

1 Corinthians 15:35-58

“Nature Reveals The Resurrection”

I don't have a whole lot by way of introduction today because I want to just jump right in where we left off last time, backing up just a bit into Vs 33. Ch 15 of the book of 1st Cor is all about the resurrection; it's reality, it's result, and even how it's revealed in nature (we'll see that today). Paul has been pointing out the necessity *of* it, the hope we have *in* it, and the vanity of life apart *from* it. and When you begin to associate with those who don't believe it, who place no stock in the *fullness* of the gospel message; watch out, you're treading on thin ice. Let it be known to you that you are placing your walk and relationship with Jesus in jeopardy when you keep company (that is strike a companionship) with the ungodly, those who have a different train of thought than you do, who don't subject themselves to a biblical world view.

When Paul came to town he didn't teach that there was no resurrection from the dead, quite to the contrary his whole reason counting all things that were gain to him in the world as loss was based on the reality of the resurrection. Remember he told the Philippians that he had abandoned his worldly credentials, his platform, his position, and all those things that made him who he was (counting them as rubbish) that he might gain Christ. Losing his life (as it were) for Christ sake that he might truly find life; he said in the 3rd Ch of the book of Phil, “...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Phil 3:10-11 So then what was causing these Corinthians to consent to the idea that there was no resurrection from the dead? It was the company they'd been keeping, it was corrupting them, compromising them, distorting and destroying their biblical world view. You toss resurrection out of the equation of the gospel and you send salvation out the window with it, it's that important (grab the last couple of studies if you haven't been here).

So the warning is found here in Vs 33, “Protect the peer circle.” Notice (read). It's *the Word* not *the world* that should be our guide for thinking, for forming and fashioning our perspective, our opinion, our thought process. and I'll say it again, underline, memorize, take to heart this scripture. I take the time to camp on it because I've seen the affects of not taking it to heart over and over again throughout the years.

Why do you think it says, “Do not be deceived;”? When the bible issues the exhortation, “Do not be deceived,” it's generally because we as humanity have a tendency to be deceived in that area. Do a little search and find out how many times the NT says, “Do not be deceived” and the context that surrounds it and you'll discover that the areas in which the warning goes out most generally are the areas that people fall prey to being deceived in. Remember when Jesus said, “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and will deceive many.” Mark 13:5-6 In the parallel passage in Luke it reads, “Take heed that you not be deceived.” How many people today are deceived as to the reality of the road they're on, whom they place their hope in and the way that leads to everlasting life? I mean we could even leave out things like Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and other major religions of the world and just consider the people who've come throughout the ages claiming literally to be the Christ, and those who've believed them and the #'s would be staggering.

Jesus said, “Don’t be deceived,” yet many, many are. Earlier in this letter Paul said, “*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*” 1 Cor 6:9-11 You guys he was writing to “believers” so often we’re deceived into thinking that God is aware of *our* situation, that things are different for us, we’re an exception here. Don’t be deceived, if you lead a lifestyle that reflects these kinds of things, if these kinds of things are the practiced pattern of your life and you do not repent. **You’re only fooling yourself if you think that by coming to church and calling yourself a Christians that that gains you some sort of safe passage into heaven. The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, regardless of the excuse.** To the Gal Paul wrote, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*” Gal 6:7 We think, “God won’t allow something to befall me, He loves me. Yeah I know I got drunk, crashed my car and ran from the cops. But God is gracious, slow to anger.” and Then we can’t believe God would “abandon us” in the court room because the judge served up a 90 sentence. You can’t sow to the flesh, seeds of sin, and not expect a harvest of corruption. It doesn’t mean God doesn’t love you, it means you’ve made decisions and now you have repercussions to face.

Here we read, “**Do not be deceived, Evil (or ungodly) company (or companionship) corrupts good habits.**” What do *we* think? “I’ll change them, I’ll be good for them, make a difference in them.” The Holy Spirit says, “It doesn’t work that way.” Oh there are times that God moves, His grace is truly amazing, but just because God is moving, doesn’t necessarily indicate God is approving. and I think that the verbiage here is important, he’s speaking here about close friendship, not a general acquaintance. There’s a marked difference between being someone’s friend, and being someone’s acquaintance. There’s nothing wrong with being acquainted with worldly people, we *should* be. **Jesus spent time with sinners, didn’t come to call the righteous but the sinner to repentance, it’s not the well who are in need of a physician, but the sick. How else are they going to come to know Christ? But friendship, close companionship with the unbeliever, the ungodly, is altogether different.** You start getting close to the ungodly, the non-believer, meaning in a personal way, striking a close friendship, the Holy Spirit is here saying “Watch out, they’ll corrupt you, and compromise your standard.” Don’t subject yourself to ungodly circles, protect the peer circle.

