

Session 3 The Forerunner Message in 1 Cor. 15 & 2 Cor. 5

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15 to correct wrong ideas that some in Corinth had about the resurrection. Some apparently believed that there is no resurrection of one's physical body (15:12, 16, 29, 32).
1. They believed that the Father had raised Jesus from the dead but not that God would raise all believers from the dead.
 2. Paul was also correcting the Greek thought that the body was intrinsically negative. The biblical view is that our body is essentially good and is an important part of our personhood.
- B. Paul wrote 2 Corinthians 5 to give them confidence not to be afraid of persecution or martyrdom.

C. Outline of 1 Corinthians 15

15:1-4	Jesus' resurrection is foundational to the gospel
15:5-11	Eyewitness evidence of Jesus' resurrection
15:12-19	What if there was no resurrection?
15:20-23	Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection
15:24-28	The ultimate outcome of Jesus' resurrection
15:29-34	Courage from believing in the resurrection
15:35-44	The resurrected body
15:45-49	An analogy of Adam and Christ
15:50-53	The mystery related to the resurrection
15:54-58	Victory over death

D. Outline of 2 Corinthians 5

5:1-5	The contrast of our earthly and resurrected bodies
5:6-8	Confidence in the certainty of the resurrection
5:9-11	Our response to the certainty of the resurrection
5:12-21	The lifestyle, confidence, and calling of the Lord's ambassadors

II. JESUS' RESURRECTION IS FOUNDATIONAL TO THE GOSPEL (1 COR. 15:1-4)

- A. Paul received truths about the gospel—including Jesus' death and resurrection—directly from the Lord (Gal. 1:11-12). It is important that we understand that Jesus died and rose from the dead. This is the main passage in the Scripture that gives us details about the resurrected body.
- ¹...I declare to you the gospel...²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you...³For I delivered to you first of all...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that...He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...*
(1 Cor. 15:1-4)
- B. The Scriptures foretold Jesus would die "for our sins" (Isa. 53:5-12; Dan. 9:26; cf. Ps. 22:14-18; Rom 5:8; 2 Cor.5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24) and would be raised from the dead (Ps. 16:10; Hos. 6:2). The resurrection is the proof that the Father accepted Christ's death for our sin (Rom. 1:4; 4:25).

III. EYEWITNESS EVIDENCE OF JESUS' RESURRECTION (1 COR. 15:5-11)

- A. Jesus appeared to Peter (Lk. 24:34) and the twelve—including Matthias (Jn. 20:19, 26; Acts 1:3).
⁵...He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present...⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me... (1 Cor. 15:5-8)
- B. Jesus appeared to 500 people at one time to establish proof of His physical resurrection. We also see the proof in that so many people testified of His resurrection even in the threat of persecution.

IV. WHAT IF THERE WAS NO RESURRECTION? (1 COR. 15:12-19)

- A. Paul set forth arguments to show the implications of not believing in the resurrection of the saints (15:12-19). He corrected some in Corinth who taught that there is no resurrection for the saints.
¹²Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?...¹⁶For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!... (1 Cor. 15:12-17)
- B. Paul pointed out that if the resurrection of our body is impossible, then Jesus' resurrection is a lie. If He did not rise, then the apostles lied about God's work and based their lives on these lies.

V. JESUS IS THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION (1 COR. 15:20-23)

- A. Jesus' resurrection guarantees the resurrection of believers (15:20-23). Jesus rose from the dead as the "first fruits" of a harvest of resurrected believers. He is the first one who was "ripe for harvest."
²⁰Christ is risen...and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep...²³But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those...at His coming. (1 Cor. 15:20-23)
- B. ***Each one in his own order:*** There is an order of succession to the resurrection. Jesus was the first human to be resurrected. The dead in Christ shall be resurrected when Jesus returns (1 Thes. 4:16).

VI. THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME OF JESUS' RESURRECTION (1 COR. 15:24-28)

- A. Jesus will subdue all of His enemies in preparing for the Father's throne to come to the earth. The end refers to the end of Jesus' 1,000 year millennial reign when all nations are fully disciplined.
²⁴Then comes the end [of the Millennium], when He [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He [Jesus] puts an end to all rule [resisting authorities during the Millennium]...²⁵For He [Jesus] must reign till He [the Father] has put all enemies under His [Jesus'] feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be destroyed is death [end of the Millennium]. ²⁷For "He [the Father] has put all things under His [Jesus'] feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He [the Father] who put all things under Him [Jesus] is excepted. ²⁸Now when all things are made subject to Him [Jesus], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [the Father] who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. 15:24-28)
- B. ***That God may be all in all:*** God makes His habitation on earth *after* Jesus subdues His enemies.

