

Therefore...

Christ is Risen... Therefore

First Corinthians 15:58

Death is the Universal Enemy

15:25 tells us, "The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."

- ◇ Of course, most all of us try to delay death. We look both ways before crossing the street. We take our medications as prescribed.
- ◇ Many people try to ignore death. You've heard the saying, "Whistling past the graveyard." Most of us have met or heard of people who would never attend a funeral.
- ◇ A few people try to redefine death. — "It's a natural part of life." The Bible doesn't consider death "a natural part of life," but rather our mortal enemy! Death is an intruder into the Garden. And not our enemy only, but also the enemy of God himself!

We often feel the concern that all is not right with the world. *Some things* are better. We enjoy more conveniences. Travel is easier. Medical care is better. Our lifespans are longer, yet the death rate is still 100%. Nobody gets out of this world alive. Forgiveness has been secured, but our old enemy death still holds sway over us, still terrorizes us. BUT, God is not yet finished!

Christ's Resurrection is the New Ultimate Reality

His resurrection is the new reality which reconfigures everything! It pushes the re-set button. It is the great "But now" of history.

Verse 20: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."

His resurrection has *secured* for us our resurrection. His own body is the firstfruits, the proto-type of the resurrection body.

Verse 23 "But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming."

Yes, for the moment, we still have hanging around that old enemy, death.

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 57).

The Resurrection Matters

The resurrection of Jesus’ literal, physical body matters. The resurrection is not a mere legend. It isn’t just a fable with a moral. The resurrection is a historical fact. And if it’s not a fact, we are in real trouble!

15:12, Weymouth: “And if Christ has not risen, it follows that what we preach is a delusion, and that your faith also is a delusion.”

15:17: “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

15:18, NLT: “In that case, all who have died believing in Christ have perished!”

15:19 Amplified: “If we who are [abiding] in Christ have hope only in this life and that is all, then we are of all people most miserable and to be pitied.”

He holds up the hypothetical for examination: If Christ wasn’t literally brought back from the dead, then we are deluded, our faith is worthless, we are unforgiven, our Christian loved ones, who have already passed, have perished, and we are a pathetic group of people to be pitied.

In that case, we might as well live like the secular people around us.

15:32 “...If the dead do not rise, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!’”

15:20, Weymouth: “But, in reality, Christ has risen from among the dead, being the first to do so of those who are asleep.”

On this earth we have a natural body, a physical body. But Jesus is going to resurrect our bodies and transform our bodies, and spiritually suit our bodies for Heaven.

And this brings us to verse 58.

“Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord’s work, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

Whenever you see the word *Therefore*, you need to ask yourself...What’s that “Therefore” there for?

It connects the previous thought to the next thought.

It defines a spiritual reality and then applies a human responsibility.

There is the reality of the resurrection and there are responsibilities which accompany the resurrection:

1. Christ's Resurrection Means We Should Stand Resolutely

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable..."

Literally, "Keep on becoming steadfast, unshaken."

Steadfast: Settled in your own mind

Unmovable: Not susceptible to being excited and distracted by some new teaching

Some of you are high school seniors. Next Easter, you will be half-way through your second semester of college. By this time next year, will you have still be standing in the faith resolutely, or will you already be tricked into unbelief by some professor who asks hard questions you cannot answer?

The fact of the resurrection — and the vast evidence for it — is there for you to fall back on. And if the resurrection is true, then what Jesus told us about his Father and the Kingdom of God is true.

2. Christ's Resurrection Means We Should Work Diligently

"...always abounding in the work of the Lord..."

Abounding – Amplified: "...Always being superior, excelling, doing more than enough in the service of the Lord"

There was an old pastor who would work many hours, laboring over his sermons. His was a small church. And one time his wife asked him why he worked so long and hard on sermons so few would hear. He replied, "You may be forgetting Who will be in the audience."

Of course, this faithful pastor was remembering how the Lord would be present in the service.

Jesus is alive. Through the Holy Spirit, He is present with his church.

We shouldn't cut corners on our service to the Lord. But rather, do our best work from the best motives.

3. Christ's Resurrection Means We Can Know Assuredly

“...knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Amplified: “...being continually aware that your labor in the Lord is not futile [it is never wasted or to no purpose].”

When our service is “unto the Lord,” we are serving for the “results” – but for the Lord.

Sometimes, people respond, and sometimes not.

Sometimes, your class may learn and grow, or not.

Sometimes, our service in the community effectively sows the gospel seed in people are “good soil.” But sometimes the seed fall on the hard ground.

We cannot controls the results, only our own faithfulness.

We know this: Jesus is alive. He is coming back... and his reward is with him!

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