

The Resurrection
I Corinthians 15

Sermon

Easter Sunday

Hobart, March 30th, 2013

Devonport, 2013

Launceston, 2013

I Corinthians 15:20-28

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²¹ So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man.

²² Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. ²³ But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

²⁴ After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. ²⁵ For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. ²⁶ And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

²⁷ For the Scriptures say, “God has put all things under his authority.”* (Of course, when it says “all things are under his authority,” that does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.) ²⁸ Then, when all things are under his authority, the Son will put himself under God’s authority, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.¹

* Ps 8:6.

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (1 Co 15:1-58). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

INTRODUCTION:

I. TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE VICTORY OF ALL VICTORIES

A. BETTER THAN ANY SPORTS FINAL,

1. Better even than victory in a war
2. We celebrate the full and final victory over all enemies
3. The release from all hostile powers and problems, pain and powerlessness
4. The triumphant overcoming of all that stands against us as human beings,
 - a) Including the defeat of death itself

S.P.S:

A. TODAY WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT THE FAMOUS CHAPTER ON THE RESURRECTION; I CORINTHIANS 15

1. And listen to Paul's teaching on why Jesus' resurrection is central to our Christian faith, our lives today and our future

B. PRAYER

BODY:

I Corinthians 15

¹ Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters,* of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. ² It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place.*

³ I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴ He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. ⁵ He was seen by Peter* and then by the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers* at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. ⁹ For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church.

¹⁰ But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace. ¹¹ So it makes no difference whether I preach or they preach, for we all preach the same message you have already believed.

A. WHAT IS PAUL ESTABLISHING IN THIS OPENING SECTION?

1. The central importance of the resurrection
2. That it is at the heart of the message, the Gospel, that Paul and all the apostles preached
3. That it is testified to in the OT (v.3)²

* Greek *brothers*; also in 15:31, 50, 58.

* Or *unless you never believed it in the first place*.

* Greek *Cephas*.

* Greek *the brothers*.

² This second proof supports the first. Jesus' bodily resurrection was prophesied in the Old Testament. There is the OT sacrificial system, which points to Jesus as humanity's Substitute and Savior. It also speaks of Jesus' resurrection occurring "on the third day." E.g.; the story of Jonah (which Jesus himself referenced in Mat. 12:38–41). There was also the wave sheaf ceremony (cp. 1Cor 15:23 with Lev. 23:9–14). The priest waved before the Lord a sheaf of the first cuttings of Spring harvest. This ceremony occurred on the Sunday following the Passover—the same Sunday when Jesus, resurrected from the dead, walked out of his tomb.

B. WHAT IS THE RESURRECTION PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT?

1. Jesus' resurrection

II. JESUS: FIRST OF A GREAT HARVEST

I Corinthians 15:12- The Resurrection of the Dead

¹² But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. ¹⁵ And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. ¹⁶ And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. ¹⁸ In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! ¹⁹ And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

²⁰ But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

A. THROUGH HIS INCARNATION

1. (which continues in his now glorified human body),
2. Jesus remains, forever, fully divine and fully human.
3. In his humanity, Jesus is the first person to be resurrected from the dead
 - a) before Jesus' resurrection, others, like Lazarus, were *resuscitated* but not *resurrected*—those who are resurrected never die again.
4. V.20 Jesus is the “firstfruits” of a great “harvest” yet to come.³

There are also other possible OT prophecies of Jesus' bodily resurrection: Psalm 16:8–11 (see Acts 2:25–28); Psalm 22:22ff (see Heb. 2:12); Isaiah 53:10–12; and Psalm 2:7 (see Acts 13:32–33). This is then backed up by the testimony of eyewitnesses (vv. 5–11)

³ “Firstfruits” refers to the OT wave-sheaf ceremony on the Sunday following the Passover. As the Lamb of God, Jesus was sacrificed for us on the Passover. As the “sheaf” of firstfruits, he arose the third day—the Sunday following Passover. When the priest waved the firstfruits of grain before the Lord that Sunday

²¹ So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. ²² Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

5. Paul is making this point out of his understanding that when Jesus (who is one with God and with all humanity) died, all humanity died with him (see 2Cor. 5:14-15).