Because I’ll tell you the opposite is true as well, godly company will inspire you, encourage you. You come to church and sit by someone who thinks singing out in worship is goofy and you find yourself sort of holding back, encumbered, hindered in your own worship experience. You sit down by someone who doesn’t worry about that but says, “I’m not here to impress anyone, I’m here to love on and worship my Lord with all that’s with in me.” and Next thing you know you’re singing out full volume, entering in, being encouraged and built up in the Lord. The bible says, “*He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.*” Prov 13:20 Surround yourself with people who love Jesus Christ who serve Him, and are sold out to Him, it’ll be healthy for you on multiple levels, it’s contagious.

Now, back to the skeptic’s perspective with regard to the resurrection, look at Vs 35.

Vs35

So Paul takes the point of view that the antagonist toward the resurrection might take, “C’mon, how does it happen? I mean, with what body are the dead raised up?” Seeking to undermine one’s confidence, shake their foundation, place a question mark in their mind. and Really what it comes down to is how big is your God? Because if for your God nothing will be impossible, then the idea of the resurrection shouldn’t be a shock to your system. Remember when Paul had his trial before Agrippa and he said, “*Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?*” Acts 26:8 We’re speaking here of the Creator of the universe, the giver of life, it just doesn’t pose a problem for God.

Vs 36-38

Here Paul in essence says, “Hey, look around, God is seeking to teach us of the nature and reality of the resurrection all around us in *nature*.” Nature reveals the nature of resurrection. He says take a look at the seed that is sown, perhaps wheat or something else. You take the grain of wheat and place it in the ground and what happens? Does a giant grain of when pop up? No, it goes into the ground, it dies, cracks open, roots go down and shoot or stalk springs up and it takes a different form from the original grain. There’s both disintegration and continuity, it’s different, but the same. What comes up isn’t the same piece of grain, yet it’s of the same piece of grain. Take some ugly ol’ bulb, perhaps a tulip, or a gladiola, or a daffodil, and someone says, “What’cha got there?” and You say, “Oh it’s a beautiful flower.” They’re going to look at that thing and think, “Yeah right, it’s pretty frail, and ugly at best shell of a bulb.” Yet you take that bulb, plant it in the ground and again it begins to disintegrate, it dies, roots go down the shoot comes up and it becomes something beautiful to behold. Now is it that bulb, well, yes and no, there’s definite continuity, but there’s dissolution there as well, one thing ended that another might begin, but what began is from that which ended. and It may be a beautiful pink or red gladiola, perhaps violet, God gives it a body as He pleases, but they’re all gladiola bulbs nonetheless. He says, “That’s the nature of the resurrection, we’re all like seeds, or bulbs in our present state, when we die we’re ‘sown’ as it were into the ground, we decay, decompose. Yet of this body will come a new body, a glorified body in the resurrection.” Will it be this body? Yes, but no, Jesus was in His body after His resurrection, but was His body the same? No, it was no longer subject to the laws of this world (and we’ll speak on that in a moment.)

But a solid grip on this helps us cope (as believers) with the reality of death. How many farmers do you see mourning the seeds they’re sowing? “Oh my precious grains of wheat, into the ground you go never to be seen again.” Or how many botanists mourn the planting of flower bulbs or seeds or whatever? None of them, even though what’s gone into the ground will never return in that form, what’s to become of it is even greater, right? So to with the resurrection, when a believer is buried, it’s like unto being sown, being “planted” as it were, oh they’ll never return in that form, but what comes of their death is even greater, a body created and designed by God fit for eternity in the heavens.

Vs39-40

So we note the variety that Paul is pointing out with regards to God's creation, there's stark differences between heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies. and Even with in their particular indigenous environment there are differences, not all flesh on this earth is the same. The flesh of fish is different from the flesh of animals, and they're suited for specific environments, animals and birds though both out of water are completely different, human beings different still.

