

**Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-18)**

26-Jan-20

G'Day Church family; Happy Australia Day!

There are **Bibles** in front of you - and an **outline** if you want to take **notes**

We'll be going through **1 Corinthians chapter 15** in some detail.

Let me **pray** before we begin...

So, throughout the month of January - we're doing a series on "**SHUN**" words in the Bible - that's words in the Bible that end in "TION" - SHUN

[PowerPoint 1-SHUN]

In **January 2019** - we looked at:

**Revelation, Substitution, Salvation, Redemption**

Now in **January 2020** we'll be looking at a few more **SHUN** words:

**Propitiation, Justification, Adoption (last week), and Resurrection**

So, we'd better define resurrection:

[PowerPoint 2-Defintion]

Restoring a dead person back to life

There's a **movie** that came out in **2017** - called *The Case for Christ*

It's a **true story** of an **investigative journalist** - **Lee Strobel** - whose wife **Leslie** becomes a **Christian**.

This really **rocks Lee's world** and he **sets out** to **disprove Christianity**

Let's have a brief look

[PowerPoint 3-Play video]

So, if **Lee** can **disprove** the **resurrection** of **Jesus** - as one of his work colleagues says - if you **disprove** that - *Christianity will collapse like a house of cards*.

**Lee** could have saved himself a lot of trouble if he'd just read and believed our chapter from 1 Corinthians 15

The Apostle **Paul** does his **own investigation** and his argument goes like this  
**First, I'll prove the resurrection of Jesus is true** - that's in **verses 1 to 11** -  
 then **I'll prove the resurrection of believers is true**.

### Resurrection of Jesus is True (vv1-11)

#### [PowerPoint 4-Heading]

- **Paul reminds the Corinthians of the Gospel** he preached to them
- The **Gospel** = the **Good News** of **Jesus**
- **V2** - This **Gospel** saved them
- **How?**

#### [PowerPoint 4a-Gospel]

- **V3** - Because **Jesus died** so that people who believe in Him - **don't get punished for their sins** - He takes the **punishment** instead
- **Jesus didn't just die for a political cause** - or as an **enemy of the state** - but **He died for our sins**.
- After He **died** - He was **buried** (as predicted by the prophet **Isaiah 53:9**) and He **rose** from the dead (resurrected) on **3<sup>rd</sup>** day after His death and

this was also **according to scriptures** (v4) - what scriptures (Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19 and Hosea 6:2; Jonah 1:17; Psalm 16:10)?

- The **cross of Jesus** is the **payment** for our **sins** to be forgiven
- The **empty tomb** and **His resurrection** are the **receipt** for that payment - showing that the **perfect Son of God** made the **perfect payment** for our sins

**How can Paul be sure this happened?**

Well like any true story in history - there has to be **eye witnesses**

[PowerPoint 4b-witnesses]

And there are **many!**

The resurrected Jesus:

- Appeared to **Cephas** (Peter) in Luke 24:34 - and to the **Apostles** (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:19-25 (v5))
- Then He appeared to more than **500 people** (Matt 28:10; 28:16-17; Acts 1:15 - **most still living** when Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians - so **it can be verified. That's a lot of eye witnesses** - how many witnesses would we want to believe? **500 is a whole school full** (v6))
- Then **Jesus appeared** to **James** and other apostles (v7) and then to **Paul** himself (v8)
- Then **Paul** adds weight to his argument - v9 - that why would someone like him who **persecuted Christians** - say it was true - unless it was. It was the **appearance of Christ to Paul** - that **convinced Paul** about the truth of Jesus

The **testimony** of these **witnesses** is **overwhelming**

Not only did they see Jesus after His death - but **they saw Him** in a manner that **revolutionized their faith** and trust in Him

[PowerPoint 4c-change in disciples]

The **changed character of the apostles** - they went from **scared wimps to brave martyrs** willing to die for Jesus - after seeing Jesus resurrected

So - with that **amount of evidence** - Paul says

The **resurrection of Jesus is true!**

### Resurrection of Believers is True (vv12-34)

Why did Paul so carefully **prove the truth** of the **resurrection of Jesus?**

It **wasn't** because the **Corinthians didn't believe** Jesus rose from the dead. In fact, Paul says **they believed** it at the **end of v11**

The **Corinthians didn't deny Jesus resurrection** - they **denied theirs** and **our resurrection** - they denied that believers are raised

Perhaps the Corinthians were **influenced by Greek Philosophy** which considered resurrection undesirable, thinking that a state of 'pure spirit' would be superior

or they were **influenced by the thinking of religious groups**, like the

**Sadducees**, who thought the idea of the **resurrection** was **wishful thinking**

Therefore, Paul argues, the resurrection of Believers is true in vv12-34

[PowerPoint 5-Heading]

- Paul asks the question v12 - if it is **preached that Jesus' resurrection is true and you believe it** - how come people are saying the **resurrection of the dead is not true?**

- Paul shows how the **resurrection of Jesus** not only proves His own resurrection but it **proves the general principle of resurrection**
- Paul's logic goes like this