VII. COURAGE FROM BELIEVING IN THE RESURRECTION (1 COR. 15:29-34)

- A. Paul presented more reasons for believing in the resurrection of the saints (15:29-34).
²⁹...if the dead do not rise...³⁰why do we stand in jeopardy [risk of harm] every hour?...³¹I die daily...³²If... I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"³³Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."³⁴Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God [of the Word or gospel]. I speak this to your shame. (1 Cor. 15:29-34)
- B. *Why do we stand in jeopardy?*: Paul faced dangerous persecution seemingly every hour.
- C. *Let us eat and drink*: This Greek maxim to live for pleasure was accepted as proverbial wisdom.
- D. *Evil company corrupts good habits*: Do not be led astray by friends who embrace this philosophy.
- E. *Awake to righteousness*: He urged them to stop sinning—with their friends who needed to know the gospel. Sin hindered them from their call to share with those lacking the knowledge of God.

VIII. THE RESURRECTED BODY (1 COR. 15:35-44)

- A. Paul answered those who concluded that the resurrection of the body is impossible because, when a person dies, their body decomposes and cannot be restored. He used analogies from nature.
³⁵But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"³⁶Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.³⁷And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain [wheat, corn]...³⁸But God gives it a body as He pleases..." (1 Cor. 15:35-38)
- B. *How are the dead raised up?*: Paul points out that there is continuity between the seed that is planted and the plant that grows from it. The basic nature of a seed is expressed in the new plant. There is continuity between our dead body and our resurrected body. The good elements of our humanity such as our personality and personal DNA will be the same in our resurrected body.
- C. There will be varying degrees of glory in the resurrected body of different people (15:40-44).
⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.⁴³It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.⁴⁴It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Cor. 15:40-44)
1. *Corruption, but raised in incorruption*: Vitality and strength replace sickness and decay.
 2. *Dishonor, but raised in glory*: Purity and honor replace failure, shame, and dishonor.
 3. *Weakness, but raised in power*: Safety and prosperity replace injustice and pain.
 4. *Natural body, but raised a spiritual body*: Supernatural capacities replace natural ones.
 5. *Mortality puts on immortality*: Unending life and love replace physical death and loss.

IX. AN ANALOGY OF ADAM AND CHRIST (1 COR. 15:45-49)

- A. Paul compared “the first Adam” with Jesus, “the last Adam.” His point is that the first Adam was designed for life in the natural world while Jesus has the capacities to live in the realm of heaven.
- ⁴⁵“The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam [Jesus] became a life-giving spirit ...⁴⁷The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven...⁴⁹As we have borne the image of [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. (1 Cor. 15:45-49)*
- B. *We shall bear the image of the heavenly Man*: Scripture gives insight into Jesus’ resurrection body (Lk. 24:13-53; Jn. 20-21). The Father “custom designed” Jesus’ body, giving Him the best design. His resurrected body is full of light that is brighter than the sun (Isa. 24:23; Hab. 3:4; Acts 26:134; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 1:16; 21:24; 22:3-5). His robes are radiant with light (Ps. 104:1-2).
- ²¹Will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body... (Phil. 3:21)*
- C. Jesus’ resurrected body has “supernatural flesh” with bones and has the capacity to eat food.
- ³⁹“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have”...⁴¹He said to them, “Have you any food here?”⁴²So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish...⁴³He took it and ate in their presence. (Lk. 24:39-43)*
- D. John 20:19-25 is an account of the same gathering described in Luke 24—John gave more details.
- ¹⁹When the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”²⁰When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side...²⁴Thomas...was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵...He said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”²⁶After eight days His disciples were again inside...Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst...²⁷He said to Thomas, “...reach your hand here, and put it into My side.” (Jn. 20:19-27)*
- E. Our five senses will be enhanced by the supernatural power of the Spirit in our:
1. **Sight**: seeing clearly at a distance or at close range
 2. **Hearing**: at distances and with great perception and perfect balance, etc.
 3. **Taste**: enjoyment of food and water to the fullest degree (1 Cor. 10:31; Rev. 22:1-2)
 4. **Touch**: to have glorified physical senses to discern and feel perfectly
 5. **Smell**: to enjoy and bring to remembrance important moments of our life
- F. We will possess supernatural abilities:
1. **To think**: to learn, grow in understanding, and remember
 2. **In health**: There will be no fatigue or lack of energy, no sickness or death.
 3. **In strength**: expressed in speed, endurance, and strength in lifting objects
 4. **In travel**: for flight and speed
 5. **In the material realm**: passing through walls like Jesus did?
 6. **To communicate**: to speak, sing, and play musical instruments, etc.

