

Resurrection Refresher—1st Corinthians 15—3/31/24
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Turn to 1st Corinthians 15 where we'll do a resurrection refresher as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ this morning.

We'll survey all 58 verses to explain & celebrate Jesus' resurrection as the foundation & focus for our resurrection.

We'll trace Paul's reasoning in extolling the resurrection as essential.

I pray this will prove fruitful on many levels as Christ's resurrection shapes so much of who we are & how we live.

You see—strange influences had crept into the Corinthian church & one of those was uncertainty whether there was a resurrection.

How depressing & purposeless to imagine there's no afterlife!

It's even unnatural not to think about eternity because God hard-wired eternity into our hearts as Ecclesiastes 3:11 says.

Romans 1 says it requires actively suppressing truth to seek to rid our minds of the reality of eternity.

Yet that error existed in Paul's day as it does in ours.

So against influence from the Sadducees & the gnostic disdain for the physical body, Paul had to defend the resurrection.

He did so by exalting the importance of Christ's resurrection.

So while this chapter is a defense of the resurrection in general, Paul did so with delight & declaration of Christ's resurrection.

In seeing those together, we see how essential & exciting it is to know that Jesus conquered death & secured the future of His followers.

So I pray 1st Corinthians 15 renews & anchors you today as we walk through 6 Resurrection Refresher points.

I'll outline 6 resurrection refreshers to revitalize your convictions in Christ's resurrection & renew your commitment to its applications.

Let's see the 1st resurrection refresher in verses 1-11. [READ]

It seems crazy that people who claimed to trust & follow Jesus would think for a second that there was no resurrection.

After all, the very Gospel that Paul preached & they received included Jesus' own resurrection.

Verses 1-2 appeals to their own experience, as we could to ours.

They had received the Gospel, they stood in the Gospel, they were saved by the Gospel & they must hold fast to the Gospel.

And that same Gospel proclaimed that Jesus died, was buried & was raised on the third day as told in the Scriptures.

Then verses 5-8 refer to many witnesses of Jesus' resurrection.

So Paul's point is that apart from Jesus' resurrection, they would not exist as a church & Paul would not have received the grace to preach.

So before the question in verse 12, he reminded his readers that they had believed a message based on Christ's resurrection.

And since that's true of us too, let's note as a 1st resurrection refresher, #1, to Remember that the Gospel **includes** Christ's resurrection.

#1—Remember that the Gospel **includes** Christ's resurrection.

That's why the resurrection is not a debatable or secondary issue—it's essential & primary—& it's why you all gather & sing His praise & serve Him so passionately & I love to be a part of that!

Christ's resurrection must be believed for anyone to be saved because it's the summit of Gospel accomplishment.

It's the crowning victory that was supported by eyewitness testimony.

Without it, there is no Gospel—which is what Paul said next as we read on in 1st Corinthians 15:12-19. [READ]

Verse 12 is the main issue addressed in the chapter—some among them were saying that there is no resurrection of the dead.

It's better translated "since *Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead*", because the condition is in the indicative & therefore stated as what is true.

Christ is preached & that preaching says He has been raised!

That's a perfect passive participle, meaning it already occurred & the results remain—Christ has been raised & He's alive!

So it was nonsense to say men cannot be raised from the dead when they believed the proven fact that Christ had been raised.

Humans can be raised from the dead because Christ was.

There must be a resurrection because Christ was resurrected & that had been established historically & believed personally.

To say otherwise was to undermine the whole basis of the Gospel that Paul preached & they believed.

To deny the resurrection is to deny Christ's resurrection & that would make their faith & Paul's preaching empty & false & worthless.

That would mean that they were still condemned in their sins because Christ's resurrection is what proved their forgiveness.

And then also, believers who had fallen asleep, meaning they had died, were destroyed if Christ had not been raised.

If there's no resurrection & this life is all there is, it was pitiful & foolish to spend this life preaching & living for Christ.

So we might phrase a 2nd Resurrection Refresher like this—#2, realize that all is empty without Christ's resurrection.

#1st—remember that the Gospel includes Christ's resurrection, & 2nd—realize that all is empty without Christ's resurrection.

Without Christ's resurrection, Christianity is a big sham, an empty shell with no hope & no power.

Without Christ's resurrection, it's all a big lie & fraud.

The lofty morals the NT teaches would've been written by liars if Christ did not rise—& liars don't have lofty morals!

If Christ did not rise, the witnesses to Jesus who were martyred were all deceived & deceitful.

And all the years of Christian outreach with food and healthcare and education for needy peoples were all a charade.

Societies transformed out of the likes of cannibalism through Christian missions were just empty tricks by foolish crooks.

Further, Jesus predicted that He would die & rise again & He promised He would raise others, but why believe Him if there's no resurrection?

If He did not rise, He's a liar & con man no one should follow.

No one should give patronizing kudos to Jesus for being a good holy man or moral teacher or prophet, if He did not rise again.

Christianity is either a lie or it is the only way of truth.

