

The Resurrection A Devotion on 1 Corinthians 15

1 Corinthians 15, sometimes known as the “resurrection chapter”, is Paul’s beautiful and logical explanation of the hope found in the resurrection of Jesus. A chapter that speaks to both head and heart. Making the appeal for the historical truth of the resurrection while showing its immense meaning for those who trust in Jesus for their salvation. It’s one of the longer chapters in the new testament but well worth the time read. Before going any further, read through 1 Corinthians 15, asking that God would give insight and understanding of His word.

Read 1 Corinthians 15

Context

1 Corinthians is a letter Paul wrote to a church he helped start in the Greek city of Corinth. This city was known in some ways as an ancient Las Vegas or Amsterdam where you could have “experiences” not available in other places. The phrase “to live as a Corinthian” was used in the ancient world to describe someone without moral rules. In short, it had a reputation. Plant in the middle of that: a church. From the letter Paul wrote it’s clear they really struggled to grow up in their faith and live holy amidst their culture. For most of the letter Paul is addressing how they treat one another, their bodies and their church. But he is now addressing a belief that was creeping into their church. It was being taught and believed by some that resurrection doesn’t happen. They still wanted Jesus but without His being raised from the dead. Paul’s point: that doesn’t work. At all. You cannot have a meaningful Jesus without the resurrection. That belief doesn’t logically hold together and it undermines every hopeful element of trusting in Christ. Without the resurrection all of Christianity falls apart and with it is held together. To better understand this there are three larger truths that we can see in an overview of 1 Corinthians 15.

The resurrection of Jesus happened. (verses 1-11)

To be a Christian is not to merely adhere to a set of ideals or teachings. Yes, we follow Jesus but we follow a resurrected Jesus. The claim of scripture that we all must make a decision about is that the resurrection happened. A real event, at a real moment in human history, witnessed by real people who saw the real resurrected body of Jesus with their own eyes. Touched him with their hands and trusted with their hearts. The resurrection sets Jesus apart and above any other. Merely our good teacher and He’s just another among many religious voices. But the resurrection proves the promise that His death does what scripture says: that it is the payment for and cleansing of the sin of anyone who believes.

Question: Do trust the resurrection as a real event that means what God says it means?

The resurrection is our hope. (verses 12-57)

This is longest section and primary thrust of this chapter. Did you notice all of the “if/then” language when you read it? Paul uses a bit of compare and contrast to drive home just how different life is with or without the resurrection. Without it we are hopeless, stuck in our sin, pitiful and make God out to be liar as we await the (as one writer put it) “bully that always wins,

death.” But with the resurrection it could not be more opposite. We have hope in the forgiveness of our sin, no fear of death and joyful expectation beyond this life. Hope in a biblical sense is not some empty sentiment to say to ourselves when times are hard. No, it’s the certainty of the fulfillment God’s promises based upon His perfect character.

Action:

1. **Take a moment and make two columns. On the top of one write “If No Resurrection...” and the other write “If Resurrection.. Then fill in these two columns using verses 12-57. For example “If no resurrection...then we only have hope in this life (v19)” or “If resurrection then...death does not win (v 55).**
2. **Take a look at the resurrection column and spend a few moments thanking God in prayer for all He does through it.**

The resurrection gives our life meaning (v 58).

The resurrection means that we have boundless hope in death. But it doesn’t mean that we mentally escape here and now. If you are reading this then God still has you here for a reason. Part of what compels us to press on in this life, seeking to glorify God in all we do is the fact that this life isn’t all there is. What happens now does have eternal impact. This is shown in the final verse of the chapter when it begins with a “therefore”. Meaning that the instruction in verse 58 is the natural outpouring of the hope explained in verses 1-57. As C.S. Lewis said *“If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.”* Yes, it is good that we trust the historical account of the resurrection and grow to understand the hope it provides but if we simply shelve those truths in our mind without it moving our heart to action then we have still fallen short. Be encouraged that because of the resurrection of Jesus, this life isn’t the end and may that strengthen you to live for Him, in the difficulty of the here and now because one day you will see Him face to face.

Question: Do I treat the resurrection like an intellectual fact only, has it led me to live out what it says in verse 58?