[PowerPoint 5a-logic]

- If there's **no principle of resurrection**, then **Jesus did not rise** from the dead
- If **Jesus did not rise** from the dead - then **death had power over Him** and defeated Him
- If death has power over Jesus - **He is not God**
- If Jesus is not God - He's **not perfect** and He **cannot** offer a **complete sacrifice for sins**, and our sins are not completely paid for by God
- If my sins are not completely paid for by God - then **I'm still in my sins**
- Therefore, if **Jesus is not risen** - He is **unable to save** anyone
- And v17 - if Christ is not risen - our **faith is futile** - our faith is as **useful as a chocolate teapot**
- And also, in v18 - if Jesus has not been raised - then **those believers who have already died are lost and gone forever**
- And v19 - if there is **no resurrection** - then the whole **Christian life is a pitiful joke**
- Paul goes on to say in v20 - that **Jesus is the firstfruits of resurrection**

[PowerPoint 5b-firstfruits]

- What Paul is saying is that **Jesus' resurrection anticipates our resurrection**

- **As** in the case when the **Jews offered God the firstfruits** of their harvest they were assured of God's blessing on the whole harvest - so by the **resurrection of Jesus** as the firstfruits of resurrection - the **blessing of our resurrection is assured** - that's Paul's argument
- [The festival of firstfruits in OT - was on the day after Sabbath following Passover (Lev 23:9-14). Significantly **Jesus rose from the dead on the exact day of the Feast of Firstfruits - the day after the Sabbath following Passover**]
- It's like **Jesus** is our **entrance fee** to resurrection
- Paul goes on to say **what Jesus' resurrection achieves**  
[PowerPoint 5c-Adam & Jesus]
- **As death came from one man (Adam) who sinned - v21 - resurrection of the dead comes through one man (Jesus=2<sup>nd</sup> Adam) -**
- So - v22 - even though all die because of Adam - Paul says all in Christ will be made alive through Jesus [John 5:29 - states all people are resurrected - believers to eternal life - and non-believers to eternal damnation]
- And so - V23 - **Jesus** is the **first** to be **raised** from the dead - and then when He returns all those who belong to him (those who believe in Him) will be raised to life too
- And when Jesus does return - in v24 - **then the end will come**
- **Jesus' resurrection sets in motion a chain of events** - which lead to **Jesus reigning until he has put all His enemies under his feet** and the **last enemy** Jesus has to destroy is **death** - v26

- Then Paul throws in **more reasons to believe the resurrection** of the dead is true in verses 29 to 32
- He says in v29 there was a **strange practice of baptizing people on behalf of those who have already died**. It seems like this might have been a **superstitious custom** - Paul's not necessarily approving of this custom
- But his argument is - **what is the point in baptising people on behalf of those who have already died - if there is no life beyond death?**

#### [PowerPoint 5d-Why suffer?]

- **Another reason** to support the resurrection of the dead - v30 - If there is no resurrection **why would Paul place his life in jeopardy** for the Gospel?
- Paul **lived life on the edge for Jesus and the Gospel** - as he says in v31 - **he faced death every day** - why would he face death daily - **for something that's not true?**
- As he says v32 - **did I face wild beasts in Ephesus for nothing?**

#### [PowerPoint 5e-No Judgement]

- And his next argument is compelling. If there is **no resurrection** then there's also **no future judgment** to be concerned about - so he can do what he likes - **eat and drink - and party - for tomorrow he dies**.
- That's the way a lot of people live today - they say - **we only live once - so let's do whatever makes us happy - before we die and it's all over**
- But Paul says **no, no, no!**

- V33 - don't be misled - **bad company corrupts good character**
- Where did the **Corinthians** get their **strange idea** about the resurrection from?
- They got the idea **from hanging around with bad company** - like the **Sadducees** who **don't believe in the resurrection** - and by **associating with pagan, Greek philosophy types** - who **didn't believe in the resurrection** (Acts 17:31-32)
- Paul's saying no - **don't conform to the pattern of the world** (Rom 12:1) - v34 - **come back to your senses** - and **stop sinning like this** - **don't be ignorant about things of God**

So, Paul has **explained** that the **resurrection of Jesus is true**

**And that the resurrection of believers is true**

Finally, he tackles the question - **what resurrection looks like** - in **vv35-v57**

### What Resurrection looks like (vv35-57)

[PowerPoint 6-Heading]

That's the question raised in v35 by some people in Corinth

**How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?**

To explain what the **nature of resurrected body looks like**

[PowerPoint 6a-Seed]

**Paul uses the analogy of a seed in vv35-38**

Paul says our bodies are like "**seeds**" which "**grow**" into resurrection bodies.

When you **bury** the body of a **believer**, you are "**sowing**" a "**seed**" that will **come out of the earth** as a **resurrection body**.