6. And because Jesus rose, still joined to us in his incarnation, all humanity rose with him—and each person will experience this reality in their own bodily resurrection.

a) This is our hope and encouragement, especially in tough times, suffering and death

III. WHEN WILL OUR RESURRECTION HAPPEN?

A. V23

²³ But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

1. We will be raised when Christ comes back

B. V24–28 THE KINGDOM

²⁴ After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. ²⁵ For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. ²⁶ And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1. The judgment of God is about bringing all into submission to Jesus, that all will accept his salvation, rule and love

morning, he was signifying that a larger harvest was yet to come. When Jesus was raised from the dead, it was God's assurance that all humanity (the larger harvest), in union with Jesus, would be raised bodily as well. Thus death is rightly referred to as "sleep" because it's temporary. The dead await a future "awakening" in resurrected bodies.

- a) It is interesting that there is an indication that this “judgment”, the defeat of evil and the surrender of evil doers takes time. That Jesus’ rule as judge will go on until the task is complete

²⁷ For the Scriptures say, “God has put all things under his authority.”* (Of course, when it says “all things are under his authority,” that does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.) ²⁸ Then, when all things are under his authority, the Son will put himself under God’s authority, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.

IV. WHAT IS THE RESURRECTION BODY LIKE?

A. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35–57 -THE RESURRECTION BODY

³⁵ But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” ³⁶ What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies first. ³⁷ And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting. ³⁸ Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different plant grows from each kind of seed. ³⁹ Similarly there are different kinds of flesh—one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

B. THE RESURRECTION BODY WILL STILL BE OUR BODY, BUT NOT THE EXACT SAME BODY WE HAVE NOW

1. We will still be human, but glorified, as Jesus’ human body was
2. We will be different, but we won’t be something totally different to what God created us to be
3. The seed harvested is not the same seed that was planted; yet there is continuity.
 - a) The seed dies, but from that death there comes life (resurrection)
 - b) What is produced is more wonderful than the original “seed”,

* Ps 8:6.

c) E.g. ugly bulbs produce beautiful spring flowers like daffodils or tulips

⁴⁰ There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the glory of the earthly bodies. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory.

⁴² It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. ⁴³ Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. ⁴⁴ They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.

4. Ted Johnston;

The only way we can enjoy the glory of the resurrection life in a new heaven and new earth is to have a body suited to that glorified environment.

The body which is sown (in burial) in perishable—it will decay; but it is raised in a bodily resurrection with a nature that is imperishable (not subject to decay).

We will have glorified bodies like that possessed by the glorified man Jesus.

Today, we have a “natural body”—one suited to our present earthly environment. We received it from our first parent, Adam: he was made of dust, and so are we (Gen. 2:7). But the resurrection body will be a “spiritual body” (note that it’s not a “spirit body”) that is suited to a spiritual environment. When Jesus appeared in his resurrected body, he moved quickly from place to place, and even appeared in rooms with locked doors. Yet he still ate food, and his disciples were able to touch him (Luke 24:33–43; John 20:19–29). Paul’s point here is this: the resurrection body completes our redemption—giving us fully the image of the glorified human Jesus, both in spirit and in body.⁴

⁴ Ted Johnston, *Final judgment and the resurrection of the dead--I Corinthians 15*; May 25, 2008, www.thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2008_05_01_archive.html,

V. THE SECOND ADAM-A NEW LIFE

A. I CORINTHIANS 15:45-49

⁴⁵ The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.”* But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. ⁴⁶ What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. ⁴⁷ Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. ⁴⁸ Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man. ⁴⁹ Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like* the heavenly man.

