

PROCLAIMING JESUS AS THE RISEN LORD.

We will focus our attention mainly on 1 Corinthians 15, which I regard as the most complete definition, description and explanation that exists in the bible of Jesus' resurrection and ours. What is the issue on the table in 1 Corinthians 15? To insist on the resurrection of Jesus as central to the Christian faith and also to show that because of Christ's resurrection, believers in Christ will also be resurrected. We shall consider our topic under three headings:

1. **BAD NEWS (What if there's no resurrection)** (Verses 12-20)
2. **GOOD NEWS (But there is resurrection...)** (Verses 1-8, 35-39)
3. **THE "THERE FORE" OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION** (Verses 54-58)

BAD NEWS – What if there's no resurrection? Verses 12-20.

Now, let me ask you something profound yet troubling. If you became believers because you trusted the proclamation that Christ is alive, risen from the dead, how can you let people say that there is no such thing as a resurrection?

Christianity without a risen Christ is not Christianity at all. If there is no resurrection, Christ would just have died a martyr's death and his death would have no justification component. It means his sacrifice on the cross was not acceptable to the Father hence he remained in the tomb, dead. If Christ did not resurrect, life in the ordained ministry is like peddling a rumour that is meaningless. If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we're a pretty sorry lot.

Listen to Paul, *"It's resurrection, resurrection, always resurrection, that undergirds what I do and say, the way I live. If there's no resurrection, "We eat, we drink, the next day we die," and that's all there is to it. But don't fool yourselves. Don't let yourselves be poisoned by this anti-resurrection loose talk. "Bad company ruins good manners." (verses 32-33)*

BUT, THERE'S GOOD NEWS: Christ resurrected and lives and has become the first fruit of those who died. Verses 1-8, 35-39. It is a fact of history supported by evidence- those who spoke with him (Christ) and can attest to what he did.

Verses 1-3 Paul appeals to O.T Scriptures (2ce). Why? Because the birth, death, and life of Jesus Christ were foretold hundreds of years before he was born. Jesus Christ also referred to OT. Scriptures when conferring with the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection. Then he said Luke 24: 25-27 to them, *"So thick-headed! So slow-hearted! Why can't you simply believe all that the prophets said? Don't you see that these things had to happen, that the Messiah had to suffer and only then enter into his glory?" Then he started at the beginning, with the Books of Moses, and went on through all the Prophets, pointing out everything in the Scriptures that referred to him."* (MESSAGE)

Peter, in his sermon on Pentecost day referred to Psalm 16:10 where David foretold that God would not allow his servant to see corruption. David died but he was looking forward to the resurrection of Christ who fulfilled that prophecy.

Paul brought 5 witnesses to support the resurrection of Christ besides the Scriptures: *Christ presented himself alive to Peter, then to his closest followers, and later to more than five hundred of his followers all at the same time, most of them still around (although a few have since died); that he then spent time with James and the rest of those he commissioned to represent him; and that he finally presented himself alive to me.*

Paul also testified that the grace bestowed on him as a result of his encounter with Jesus changed his life completely, as it has changed my own life and everyone who actually belongs to Jesus.

But that is not all there is to say about our hope as an aftermath to Jesus' resurrection. When Christ appeared to his disciples, closed doors could not lock him out. He had a discernible body which was also a resurrected and glorious one. The Bible says, we shall be like him in our resurrected bodies.

Verses 35-38 MSG. *"...Some sceptic is sure to ask, "Show me how resurrection works... We do have a parallel experience in gardening. You plant a "dead" seed; soon there is a flourishing plant. There is no visual likeness between seed and plant... The dead body that we bury in the ground and the*

resurrection body that comes from it will be dramatically different". We shall think of heavenly things and earthly desires and attitudes would have vanished away for we shall be like Christ.

That takes us to my third section: **THE "THERE FORE" OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION** (Verses 54-58)

So is there life after death? Yes, there is, and we can be sure because of Jesus' own resurrection from the dead, which is a pointer to ours. We've seen the truth at stake, that without it there is little hope; we've seen the evidence at hand, which Paul shows very convincingly that Jesus is alive. The power that brought Jesus back from the dead is the same power that is at work in all believers which will also bring them back from the dead to be with the Lord Jesus. The faith, that is saving faith, is the faith that produces good works for and with Christ. It is the faith that shares the good news of a crucified Saviour, that proclaims Jesus Christ as the risen Lord, by serving the poor in our local community. It is that which nurtures disciples so they flourish in the faith, and seeks God's truth in a confusing culture. It is that faith which stands for justice in a godless society among other things.

Verse 58 is a fitting conclusion: *"With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort. Your bereavement and grief, your labour, your sickness, your pain, your disappointment are not in vain in the Lord.. (MESSAGE)*