

1 Corinthians 15

v.20 **Now Christ is risen from the dead:**

Firstfruits is the ancient Greek word *aparche*. In the Septuagint, this word is used for the offering of firstfruits and in secular usage the word was used for an entrance fee.

i. Jesus was the **firstfruits** of our resurrection in both senses. In the Old Testament, the offering of firstfruits brought one sheaf of grain to represent and anticipate the rest of the harvest (Leviticus 23:9-14). The resurrection of Jesus *represents* our resurrection, because *if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection* (Romans 6:5). The resurrection of Jesus also *anticipates* our resurrection, because we will be raised with a body like His. “As in the firstfruits offered to God, the Jews were assured of God’s blessing on the whole harvest; so by the resurrection of Christ, our resurrection is insured.” (Trapp)

The resurrection of Jesus is also the **firstfruits** of our resurrection in the sense that He is our “entrance fee” to resurrection. Jesus paid our admission to the resurrection!

v.(24-28) The resurrection of Jesus leads to the resolution of all things.

When He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power:

He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet: Paul here refers to the one-thousand-year reign of Jesus described in Revelation 20:1-6. After that time, there will be a final, Satan inspired rebellion (Revelation 20:7-10), which Jesus will crush and finally and forever **put all enemies under His feet**.

v. 29 Paul does not advocate this practice, simply pointing out they know there is more

Paul's point is plain: "The pagans even believe in the resurrection because they baptize for the dead. The pagans have the sense to believe in resurrection, but some of you Corinthian Christians do not!"

How can we die daily? Spurgeon gives seven steps to dying daily in a sermon titled *Dying Daily*.

- First, every day carefully consider the certainty of death.
- Second, by faith put your soul through the whole process of death.
- Third, hold this world with a loose hand.
- Fourth, every day seriously test your hope and experience.
- Next, come every day, just as you did at conversion, to the cross of Jesus, as a poor guilty sinner.
- Sixth, live in such a manner that you would not be ashamed to die at any moment.
- Finally, have all your affairs in order so that you are ready to die.

The ancient Egyptians, at the end of a big banquet, often escorted a wooden image of a man in a coffin around the tables, telling people to have a good time now, because you'll be dead sooner than you think. If there is no resurrection, and no future judgment, then we may as well have the best time we can right now – and Paul was a fool for putting himself in such discomfort and danger for the sake of the gospel.

Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame.

V33 **Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”** Where did the Corinthian Christians get their strange ideas about the resurrection, ideas Paul spent this chapter trying to correct? By keeping **evil company**, the Corinthian Christians were being *conformed to this world*, and they needed to be *transformed by the renewing of your mind*. Christians must let the Word of God shape their thinking, not the **evil company** of this world.

Evil company corrupts good habits: This is not a quotation from the Old Testament, or even from the words of Jesus. Paul quotes from an ancient, secular comedy play, *Thais*, written by Menander. Though he was a pagan, Menander told the truth at this point, and Paul (more properly, the Holy Spirit) had no problem quoting a pagan who did tell the truth at a particular point.

v (35) **What is the nature of the resurrected body?**

But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?”

a. **How are the dead raised up?** This is a question Paul doesn't really answer in the following verses, because the answer is obvious. God raises the dead. As Paul said to Agrippa in Acts 26:8, *Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?*

d. **We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed:** Since **sleep** is a softer way of describing the death of a believer, Paul tells us that not all Christians will die, but there will be a “final generation” who will be transformed into resurrection bodies at the return of Jesus before they ever face death.

e. **In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet... the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed .**

i. Paul expressed the same idea again in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. This remarkable, instant gathering of Christians unto Jesus in the clouds has been called *the rapture*, after the Latin word for *caught up* in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18.

What of the dead in Christ before that day? Are they lying in the grave, in some kind of soul sleep or suspended animation? No. Paul made it clear that to be *absent from the body* means *to be present with the Lord* (2 Corinthians 5:8). Either the present dead in Christ are with the Lord in a spiritual body, awaiting their final resurrection body; or because of the nature of timeless eternity, they have received their resurrection bodies already because they live in the eternal “now.”

1John 3

iii. Ironside says that the **last trumpet** was a figure of speech that came from the Roman military, when they broke camp. The first trumpet meant, “strike the tents and prepare to leave”; the second trumpet meant, “fall into line”; the third and **last trumpet** meant “march away.” This **last trumpet** describes the Christian’s “marching orders” at the rapture of the Church.

g. **So this corruptible must put on incorruption:** Resurrection is a **must** for the Christian’s destiny. In light of all this, how could the Corinthian Christians let go of such an important truth?

(54-57) Resurrection is the final defeat of death.

victory”!

b. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?

a. **Therefore... be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord:** Because we know death is defeated and we have an eternal, resurrected destiny with Jesus Christ, we should stand firm and unshakable all the more for Him right now. We should work hard in everything now, working for the Lord, because *right now counts forever!*

. **Knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord:** Even if your labor is vain to everyone else, and everyone else discounts or doesn't appreciate what you do for the Lord, **your labor is not in vain in the Lord.** It doesn't matter if you get the praise or the encouragement; sometimes you will and sometimes you won't. But resurrection means **that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

i. "You must not only *work*, but you must *labour* – put forth all your strength; and you must work and labour *in the Lord* – under his *direction*, and by his *influence*; for without him you can do nothing." (Clarke)

ii. This should make us **steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord!** We don't need to waver, we don't need to change direction, we don't need to fall, and we don't need to quit. *For 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 (Hebrews 6:10).* The Lord will show His remembrance of our *work and labor of love* at the resurrection.