin, giving you forgiveness and righteousness in it's place then do it today, let today be the day of salvation for you. Jesus has paid the price, the inheritance awaits, all you have to do is receive it. Open your heart, confess your sin, ask Jesus to come in and let Him wash you whiter than snow.