B. JUST AS OUR LIVES HAVE BEEN THE SAME AS ADAM’S, OUR NEW LIFE WILL BE THE SAME AS THE RESURRECTED JESUS

1. We will no longer be mortal, sinful, separated from God, suffering and causing suffering
2. Joined to Jesus we are resurrected, transformed
3. We will be “spiritual” people
 - a) This doesn’t mean spirits, but people with new hearts and minds and bodies
4. We will be “Heavenly people”
 - a) This doesn’t mean living in heaven and separated from the earth, or bodiless
 - b) It means taking on a new nature, the mind and heart of God
 - c) Like Jesus’ after his resurrection, we will still walk, talk, eat, etc. But we will be immortal, and no longer subject to sin and death.

* Gen 2:7.

* Some manuscripts read *let us be like*.

VI. FINAL VICTORY

A. I CORINTHIANS 15:50-53

⁵⁰ What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.

⁵¹ But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. ⁵³ For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

B. THE RESURRECTION IS GOD'S FINAL JUDGMENT

1. It is his final will and decision about us
2. His full and final yes to us all
 - a) The end of our state of separation from him
 - b) The beginning of our new atoned life with him
3. And this is all through Jesus Christ
 - a) Through his being one of us, the second Adam, the new man that gives all mankind a new life with God, free of sin
 - b) A life in which our dying bodies are resurrected, transformed, like Jesus was. Remember it is the same resurrection, Jesus' resurrection

I Corinthians 15:54

⁵⁴ Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die,* this Scripture will be fulfilled:

"Death is swallowed up in victory.*

⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?*"

⁵⁶ For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. ⁵⁷ But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

* Some manuscripts add *and our mortal bodies have been transformed into immortal bodies.*

* Isa 25:8.

* Hos 13:14 (Greek version).

C. TED JOHNSTON;

This body, though still human, is not subject to decay or death and the other debilitating limitations we now face in our bodies.

This is great Good News. Indeed, this bodily resurrection is the final unfolding and crowning achievement of Jesus' victory over death. Jesus achieved that victory long ago through his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Jesus bore all our sins on the cross (1Pet. 2:24), and also bore the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13). It is through him that our sins are forgiven and the curse broken. We share in his victory. We share in it today: the literal translation of 1Cor. 15:57 is, "But thanks be to God who *keeps on giving us the victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ." We experience even now "the power of his resurrection" as we yield to him (Phil. 3:10). But the fullness of that experience will come to us when we are given a resurrection body which is fit for experiencing Jesus' victory over death to the full.⁵

⁵⁸ So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

D. TED JOHNSTON CONCLUDES;

As Paul considers the sum-total of these truths about our coming bodily resurrection, he breaks out in a hymn of praise that serves as a summary admonition. Because of the assurance of Christ's final victory over death in our resurrection, we know that nothing we do for him now is wasted or lost. Thus we stand firm in our service, unmovable in our suffering, abounding in our ministry to others. Why? Because we know we have an enduring future in a resurrected body. Thus our labor in and with the Lord now is not in vain.⁶

⁵ Johnston

⁶ Johnston

CONCLUSION:

E. JOHN MCLEAN; MARCH 28, 2013, LIFE TOGETHER.

1. Wrote about the new life Jesus' resurrection gives to us all.

This life that he brings is affirmed and confirmed in the celebration of his resurrection and ascension. He takes our humanity back to the Father – forgiven, redeemed, reconciled, made righteous – in himself. The Father looks on us as he does his Son. We can call the Father “Abba”, as Jesus does.

It's a beautiful season to focus on the Son, not on the sin. When we focus on the sin, we focus on ourselves. And tend to become either despairing on the one hand, or judgmental, self-justifying and self-righteous on the other. When we focus on the Son, we are transformed by His Spirit to share in his graciousness, joy, love, and life. We are freed to be who we were intended to be in Christ.

