

1Corinthians – Week 55

I. Review: 1Cor. 15:1-7

- A. Paul deals with those false teachers who were denying the future resurrection of the dead.
 - i. He begins to refute the false teaching by reminding them of the gospel, which includes the resurrection.
 - ii. And he mentions the many eye-witnesses to the resurrected Christ.
 - iii. He even mentions his own personal eye-witness account to the resurrected Christ.
 - 1. He sees himself unworthy of being called an apostle because he persecuted the church.
 - 2. He then attributes his calling purely as an act of grace on God's part...

II. Continuation

- A. 1Cor. 15:8-11 (ESV), *“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”*
 - i. Paul responded to God's unusually great grace to him by offering back unusually great service to God.
 - 1. God's grace proves vain when there is no radical change in one's life (cf. 2Cor. 6:1)
 - ii. However, Paul did not view his service as self-generated but the product of God's continual supply of grace to him
 - iii. God saved Paul by grace and Paul served God by His grace!
 - 1. Grace not only saves, but it gives us strength...
 - a. Hebrews 4:16 (ESV), *“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*
 - iv. Now he tackles the false teaching...
- B. 1Cor. 15:12 (ESV), *“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?”*
 - i. Since you heard, received and took your stand on the gospel, which includes the resurrection of Christ, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?
 - ii. Belief in bodily resurrection is foundational to the Christian faith...
- C. 1Cor. 15:13-15 (ESV), *“But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.”*
 - i. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is still dead and the whole gospel is a lie!
 - ii. And not only would the gospel be a lie, those who preach the resurrection would be misrepresenting God, claiming He did something He did not do: Raising Christ from the dead!
- D. 1Cor. 15:16-19 (ESV), *“For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”*
 - i. If Christ is still in His grave, then there is no hope of salvation!
 - 1. We are all still in our sins, that is, our sins have not been forgiven!
 - 2. We are all condemned to spend eternity away from the Lord!
 - 3. And everyone who has died for the sake of the gospel is suffering the same consequences as the rich man in Luke 16:19ff.
 - 4. And to suffer all kinds of persecutions, and even death, for a faith that is totally false is to be pitied indeed!

5. The tension is now relieved as Paul triumphantly makes the point that Christ has, in fact risen, and the blessed consequences of that resurrection...
- E. 1Cor. 15:20 (ESV), *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep”*
- i. Now, this is not saying that Christ was the only one to rise from the dead!
 1. Others, like Lazarus, have been raised from the dead before Christ died and rose!
 - ii. But Christ’s resurrection is preeminent in that:
 1. He rose, never to die again!
 2. And that His resurrection is the first-fruits (or the first crop) of the great future crop of the resurrected dead!
 - iii. First-fruits as used in the Passover celebration:
 1. The Jews celebrated Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month on their sacred calendar. (cf. Lev. 23:5)
 2. Jesus died on the day Jewish fathers slew the Passover lamb, which was a Friday that year.
 3. The Jews offered a sacrifice of first-fruits the day after the Sabbath (Saturday) following the Passover (cf. Lev. 23:10-11), namely, Sunday.
 - a. This was the day Jesus arose.
 4. Fifty days later on Pentecost they presented another offering of new grain that they also called an offering of first-fruits (cf. Lev. 23:15-17).
 5. But the first-fruits they offered came from the first of the crops (also called first-fruits) they had previously offered after Passover.
 6. Paul uses this metaphor to show that Christ, the first-fruit of the dead, would yield a crop of resurrected believers in the future!
 - iv. Notice the order of events as laid out by Paul, as he speaks in the Spirit...
- F. 1Cor. 15:21-23 (ESV), *“For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.”*
- i. Adam brought death into the world!
 1. The tree of life was removed because of his disobedience (cf. Gen. 3:22).
 - ii. However, Christ -- whom Paul later calls the Last-Adam (v. 45) -- brings life!
 - iii. And just as the order of harvest, where a crop is picked, then later on, another crop is picked, Christ is the first, then at His second coming, there will be another crop of risers!
- G. 1Cor. 15:24 (ESV), *“Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.”*
- i. When Christ returns, judgment day begins!
 1. The resurrection would not only be for the righteous, but for the unrighteous as well (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15)
 2. Every man will stand before Him! (2Cor. 5:10)
 - a. The true disciples will be separated from the lost (cf. Matthew 25:31ff)
 - ii. The second coming of Christ is not the start of Christ’s reign, as some would teach, but the end of it!
 1. For the verse says the kingdom will be handed over to God the Father!
 2. At this time, all authority, whether human or demonic, will no longer be!
 - iii. When all is said and done, the righteous will go into eternal life, while the unrighteous into eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46).