

FOUNDATION
Instruction About Resurrection of the Dead – Part One
1 Corinthians 15:35-44

1 Corinthians 15:35-44~ ³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” ³⁶ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. ⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

I. Introduction

There is at least one thing that we all have in common. There is at least one thing that we all share. No matter of gender, or age, or social status, or race, or religious belief ... every one of us must face death. Death is a certainty and a reality that we all must deal with one day. Hebrews 9:27 says that:

Hebrews 9:27~ ²⁷ ... it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,

But for the Christian, there is an offer of hope that no other religious beliefs offer. It is the offer of the resurrection of the dead ... that those who hope in God through Jesus the Christ will be raised to life. And this hope is not wishful thinking. This hope is based on the historical fact that Jesus was resurrected from the grave. The same God who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise those in Christ from the grave. 1 Peter 1:3 says ...

1 Peter 1:3~ ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

It is “living hope” that we who are in Christ have. It is not a dead hope. It is not a feeble and fowl hope. It is a living hope. It is a hope that is alive and active that affects our life. It is a hope that is found only in Jesus and in nowhere else.

Did you know that in the Old Testament, there is no teaching about the resurrection? None! Let me clarify ... there is no promise from God to the Old Testament saints that they will be resurrected from the grave.)Now there is only one place in the Old Testament that mentions the resurrection, and that is found in Daniel 12:2, but that is a prophesy about the New Covenant). The promise of resurrection to the Old Testament saints is found nowhere in the Old Covenant.

As William Barclay notes:

In the Old Testament there is very little hope of anything that can be called life after death. According to the general Old Testament belief all men, without distinction, went to Sheol after death ... where the dead lived a shadowy existence, without strength, without light, cut off alike from men and from God. The Old Testament is full of this bleak, grim pessimism regarding what is to happen after death.

Listen to some of the ways the Old Covenant describes death.

Psalm 30:9~⁹ “What profit is there in my death,
if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it tell of your faithfulness?

There is no profit in death, the Psalmist wrote. Listen to Isaiah.

Isaiah 38:18~¹⁸ For Sheol does not thank you;
death does not praise you;
those who go down to the pit do not hope
for your faithfulness.

Not only is there no profit in death, there is also no hope in death. Let me read one more ...

Ecclesiastes 9:4-5, 10~⁴ But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. ⁵ For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten ... ¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

How is that for comfort?

But in the New Covenant, we have a precious promise that is found only in Christ. And hence, it is one of the foundations of the “elementary teaching about the Christ” found in Hebrews 6.

II. The Affects of the Resurrection

Before we delve into the elementary doctrine about the resurrection (we will take a look at that next time), let’s take a step back and discover the affects of the resurrection on us who believe and follow Jesus.

1. First, the resurrection gives us Hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

1 Thessalonians 4:13~¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For

since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

The believers in the Church at Thessalonica were mourning. They were grieving because many of their friend and family had been put to death ... they had been put to sleep, if you will. Why? It is because of the Faith. Paul did not tell the Christians not to mourn nor grieve over a love one's death.

It is natural to grieve when someone dies because death is not part of God's original desire. Death is the result of sin. So it is natural to grieve over the lost that we feel at a love one's death. We are to grieve, but we are to grieve in hope. We are to grieve but that grief should not overwhelm us because of the resurrection.

When my cousin past away a couple of years ago, she requested that I would officiate at her funeral. Of course I accepted her departing request of me. I hate funerals because I just don't know what to say. I mean, what do you say at funerals? "How are you doing?" "How do you think I am doing?" Right?

But there was one silver lining during this service ... she was a believer in Jesus. And as such, we grieve, but we grieve with hope. Why do we grieve with hope? Let me give you three reasons.

a. First, death is Temporary.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14~ ¹³But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴**For** since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

The Bible uses the word "sleep" to describe death. Both Jesus and Paul describe death as sleep. And in every incidence when they use the word "sleep", there is a resurrection that shortly follows. It is seen here in 1 Thessalonians 4:14 and elsewhere in the Scriptures.

Mark 5:39~ ³⁹And entering in, He said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep."

John 11:11~ ¹¹This He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep."

1 Corinthians 15:51-52~ ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Death sounds permanent. But the Bible describes death as sleep because sleep is temporary. The ones who sleep will wake up... i.e. will be resurrected. So death is temporary for those who follow the Way.

- b. Second, those who died are with Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:14~¹⁴ ... God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

They are not in a bleak, grim pessimistic place where they are shadowy existence, without strength, without light, and cut off from God. No, they are with Jesus. When a person dies in the Lord, he or she is taken to be with Jesus until He returns to this earth and resurrect everybody.

Paul says the same thing to the Corinthians Church. If we are absent from the body (that is, we die), we will be present with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:8~⁸ Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

So those who die do not die alone. They are with Jesus.

- c. Third, those who died in Christ have more honor.

1 Thessalonians 4:15~¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

The dead in Christ, that is those who had died for the Faith, will be raised before those of us who are alive. Some people think that the reason why the dead are raised before the living is because they have six feet further to go than those who are alive. I don't think that is the intent of the text. The dead in Christ are raised first because they received the honor for dying because of the Faith. That is the idea.

So the resurrection brings hope to those who are in Christ. The resurrection gives us something to look forward to.

2. Second, the resurrection gives us Comfort. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18~¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Paul tells us to encourage one another with the hope of the resurrection. The resurrection brings comfort because when Jesus returns, we will be with him forever along with our love ones and those who died in the Faith. It will be a huge reunion.

The resurrection also brings us comfort because the life that we live is not in vain. The death that we die in the Lord will be rewarded. The resurrection encourages us to press on ... to be faithful ... to never give up.