Jesus is risen, alive, ascended – our High Priest at the right hand of the Father who intervenes for us. Who lives in us and through us by the Spirit. Who stands in for us with the Father at every step in life.

And this resurrection business is not just domesticated into something reduced to our limited constraints. The story is cosmic in proportions.

The one by whom all things were created, and in whom all things hold together, is also the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15-17). As the firstborn, his resurrection signals the reconciliation and birth out of death of “all things, whether on earth or in heaven...through his blood shed on the cross” (v18-20). That's a celebration! Resurrection is not a solo act, but one made available in Christ for all humanity.⁷

F. PRAYER

⁷ John McLean, *Life Together*, March 28, 2013, GCI Aus.

NOTES

I. CRAIG HOVEY; UNEXPECTED JESUS;

A. TALKS ABOUT HOW THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION ARE NOT JUST EVENTS THAT FOLLOW ONE AFTER THE OTHER.

1. They are interconnected, and neither can have significance without the other

..if Christ had not been raised, the cross would not be good news for anybody. (It would doubtless be good news for the ones who caused it to happen, the Romans and the Sanhedrin, but this is hardly the news Christians proclaim—which is its opposite.)

The resurrection takes something that would, on its own, be unequivocally bad news and re-stories it by changing the ending. As a result, every failure and scandal along the way takes on a new significance...

The goodness of the Father's action in raising up the Son throws back over the entire story... Prior to the resurrection, these were merely events in the same tragedy of human existence that existing this way has taught us to expect. History (we have grown accustomed to telling ourselves) is a series of events in which the strong defeat the weak. There is nothing surprising about that. When it happens, it is no longer even interesting.

But the expectation that Mary sang about.. as a certainty—"He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the might from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree" (Luke 1:51-52)—is now what defines history since it is the reality of how the Father has acted in raising the Son.

The cross is not only part of the action that God has reversed but is in fact itself possible through the Son' obedience in not fighting back to secure his own future. Therefore, the cross may be said to be part of God's single action in Christ; his giving the world himself, his refusal to fortify his own life and destiny if it meant punishing those who would call it into question and destroy it, and his re-gifting by the Father precisely to this crucifying World.

B. IN OTHER WORDS;

1. Instead of giving us the punishment and just vengeance we deserved, God gave his Son in order to forgive and save us from our world, in which we cause so much havoc by living the way of self-preservation, and punishing others to preserve our lives and get our own way.
 2. And God resurrected Jesus, to make clear what this gift entailed, and the new life that he has given us.
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II. QUOTATIONS:

On Easter, followers of Jesus celebrate the central truth of the Christian faith: **Jesus is alive (and we are alive in him)**! Here is what T.F. Torrance writes (in *Atonement, The Person and Work of Christ*):

"The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... is a stupendous deed, comparable only to the original creation of the universe. Indeed like the incarnation itself, when God himself entered the creation as one of the creatures he had made in order to operate within it, the resurrection transcends it in significance" (p. 221).

"Jesus Christ rose...the new Adam who heads the race in the new creation opened up in the resurrection from the dead [see 1Cor 15:45ff; Rom 1:4, 5:12; 2Cor 5:17]. As such he rose clothed with the power of the resurrection and is spoken of as 'life giving spirit' [1Cor 15:45]. He was not only an Adam into whom God breathed the breath of life and made a quickened soul, but the Adam with such fullness of life in himself that even as man he breathed quickening spirit into others. He is the resurrected man who has life in himself, and is become in himself the source and fountain of eternal life for others [John 11:25, 5:21ff, 6:35ff]. By living in utter holiness as Son on earth he appropriated for and into our human nature the eternal life of God, as it was by virtue of that 'power of an endless life' [Heb 7:16 KJV] that he broke through the bonds of death and the grave. It is that same 'power of an endless life' that now overflows from him to all who are members of his body, and it is therefore out of his fullness that we may all receive" (p. 217).
