

Church Purity in a Polluted Culture - Part 23

1 Corinthians 15:12-34



“Christ’s Resurrection and the Resurrection of Believers”

Many people in the Greco-Roman world believed that death extinguished life completely and thus the Corinthian Christians took on much of the cultural thinking. Paul argues that there is a direct connection between God’s redemption plan and the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of believers.

No Resurrection: The Theological Implications (15:12-19)

“But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?” (1 Cor 15:12 NIV)

- The source of this denial of the resurrection probably had its origin in Greek philosophy, which thought the physical body was the source of evil.
- Paul now begins his disputation by use of an *a priori* argument or reasoning from self-evident propositions. If no resurrection...
 - Christ has not been raised
 - Preaching is useless and so is your faith
 - We are then found to be false witnesses
 - You are still in your sins
 - Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost
 - We are to be pitied more than all men
- The resurrection was God’s signet ring seal, His stamp of approval on the document of redemption, declaring His acceptance of the sacrifice of His Son, and could now be just in declaring righteous all those who come to Christ by faith!

Yes Resurrection: The Blessed Implications (15:20-28)

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Cor 15:20 NIV)

- The Greek word for raised (γείρω) is used in the PASSIVE voice, and PERFECT tense. The Triune God raises the dead. The PERFECT

tense speaks of Jesus’ past resurrection, which becomes a state of being presently, carrying with it all its blessed implications.

- In Hebrew thought, the firstfruits were the best of the first crops of the harvest, which were offered to God in thanksgiving for his goodness in providing for them, and were a foretaste of the greater harvest yet to come.
- Those who are in Adam have inherited his sinful nature, and die both spiritually and physically.
- Those in Christ are those who have been born again, given a new nature (spiritual), and someday will have new bodies, thus being totally alive.
- Jesus Christ, as the resurrected King, as a final act of obedience, presents to His Father a trophy which radiates with the glory of God, the ingathering of His great harvest, our resurrection, His Kingdom, having destroyed all Kingdom enemies, including the final enemy, death!

No Resurrection: The Practical Implications (15:29-34)

“Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them” (1 Cor 15:29-30 NIV)

- He is not saying that this practice of being *baptized for the dead* should take place, but that in fact it does, and if you are one who believes in such a thing, it is ludicrous if there is no resurrection.
- It absolutely makes no sense to endure the hardships that we do, or embrace our spiritual disciplines, if there is nothing else ahead.
- How we live truly defines whether our belief in the resurrection is intellectual, superficial, hypocritical, or deeply personal.

Summary

1. Do I recognize that the resurrection was God the Father’s seal of approval upon the redemptive work of Christ, and do I therefore see it as the very foundation upon which the gospel stands?
2. Do I understand that my belief in the resurrection is gauged by the life I know live in the flesh?
3. If I knew for sure that Jesus Christ was returning today, would my life and plans change?
4. What is it that I would want the Lord Jesus Christ to catch me doing if He were to suddenly appear?