And since it **is** the truth, ideas that Jesus' resurrection was merely an illustration or that He only spiritually appeared are also not logical.

So listen—since Christianity **is** the truth—we need to ask if our lives would be pitied if there was no resurrection.

Think about the way you live each day & week.

What about the way you spend your time & money, for example—shows that you are banking on a resurrection in Christ & you are not merely living for this life?

Paul made clear that there were consequences of not believing in a resurrection before he again proclaimed that Christ **has been raised**.

Read verses 20-28 to see that. [READ]

After highlighting how unreasonable & impossible it was to question or deny the resurrection, Paul unreservedly returned to the truth.

The truth is that Christ **has been raised** as eyewitnesses had established & as the Gospel's impact had evidenced.

Then Paul advanced his argument by describing Christ's resurrection as the firstfruits of those who are asleep, meaning those who died.

Firstfruits are initial crops that appear & show that more will come—they prove plants are trustworthy to produce more.

So Christ's resurrection guarantees resurrection for all who are His.

Death came by Adam & brought death to all who were in him.

And similarly, resurrection of the dead came by the man Jesus Christ & He brought resurrection life to all who are in Him.

Verse 22 includes all who are in Christ—not all who ever live.

It's not a statement of universalism as if everyone will be saved.

The all is defined as all who are in Christ that will be raised.

Verse 23 mentions an order of Christ first & His people at His coming.

The end in verse 24 is telos, meaning the goal & completion.

The resurrection will happen for the church at the Rapture & for other saints at the end of the Tribulation & end of the millennium & then Christ will finally vanquish all His enemies.

All things except God the Father will be subject to Christ & then He will hand over His kingdom to the Father & the Triune God will be all in all.

Without believers being resurrected, no one will be in that kingdom.

But believers will be resurrected because Christ's resurrection secured that as certain & that's our 3rd Resurrection Refresher.

Point #3—Relish that our future is secured by Christ's resurrection.

From verses 1-11, we said 1st to remember that the Gospel includes Christ's resurrection & from verses 12-19, we said 2ndly to realize that all is empty without Christ's resurrection.

Now from verses 20-28 where Paul moved forward in his reasoning, 3rdly, **relish that our future is secured by Christ's resurrection.**

By 'relish', I mean prize it & praise God for it, treasure & trust that Christ's resurrection has secured your future.

Think of how happy & restful & precious that is!

You can know for sure that your future is never in doubt when you bank everything on Christ alone!

Relish that & let it fuel your worship & transform your lifestyle.

Knowing such sure promises in Christ transforms everything.

That transformed lifestyle was Paul's next reason for the reality of the resurrection that we read in verses 29-34 as we move on. [READ]

Resurrection refresher #4 to note from verses 29-34 is this—
reaffirm that our lifestyle is rooted in Christ's resurrection.

Point #4—reaffirm that our lifestyle is rooted in Christ's resurrection.

Our lifestyle—meaning what we think & do in every way—is
rooted in Christ's resurrection.

When verse 29 mentions baptism for the dead, you need to know the word 'for' can mean 'because of' or 'as a result of'.

The idea is that Corinthian believers had come to trust Christ
because of the testimony of believers who had died.

They were saved & baptized as a result of the witness of believers who had been faithful & lived with hope in Christ all the way to death.

It would be foolish to follow the faith of those who died with hope in Christ if they would never be raised from the dead.

That would be like following someone who claimed he could fly & jumped off a cliff trying & fell to his death.

You would not do that—you would not follow such a person.

And Paul's point then is that the impact of dead believers only makes sense for you to follow in their faith if they will be raised from death.

Paul used similar logic about following Paul or others who endangered themselves by preaching Christ & living for Christ.

If they had no future resurrection to overcome death, why risk it?

Do you see Paul's logic?—of course there's a resurrection.

There would be no reason or profit even for dying to himself daily & facing opposition & persecution if no resurrection reward awaits.

Without resurrection, you should just eat & drink & not care.

Apart from future resurrection, it would make sense to live all for this life & not for the life to come, all in fleshly lusts & not in God's ways.

Sadly, some Corinthians had been hanging out with such people as shown by their corrupted choices & actions.

The bad company of those who did not live in light of the resurrection was poison & trouble & we need to be warned by that today too.

If you claim to follow Jesus, wake up & realize you cannot be friends with the world because unbelievers will corrupt you.

God calls us to be holy—which means set apart, separate—so you must not live to be accepted & cool & fit in with lost people—especially if they show up in church like some must have at Corinth.

We can't escape lost people—we are in the world but must not be of it—but we must always be mindful to be different!

So verse 34 says to stop sinning because it's shameful for those who claim to follow the Risen Christ to live like the world.

Christians should have different motives & distinct lifestyles because we know Christ is both our Judge & our Reward.

That's what I mean in summing up verses 29-34 by saying that we must reaffirm that our lifestyle is rooted in Christ's resurrection.