Though we're all suited in some way for this earth, approximately 14 lbs of pressure per sq" upon our bodies, the composition of the air with breathe being basically 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen with 1% left over that include various other trace components (water vapor, carbon dioxide, argon, so on and so forth). Our bodies aren't suited for life under the sea, or on the moon, we have to have equipment and various things that modify the atmospheric conditions so that we can survive in environments other than our own. Now I don't know about you, but when I get to Heaven I don't want different pieces of equipment strapped to me all the time so that I can with stand an environment beyond this earth, I'd like a new body altogether. and That's what God gives us in the resurrection. There are all kinds of differences with respect to God's creation on this earth, above this earth and below this earth.

and Things will be different still in the resurrection, but nature teaches us both resurrection and to expect things to be different with regard to the different environment that you're suited for.

Vs41

Some people see this as saying that there will be degrees of glory in Heaven, everyone saved, everyone rejoicing, but God rewards us differently according to our works. If we served Him with a whole heart, dedicated, consecrated, well done and all the rest, or if we accepted Him but never really served Him, or lived life set apart to Him. Daniel Ch 12 tells us of that day, "*Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.*" Dan 12:3 You will never regret leading your life full on for Jesus Christ, but to give Him less than all of who we are is unfortunate indeed. I think it would be great to see all of you shining with radical intensity throughout all eternity, I mean a night light is good and all but God wants to do so much more in your life for His glory. So there are differences in the make-up of various bodies in God's creation, be it terrestrial (or earthly) or celestial (heavenly, the sun, moon, stars) and there are differences in the glory given to each, but they're all suited for the environment that they dwell in.

Vs42-44

So "yes" there are differences in the resurrection body, and the body we currently dwell in. But don't be misled by the phrase, "spiritual body" to think that we're *un-embodied* spirits. The key word is "body," natural "body" and spiritual "body." When Jesus rose from the dead though His body was suited for the spiritual realm it wasn't spirit. Remember we sighted it last week. When He appeared to the disciples He ate with them, beckoned them to touch Him, He said, "*Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.*" Luke 24:39 Spiritual, "yes" a spirit, "no," there was material substance to the resurrected body of Jesus and there will be to yours as well. So understand that the resurrection body will be of your body, but not this same exact shell just rewired. A tulip is of the bulb, but not the bulb.

Because this body is corruptible, weak, full of dishonor. But when it's raised it'll be incorruptible, full of glory, raised in power. Everything about the resurrection will be inherently infinitely better than the shell, the bulb you currently inhabit. It won't break down, get sick, grow old, get tired, it won't be bound by the laws of nature, it's like going from the caterpillar to the butterfly, we shed this shell and fly.

Vs45

Adam was able to pass on physical life, but only Christ can give spiritual life. Jesus is the author of everlasting life, He's the way, the truth, and the *life* and no one comes to the Father except through Him.

Vs46-49

John put it this way, "*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*" 1 John 3:2 Even as we've born the image of the man of earth, Adam, corruptible, weakness and dishonor, so also we'll bear the image of the Man of heaven. Incorruption, glory and power, with out sin in perfect righteousness, we've been like Adam, we'll be like Christ. However (Vs 46) the spiritual isn't 1st but the natural, afterward the spiritual. The 1st birth gives us that which is natural; God rejects the 1st birth, the natural birth as sufficient. We've got to be "born again" of the Spirit, we've got to experience a spiritual birth by faith in Christ. Remember God rejected Ishmael, accepted Isaac, rejected Esau accepted Jacob, and there's a principle at work there spiritually, God rejected the 1st birth but accepted the 2nd. Now we know that God's not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance so don't misunderstand me here.

We're talking about a spiritual principle portrayed there in the scriptures. It's not the natural birth that saves us, it's the spiritual birth, being born again the 2nd time through faith in Jesus Christ

Vs50

You see, flesh and blood can't inherit the kingdom of God, he's not saying that material substance can't inherit the kingdom, but that this present state of physical corruption isn't suited, couldn't survive in Heaven. Being placed in the presence of God's perfect righteousness would put an end to this tent, God told Moses that if a man even seen Him he would die, much less try to abide in His presence in this body. So this corruptible *must* put on incorruption. and Jesus explained all this to Nicodemus in John Ch 3. Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of night Jesus told him that he needed to be born again. and He said, "How can a man be born again when he's old?" He couldn't discern the spiritual nature of Jesus' conversation. and Jesus said, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" John 3:5-6 In other words it takes both, a natural birth and a spiritual birth to make it into the kingdom of God, that which is of the flesh is flesh. Weak, corruptible, you have to be born of the Spirit to inherit the kingdom of God, the incorruptible perfect state of righteousness and glory.

