



PRODIGAL

CHURCH

SERMON SERIES: PRODIGAL CHURCH

DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2020

SPEAKER: CRAIG VERNALL

SERMON TITLE: RESURRECTION

SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 15

As we begin our sermon study this week, let's be reminded of what a wonderful testimony we heard from David & Linda Cowie on Sunday. What a celebration of decades of God's provision and David and Linda's faithfulness to their calling as missionaries. Please remember to pray for them. Also, if you'd like to bless them with a financial gift to celebrate this season please do so through our BBC website.

Q1. What inspired you most about David & Linda's story? How did their story glorify God?

1 Corinthians 15 is a chapter full of promise and hope. The chapter is about anastasis - resurrection. The older we get the more our future resurrected body appeals to us! Yet Paul is addressing a problem that was common amongst the early church. The heresy was called Gnosticism. This Greek philosophy had permeated the church and leading people to believe that the body is evil or sinful. Therefore, believing that it's our spirit only that will be raised to new life. Paul rejected this way of thinking. Remembering "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good". (Genesis 1: 31). Gnostics could see no value in redeeming the body. So, Paul sets out to explain how the resurrection will happen and what that will mean for each of us.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-19.

"¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied."

Paul begins a reasoned argument that reaches logical conclusions about our faith in Jesus if we were to take away the resurrection of the body from the Christian story. For Paul it's resurrection or nothing. Further on Paul builds upon this argument with more conclusions about this imperative.

²⁹ Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? ³⁰ And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? ³¹ I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

Q2. When you think about the gift of salvation given to us by Jesus' death and resurrection, what do you find yourself focusing upon more? Jesus' crucifixion or his resurrection? Why do you think we focus upon one part more than the other?

Q3. What do you think requires more faith to accept; that Jesus died for our sins or that he rose from the dead?

Q4. What part of Jesus' story do you find yourself sharing more readily with others?

Death is something that Jesus now has authority over. Jesus' death on the cross was not a justifiable death given that he was innocent of all sin. Therefore, Jesus death and subsequent victory over death (resurrection) can be credited to us who believe (have faith) in him. (cf. Romans 4:23-24) Read how Paul describes this victory in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

²⁷ For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.”

As believers we have faith that God has everything worked out. This passage of scripture above gives us confidence that God has a plan that works through delegated authority. Authority given to Christ who will in turn ultimately submit himself to God.

Q5. Does this picture of the sequencing that's described in these last days give you confidence about your own future resurrection experience? How so?

Paul moves on in chapter 15 to describe in detail how the resurrection will occur. Paul appears to be answering specific questions.

³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” ³⁶ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.

⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.”

Here Paul differentiates between people and animals and heavenly bodies. It appears that Paul is using this differentiation to counter a claim that when we die, we simply melt into the cosmos. Paul is rock solid about our eternal future. We will be resurrected and have a body.

Q6. It may well surprise people to read that Paul is very specific about the post death form we will take or won't take. In your experience, have you ever had conversations with New Age believers who think of life after death as reincarnation or just melting into the Cosmos?

In the final parts of chapter 15 Paul is writing with excitement.

⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised 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 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Q7. This list of descriptions and comparisons seems to flow out of Paul as he seeks to build a picture in our minds of how we will be the same but not the same. How we will transition from mortal to immortal...and the list goes on. So, what image attracts you the most or speaks to you the most about this transition into our resurrection bodies?

Q8. What are some specific ways that the resurrection gives us hope? (vs. 50-58) How might this hope help you minister and encourage others?

Theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg said, "The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live."

Q9. How does the reality of the resurrection affect your day-to-day life?

What difference does Jesus' resurrection make to your life and the way you respond to your circumstances?

END YOUR GROUP TIME WITH PRAYING AND ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER.