

## BEING WISE ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

### PART 3

Open your Bibles this morning to 1 Corinthians 15:29-34 and 49-58.

Before we begin this morning, let's bow for a word of prayer.

Last Sunday, we began a four part sermon entitled, "Being Wise about the Resurrection."

The four parts of this message are in the form of questions; four questions that are raised and answered.

In part 1, we asked the question, are the dead raised? This is a fundamental question because if the dead rise not, if the dead are not raised, then we just need to stop and not go on any farther.

But Paul gave three conclusive proofs that the dead are raised:

- The Corinthian's salvation
- The Old Testament Scriptures
- The Eyewitness accounts of His resurrection are conclusive proof that the dead are raised. It is hard to argue with eyewitness accounts – especially as many as are referenced here.

In part 2, we asked the question, when are the dead raised?

Based on three images Paul used we were able to draw the sequence or the order of the resurrection.

The images were: The First fruits; Adam; and The Kingdom.

We were careful not to set dates: "No man knoweth the hour when His Lord cometh."

But we can know the order even if we can't know the day and time.

Now this morning we want to raise a third question: Why Are the Dead Raised?

If the dead rise, and they do, and if Jesus is coming again, and He is, then there must be a reason, a fundamental purpose for the resurrection of the body.

The resurrection of the body is a future event that has compelling implications for our personal lives.

If the resurrection is not true, then we can forget about the future and live as we please.

But the resurrection is true: both the resurrection of Christ and the future resurrection of our bodies are true.

And Jesus is alive and is coming again to affect these future resurrections: both the resurrection to life and the resurrection to condemnation.

Even if we die before the Lord comes, we will be raised at His coming and stand before Him in a glorified body.

Paul cited four areas of Christian experience that are touched by the fact of the resurrection. These will effectively help answer the question as to the “why” of the resurrection.

**The first one is evangelism**, verse 29: *“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?”*

What does it mean to be baptized for the dead?

Some take this to mean “proxy baptism,” where a believer is baptized on behalf of a dead relative; but we find no such teaching in the New Testament or the Old.

I want you to understand and comprehend this: Nowhere in the Bible is baptism for the dead taught! Ever! Period!

Nowhere in the New Testament is it ever practiced...period.

In the second century, there were some heretical groups that practiced “vicarious baptism,” but the Church of Jesus Christ, the visible body of Christ, has NEVER accepted this practice.

The first Disciples and Apostles and the early church did not practice this and neither do we.

To begin with, salvation is a personal matter that each must decide for himself, and secondly, nobody needs to be baptized to be saved.

The Dying Thief on the cross beside Jesus was never baptized; yet he was saved. *“Today, thou shalt be with Me in paradise,”* Jesus told him.

A person is saved by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and once you die there is no more hope!

If a person is to ever come to faith in Christ, they must do it on this side of death and the grave and they must do it by faith and faith alone and they must do it personally.

This phrase in verse 29 probably means “baptized to take the place of those who had died.”

In other words, if there is no resurrection, why bother to witness and win others to Christ?

Why reach sinners who are then baptized to take the place of those who have died if there is no resurrection?

If the Christian life is a dead-end street, the get off the street!

Each, and I'm going to say it this way, each one who has reached the age of responsibility and who is able to reach that age mentally will share in either the resurrection of life and go to heaven, or the resurrection of judgment and go to hell, John 5:28-29.

We weep for believers who have died when we ought to rejoice!

They are at home with God!

We ought to weep for unbelievers who still have opportunity to be saved.

*“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”*

The doctrine of the resurrection, the reality, I should say, of the resurrection ought to motivate us to do the work of evangelism.

**Then there is a second area that is touched by the doctrine of the resurrection and that is the area of suffering for the cause of Christ, verses 30-32:**

*(30) “And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? (31) I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. (32) If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.”*

Now the suffering that I believe Paul is referencing here is suffering for the cause of Christ.

I die daily here does not mean dying to self as it does in Romans 6, but to the physical dangers Paul faced as a servant of Christ (see particularly 2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

He was in constant jeopardy from his enemies and on more than one occasion had been close to death.

Why endure all of this if death ends it all?

We should do as Paul suggests in verse 32 in his quote from Isaiah 22:13, *“Let us eat, drink, and be merry: for tomorrow we die.”*

What we do in the body in this life comes up for review for every believer at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

God deals with the whole person, not just the immaterial spirit and soul!

According to Romans 8, the body shares in salvation, *“We wait, to wit the redemption of the body.”*

The suffering endured in the body will result in glory at the resurrection according to 2 Corinthians 4:7-18.

If there is no resurrection of the body, then it is indeed foolish to suffer for the cause of Christ, which is what Paul is talking about here.

**This third area has always been a platform for discussion and even disagreement: That area is the area of “Separation from Sin.”**

Some folks teach separation just for separation’s sake: they have their little lists!

If there is no resurrection, then what we do with our bodies will have no bearing on the future.

Just like today, some of those in the Church at Corinth rejected the resurrection in order to rationalize their sin.

Listen folks, the believer’s body, your body if you are a true Christian, a true believer, is the TEMPLE of the HOLY SPIRIT and must be kept separated from the sins of the world.

Yes, we teach and believe in eternal security; that even if a believer falls into deep sin, if that person is indeed a true believer, he or she is still saved. (See 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5)

No, we do not teach that eternal security gives us a license to sin; to do as we please.

We, if we are truly saved, belong to Christ. We are not our own. We are bought with the precious blood of Christ and we are to live as holy a life as we can through the power of the Spirit.

What a shameful thing it is for a believer to be living “my way” when so many will die without Christ.

**Then finally, this morning, the fourth area cited by Paul is the area of Death.**

For this, look with me at verses 49-57.

Why are the dead raised?

Well, for one thing, the heavenly kingdom is not made for the kind of bodies we have, bodies of flesh and blood.

So our bodies will have to be changed.

John wrote, *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is,” 1 John 3:2.*

Yes, there will be some who enter the Millennial Kingdom in their natural bodies, but no one will enter into the Eternal Kingdom in a body of flesh and blood.

So when Jesus returns, the bodies of living believers will be instantly transformed be like His body, and the believers who have died will be raised with new glorified bodies.

These bodies will not be, will never again be subject to death and decay.

As Christians, we have victory “in” death and “over” death.

Freud was wrong when he said that “no remedy had ever been found for death!”

There has been found a remedy for death and that remedy is in Christ.

It is because of the victory of Jesus Christ in His own resurrection that we have the victory “in” and “over” death.

*Jesus said, “I Am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die...”*

The literal rendering of 1 Corinthians 15:57 is “*But thanks be to God who keeps on giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

We experience the “*power of His resurrection*” in our lives as we yield to Him.

Because of this we can be “*steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*”

Solomon may have sung the song of vanity in Ecclesiastes but here in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul sang the Song of Victory in Jesus.

Let's bow for prayer!