X. THE MYSTERY RELATED TO THE RESURRECTION (1 COR. 15:50-53)

- A. Transformation of the physical body is necessary for any to live in the supernatural realm.

⁵⁰...*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

⁵¹*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [die physically], but we shall all be changed*
—⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Cor. 15:50-52)

- B. *The mystery of the rapture:* Paul tells of a mystery—one of God’s plans that He had kept hidden—that not all believers will die physically. Paul had written earlier about the rapture (1 Thes. 4:17).

¹⁶*The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout...And the dead in Christ will rise first.*

¹⁷*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [raptured]...to meet the Lord in the air.*
(1 Thes. 4:16-17)

XI. VICTORY OVER DEATH (1 COR. 15:54-58)

- A. By transforming believers at the resurrection, the Lord shows His victory over death (15:45-58).

⁵⁴*When this corruptible has put on incorruption...then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory”...⁵⁷*Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through... Jesus Christ.* ⁵⁸*Therefore...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:54-58)**

- B. *Always abounding:* Our response to the revelation of the resurrection is to live steadfastly and abound in our work for the kingdom, knowing that our small acts of obedience are not in vain.

XII. INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 5

- A. The chapter division at 5:1 separated Paul’s message on the resurrection in 5:1-10 from its context which began in 4:16. Paul’s apologetic for persecution and martyrdom is addressed in 4:16-5:10. 2 Corinthians was written in context of his persecution. (1:5-9; 4:8-9, 16-17; 11:23-33; 12:7-10).

- B. Paul saw the benefit of persecution and pressure as working to release a greater measure of glory now and in the age to come for those who respond to the Lord in the midst of it (4:16-18).

¹⁶*Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.* ¹⁷*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,* ¹⁸*while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16-18)*

- C. *We look at the things which are not seen:* The things not seen include the New Jerusalem and God’s throne (Rev 4), eternal rewards, millennial Jerusalem having worldwide conditions of Eden with a global reign of peace, love, unity and gladness, the tree of life, river of life, lake of fire, etc.

- D. *We do not look at the things which are seen:* We are not to focus on how hard or dark things are or on how much mistreatment, lack, delay, uncertainty, strife, failure, or obstacles we face.

XIII. THE CONTRAST OF OUR EARTHLY AND RESURRECTED BODIES (2 COR. 5:1-5)

- A. Paul contrasted our present natural bodies with our resurrected bodies (5:1-5). The “for” in 5:1 connects 5:1-10 with 4:16-18, continuing Paul’s view of the persecution that he endures.
¹For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (2 Cor. 5:1-5)
- B. **We know:** Paul expanded on his teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 about the resurrection. Gaining perspective is essential—to *know* or *look at* (4:14, 18; 5:1, 6, 11)—to *be confident* (5:6, 8).
- C. **Earthly house or tent:** Our present body is referred to as a tent because it is our temporary dwelling. Paul spoke of the body “being destroyed”—by martyrdom, sickness, injury, or old age, etc.
- D. **We have a heavenly building:** Our resurrected body is our heavenly or supernatural “habitation.” Paul’s use of the present tense (“we have”) highlights that it is so sure that it is regarded as a reality.
- E. **We groan:** We groan in longing with hope for our resurrected body without sin, pain, or persecution. Paul’s groan was not hopeless, but it was his earnest desire to receive the fullness of all that God promised. Paul felt the pain of separation from what he regarded as his true home.
- F. **Found naked:** Nakedness refers to a disembodied state. The super-spiritual Platonic concept of the Gnostics believed the body was not good and that living as a disembodied spirit was the ultimate.

XIV. CONFIDENCE IN THE RESURRECTION AND THE JUDGMENT SEAT (2 COR. 5:6-11)

- A. Paul sought to help the saints have confidence that even overcomes the fear of being martyred by knowing that we will be with the Lord. To walk by faith is to focus on unseen things that are (4:18).
⁸We are confident, yes, well pleased...to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:8)
- B. Paul’s heart cry in these passages will become a reality in the end-time Church (5:8, Phil. 1:23).
²¹For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain...²³I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. (Phil 1:21-23)
- C. Paul changed his focus from being confident in the resurrection to a warning that we must all appear before the judgment seat (5:9-11). Each of us will be held accountable for our individual actions.
*⁹...we make it our aim, whether present or absent [from the body], to be well pleasing to Him.
¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. ¹¹Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God... (2 Cor. 5:9-11)*