We do not live for this brief life, for these earthly bodies, if we know Christ, because He has promised far better bodies & far greater pleasures in His holy presence in the future.

That leads to a 5th resurrection refresher from 1st Corinthians 15 & that is to rejoice that greater bodies are assured by Christ's resurrection.

Verses 35-49 encourage us, #5, to rejoice that greater bodies are assured by Christ's resurrection.

We said (#1) **remember** that the Gospel includes Christ's resurrection;
(#2) **realize** that all is empty without Christ's resurrection;
(#3) **relish** that our future is secured by Christ's resurrection;
(#4) **reaffirm** that our lifestyle is rooted in Christ's resurrection; &
(#5) **rejoice** that greater bodies are assured by Christ's resurrection.

Read 1st Corinthians 15:35-49 next with me. [READ]

Some questioned how God the Creator of all could remake bodies, which was incredibly foolish question when you think of it.

So Paul illustrated how God designed creation with many displays of how death can lead to growing new life.

It's seen when a seed goes into the soil & germinates as a plant.

That plant still has the same identity, but a greater form.

Similarly, it makes sense that new resurrected bodies of believers will be connected to, but far greater than, their current earthly bodies.

The **new** body cannot die or perish because it must live forever.

The **new** body also cannot sin in dishonor or be weak because it is fit for God's holy presence in glory & power.

And the **new** body also must be spiritual & can't merely be natural because it must dwell in God's presence eternally.

And don't miss this—much of the evidence of such better bodies is Jesus' own resurrected body as described by those who saw Him.

Jesus was greater than Adam & so was His heavenly body.

So we should **not** doubt God's promises of new resurrection bodies when He's already proven it in Jesus.

Jesus' resurrection body is amazing & these descriptions of the resurrection bodies of believers are also amazing.

How exciting to think we won't be able to sin in those new bodies!

And how thrilling that we won't face death or pain or sorrow or all the troubles that will pass away in Christ's presence!

So we rejoice that greater bodies are assured by Christ's resurrection!

Do you see that 5th point from verses 35-49?

I pray you are seeing these marvelous truths of Christ's resurrection.

I pray you are moved by how proven Christ's resurrection is & how promising & transformational & happy & hopeful it is.

And verses 50-58 sum all that up so let's read those now. [READ]

To sum up what he's said, Paul explained that flesh & blood do not inherit the final kingdom of the eternal state.

So this *mystery*—which means something not before revealed fully—**must** take place—& that is the future resurrection to new bodies.

New bodies will come & be **imperishable & immortal**—meaning they will last forever & never decay or die as they will forever experience permanent victory over sin & death.

At that point, death will no longer have the temporary victories that it seems to have when we grieve the loss of loved ones in this life.

That sting of death now is a reminder of sin's curse & our need for the Savior who conquered sin & death.

But our experience of Christ's victory will reach its completion & that ultimate eternal reality should impact every second of this short life.

So note a resurrection refresher #6 from this final section—#6, recall that life forever is shaped by Christ's resurrection.

Point #6—recall that life forever is shaped by Christ's resurrection.

Our lives look forward to & are governed by the reality that one day we will pass from this life into eternity.

You are created with a default setting that **you know eternity is real.**

So don't suppress that or ignore it or be distracted from it.

Always remember that eternity is real & it's truly forever & you will only experience happiness in that unending future if you know Jesus.

So we want to be ready for the resurrection that will come.

We want to trust in Christ & be raised with Him.

And we want to be steadfast to finish well walking with Him & abounding in serving Him because He has promised rewards.

We will never deserve rewards, but just as we are welcomed to Christ all by His grace, so He will reward by His grace.

And that future expectation shapes our current actions.

Think of how that is true of you—or how it should be true of you—or what more ways it should be true of you.

Don't lose heart because Christ's final rule & reward **will overcome** whatever may seem to win in a smaller way now.

That assured final victory comes freely through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So we always give thanks to Him as verse 57 says.

Jesus is God the Son who became a Man to live perfectly & die sacrificially for sinners & rise in victory so that all who trust Him can rise again to be with Him forever.

If you don't know Him, then give up on any works of your own to get you right with God & trust Jesus Christ alone today.

And if you do know Him, rejoice & rest all your hope in Jesus.

As those He has transformed, all we do for His glory is more of His grace toward us that He will reward again by His grace.

So we move forward knowing that our toil is never in vain in the Lord.

And we remain steadfast & immovable as we look toward the secure promises of resurrection bodies to be with Him.

That certain future shapes life both now & forever.

So recall that life forever is shaped by Christ's resurrection.

1st today, remember that the Gospel includes Christ's resurrection.

2nd, realize that all is empty without Christ's resurrection.

3rd, relish that our future is secured by Christ's resurrection.

4th, reaffirm that our lifestyle is rooted in Christ's resurrection.

5th, rejoice that greater bodies are assured by Christ's resurrection.

& 6th, recall that life forever is shaped by Christ's resurrection.

Let's pray & praise our Risen Lord Jesus Christ together as we close.