Vs51-52

What's this? The doctrine of the rapture of the church; he says, "I tell you a mystery." Something that hadn't been formerly revealed, nor could it be known apart from God supernaturally making known. A biblical mystery isn't something that can be solved through lots of study and piecing together clues. It's something formerly concealed that's now been revealed by the Holy Spirit. **and He's saying that a body that decays can't come into God's presence, he's not really referencing moral corruption here (though that would be applicable) but he's in reference to the physical breakdown and weakness of the body. It can't go to Heaven in its current state. Yet there's a generation, quite possibly the one you live in (the signs all pointing that way) that won't see death. But that will be alive and remaining on the earth when Jesus calls for His church, what happens there?** Well we won't all sleep, not every believer will experience death, but we will all be changed. That is we'll undergo a transformation, and it'll happen instantaneously, in a moment, that word "moment" speaks of something that can't be divided or cut into, the idea is it'll happen in a nanosecond, the twinkling of an eye, you won't even realize what hit you, it'll happen so fast that there won't even be a division in time, just "boom" and you'll be in your new body. **Now we won't precede those who've gone to be with the Lord, they'll be raised, and we'll be changed and it'll all happen in an indistinguishable, lightningly fast moment in time. To the Thessalonians Paul put it like this,** *"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."* 1 Thess 4:15-17 and It's all going to happen instantaneously and what a great day it will be.

Vs53-57

The psychiatrist Sigmund (fraud) Freud once wrote, "And finally there is the painful riddle of death, for which no remedy at all has yet been found, nor probably ever will be." **It's too bad he didn't know Jesus Christ because he was wrong, there is a remedy for death, it's found in Christ. In Christ death is swallowed up in victory.** Paul told the Romans, *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."* Rom 8:37 We have victory *in* death and over death in the resurrection of Jesus Christ Jesus said, *"Because I live, you will live also."* John 14:19

The sting of death is sin; the strength of sin is the law. You would think the strength of holiness was the law, but it's the strength of sin because it stirs up the sin nature with in us. Now that doesn't indicate a problem with the law, it simply reveals the problem with us. Paul dealt with that in Rom 7, but we thank God who gives us the victory through or Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then, in light of everything we've learned regarding the resurrection how should we respond, what should this solidify in our lives presently?

Vs58

Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes cried out that all was vanity under the sun. Paul vigorously and fervently refutes that. Oh, *apart* from the Lord it's true, but *in* the Lord your labor will never be wasted, never be lost or in vain.

It may be to others, others may not see it, appreciate it or ever even acknowledge it, but if it's in the Lord, *unto* the Lord it's not in vain. You might be praised *for* it, or encouraged *in* it, or you might not, that's irrelevant to you because you don't labor unto man, but *in* and *unto* the Lord. and "...*God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*" Heb 6:10 and Having seen you labor in the secret, not for the praise of man, He'll reward you openly and reward that work and labor of love at the resurrection. Don't lose heart, your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, that is stand firm, immovable (or persistent) always abounding, that is, immersed and overflowing in the work of the Lord. In other words, because death is defeated and you have an eternal resurrected destiny with Jesus Christ let that translate into your life in causing you to be immovable and unshakable serving the Lord with all that you are because what you *now*, matters for eternity. An everlasting kingdom awaits, and we've just got a bleep in time to allow God to be glorified in our lives in the here and now, so be steadfast, immovable, *always* abounding in the work of the Lord knowing (you can be sure) that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for that assurance and we pray that You would strengthen us in that resolve to serve You with all that we are. Unshakably, immovably, with our whole heart; and we thank You that having bore the image of the man of dust, that even so Jesus we'll bear Your image as well, and when we see You we'll be like You. Meanwhile help us to redeem the time knowing that the days are evil, and help us to be mindful of the company we keep, that we would surround ourselves with those who would seek to build us up and challenge us in our walk with you, that we might serve You more and grow closer to You still.

We thank God for the promise of victory over death, but that victory is extended only to those who are in Christ. If you don't know Christ, resurrection will come to you, but not unto salvation or life, but unto condemnation and death. God would spare you an eternity separated from Him. Jesus bore our sin, my sin, your sin, and He shed His blood that we might be forgiven, He absorbed our penalty that we might be saved, be washed clean and live with Him forever. Victory can be yours, but only in Christ, open your heart, surrender to Him today.