**Charles Spurgeon** puts it this way:

*"If death is like a sowing a seed, let us do away with all faithless, hopeless, graceless sorrow... 'Our family circle has been broken,' say you. Yes, but only broken that it may be re-formed. You have lost a dear friend: yes, but only lost that friend that you may find him again, and find more than you lost. They are not lost; they are sown."*

(pause)

When you **plant a wheat seed**, a **big wheat seed** doesn't come up. Instead, a **stalk of wheat** grows. So, even though our resurrection bodies come from our present bodies, we **should not expect** that they will be the **same bodies** or just "**improved**" bodies. They will be **transformed bodies**.

[PowerPoint 6b-Heavenly body]

**Then Paul uses the analogy of living and heavenly bodies - v39-41**

Paul says all flesh is not the same. There are **different kinds of bodies** (flesh) in **God's creation** - **people, animals, birds, fish**. And there are heavenly bodies. Our **resurrection body will be a heavenly body**, suited for life in heaven, not only for life on this earth.

There are **different bodies or structures in the universe** - **sun, moon and stars** - and **each** is created with its **own glory** and each is **suited** to its **own** particular **environment** and needs. While our **present bodies are adapted** for

the environment of time and **earth**, our **resurrection bodies** will be **adapted** for the **environment** of **eternity** and **heaven**.

It's hard for us to understand what our resurrected bodies will be like so **Paul** uses a **contrast** to help us - in vv42-44 - giving four contrasts between our **present body** and **future resurrection body**.

On all counts, the **resurrected body** wins

[PowerPoint 6c-contrasts]

- Imperishable triumphs over perishable
- Glory triumphs over dishonour
- Power triumphs over weakness
- Spiritual triumphs over physical

Then Paul describes two Adams and their two bodies in vv45-49

[PowerPoint 6d-2 Adams]

First Adam - living being - from dust - we have image of earthly man

Second Adam (Jesus) - live giving-spirit - from Heaven - then we have image of the Heavenly man - when Jesus rose - He **could eat** [Luke 24:39-43) yet not bound by laws of nature - he **vanished out of sight** (Luke 24:31) - **appeared in the midst** of the disciples (Luke 24:36-37)

[PowerPoint 6e-imperishable]

Then Paul describes the need for a resurrected body - in vv50-53

- **Flesh and blood** = our **current bodies** can't inherit kingdom of God - so we need a resurrected body

- He argues our **current perishable bodies can't inherit the imperishable life of Heaven** - our current bodies which are **subject to disease, sickness, injury and one day decay** - are unsuitable for heaven.
- **Paul also reveals a mystery** - something the Corinthians couldn't know by reason or research - but something God has revealed to Paul
- He says **not all Christians will die**, but there will be a **"final generation"** - **still alive when Jesus returns** - this final generation will be transformed into resurrection bodies at the return of Jesus before they ever face death.
- In a single moment, **Jesus will gather His people (those already dead and those alive on Earth)** - He will gather them to Himself - for resurrection.
- This event is known as the **rapture** (1 Thes 4)
- At this rapture the **last trumpet will sound** - v52
- And v53 - and so the **perishable body will put on the imperishable body** - **the mortal body will become immortal**

In light of all of this - **Paul's arguing** - how could the Corinthians let go of such an important truth?

The bottom line is **resurrection is the final defeat of death** - vv54-57

When the resurrection happens - **the sting of death is defeated**

The principle of **resurrection proves that we are not subject to the penalty of the law (which is death for sinners)**, - and instead we are **set free** from

sin. The resurrection defeats this penalty of sin - and removes the sting of death.

All this is possible - only because God sent Jesus - so Paul concludes his argument in v57 by giving thanks to God for Jesus

So, we've seen that the resurrection of Jesus is true

We've seen the resurrection of believers is true

We've seen what resurrection looks like

### Conclusion (and Response) - V58

What should our response be to all this?

[PowerPoint 7-Heading]

I mentioned the movie - **The Case for Christ** - at the beginning

Without spoiling the movie too much - I hope

In his investigation - Lee could not disprove the resurrection of Jesus - so he was left with no option - but to believe it.

Paul gives the Corinthians - and us - no option but to believe it - because it's true

And Paul gives us a **threefold response** in the final verse - v58

[PowerPoint 7a-Stand firm]

1. 1<sup>st</sup> - **To stand firm** - people will try to shake our faith in the resurrection - and make us doubt - but Paul's given us more than enough evidence to show clearly our hope of being resurrected in the future is a **certain hope**. So, stand firm - keep away from bad company - and don't be led away into sin.

[PowerPoint 7b-Let nothing move you]

2. **2<sup>nd</sup> - let nothing move you** - Because we know we will be resurrected to new life, we can endure persecution and danger for Christ's sake (verses 30-32), just as our Lord Jesus did - just as Paul did. Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, thousands of Christian martyrs through history have willingly traded their earthly lives for everlasting life and the promise of resurrection - so let nothing move you from this faith

[PowerPoint 7c-work]

3. **3<sup>rd</sup> - Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord** - because you know that your labor for the Lord is not in vain. Part of that work for the Lord **means to help people** who are **ignorant about God** - **and are lost from God**. Helping people who are lost from God - will never be work that is in vain.

Let's pray...