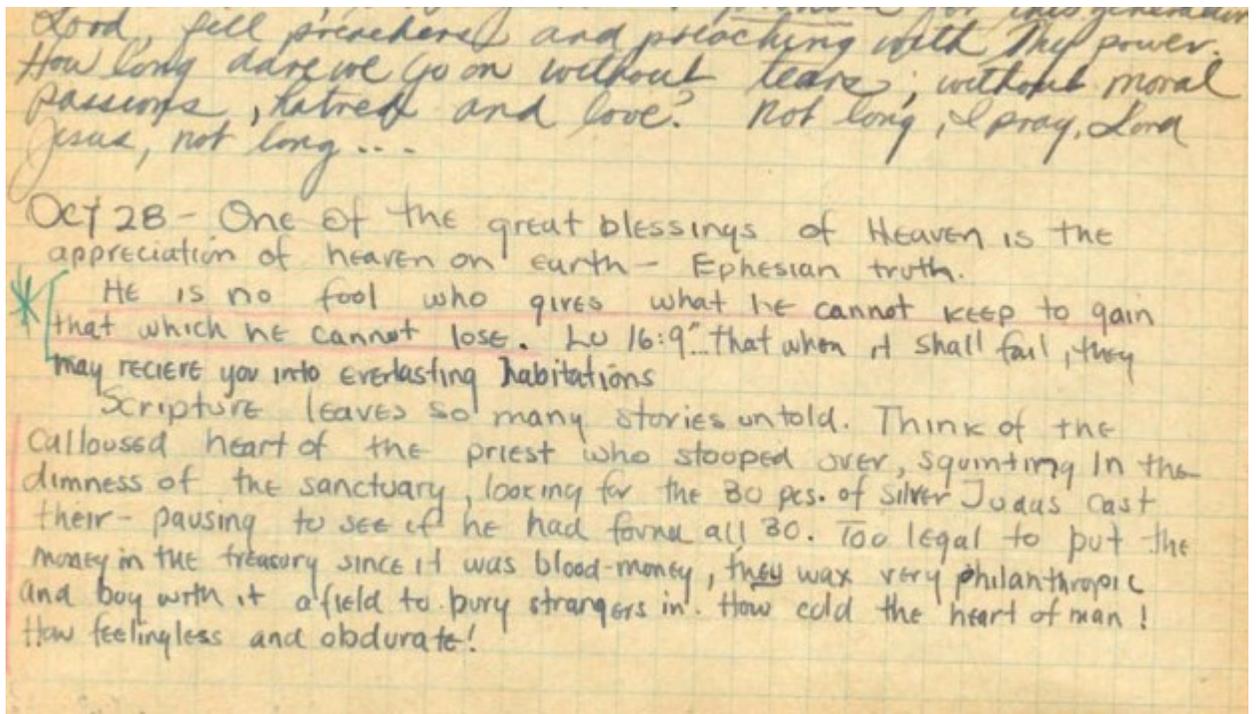
3. Third, the resurrection gives us Endurance to Suffer. (1 Corinthians 15:30-32)

1 Corinthians 15:30-32~³⁰ Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹ I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! ³² What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

We endure suffering because we know that there is something better in the end.

Jim Elliot scribbled in his journal on October 28, 1949 a thought that he would never imagine would be quoted by Christians for encouragement. He wrote:

One of the great blessings of Heaven is the appreciation of heaven on earth – Ephesians truth. He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.



If there is no resurrection from the dead, Paul writes, than that means that Jesus was not resurrected because our resurrection is tied to Jesus' resurrection. And if Jesus was not

resurrected, than gospel is not true. And if the gospel is not true and the resurrection is not true, we who give up everything of the gospel should be pitied.

1 Corinthians 15:19~ ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

4. Fourth, the resurrection keeps us Faithful. (Hebrews 11:35)

Hebrews 11:35~ ³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.

These men and women of the Faith were committed to Christ instead of compromising their conviction because they were anticipating something better ... the resurrection. They embraced torture. They accepted imprisonment because they knew that that there was something more precious that awaited them than this life. They kept the faith because of the resurrection.

5. Five, the resurrection keeps us Pure. (1 John 3:2-3)

1 John 3:2-3~ ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

John says that we do not see what we will be like when Jesus returns. When Jesus comes, he will resurrect us and we will be with Him forever. The fact that Jesus' return is inevitable, it keeps us pure. It keeps us on our toes.

When I was in college, I would live at home with my mom and commute to school. Every now and then, I would come home early from school while my mom was at work. As long as she was at work, I would lie on the couch and rest, raid the refrigerator for some snacks or grubs, leave the dishes in the sink, toss my books and backpack on the floor, and just goof off. But every time 5 o'clock rolled around, things changed because I knew that my mother was coming home. You better believe I got my lazy behind off that couch and started to wash the dishes, picked up my clothes, books and bag, and just tidying up the place. The fact that I knew she was coming mad me diligent in keep the house "pure".

If I did all these things for my mom, imagine what I would do for my Lord. The fact that we know Jesus is coming also keeps up pure ... keeps us in line.

III. Conclusion

The resurrection affects us in so many ways.

1. It gives us hope.
2. It gives us comfort.

3. It gives us endurance.
4. It keeps us faithful.
5. And it keeps us pure.

I conclude with the words of William Barclay concerning the resurrection:

In a slippery world it [the resurrection] kept him on his feet. In a tempting world it gave him resistance power. In a hurting world it enabled him to endure a broken heart or an agonized body and not to give in.

IV. The Blessing

Presider: May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be unto you.

Congregation: And also to you.