

1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 29-34 - Devotional

1 Corinthians 15:12-14

Observations, Questions, and Application:

O: Resurrection is an all or nothing deal. If there is no resurrection from the dead, then that extends to not only saints, but also to Christ. And if Christ has not raised from the dead then there is no hope for any of us. Paul goes so far as to say that if Jesus has not risen, then the whole Christian witness and faith is pointless. The Corinthians just wanted to focus on those parts of God they could easily wrap their head around and were rejecting the rest. Paul tells them that it is all a package deal.

- **Q:** What about me? Are there any aspects of God that I reject because they don't fit into my view of the reality? Am I willing to accept even the seemingly inconvenient truths?
- **Q:** Why was resurrection from the dead such a big deal to Paul? Why do you think it mattered that the Corinthians believed? Why is it important for me to believe Jesus died and rose?

Application: The Bible is a lot like the human body. Some people think there are such things as vestigial organs or needless extra body parts, but there aren't. We can live without certain parts but not as well. In the same way the Bible does not contain needless or extra pieces we can ignore— at least not without suffering some serious spiritual crippling.

1 Corinthians 15:15-17

Observations, Questions, and Application:

O: The result of Christ having not risen from the dead is a breakdown of the truth of the gospel. Indeed, if Christ has not been risen, then the gospel contains no truth. As a matter of fact, we would have to completely reimagine God. Paul says that if Christ did not rise then the God they are preaching about is a fiction and we are still lost in sin.

- **Q:** What are some of the character qualities of God? If God did not raise Christ from the dead what happens to some of those character qualities? Do they still apply?
- **Q: Think it through:** How are Christ's death and my sin connected? Why was it necessary for Him to die? Could there have been another way? Why or why not?

Application: Christ's resurrection is cornerstone to assurance of salvation. If Christ is risen, then God is love, all powerful, merciful, just, etc. and we are forgiven of our sin when our trust is placed in Christ. If I don't actually believe that bodily resurrection is a reality, then I can't be sure of any of the rest of those realities.

1 Corinthians 15:18-19

Observations, Questions, and Application:

O: Not only does a lack of confidence in the resurrection compromise our confidence in God but it also has a dire consequence regarding those saints who have already died. Gone is the hope of being reunited one day with born again loved ones. Gone is the peace from knowing that separation from us means they have gone on to have close fellowship with a loving God. If there is no resurrection, then we truly only have this life, and death is to be feared.

- **Q:** What happens to a believer after they die? Is death something to be feared? What about for a nonbeliever? What separates a Christian from a non-Christian?
- **Q:** Do you have any friends or family that you are looking forward to being reunited with someday? How does a belief in the reality of a resurrection of saints help you face this life without them now? What would it feel like if we rejected the idea of the resurrection of saints?

Application: The thought of life after death and that we will be reunited with those who have already "fallen asleep" grants great peace and hope to a believer. But it is more than just a comforting thought. It is a reality that should spur us to make sure that that future reunion will be as big as possible. Others have no hope. We do, and we should share it.

1 Corinthians 15:29-32

Observations, Questions, and Application:

O: Verse 29 is one that is difficult to interpret. Many Bible scholars have taken a run at it without much confidence in what Paul is asserting. To be clear, however, Paul IS NOT saying that a living believer can be baptized on behalf of a dead nonbeliever and that will somehow redeem them. It is more likely that Paul is asserting that there is no reason to go through the bother and hazard of witnessing and putting ourselves in awkward or risky situations to share the gospel if the gospel has been rendered vain by the lack of bodily resurrection.

- **Q:** Why do I share the gospel with others? What is my driving conviction? Would I bother to share the gospel if I had no confidence in it?
- **Q:** Wait... Do I have confidence in the gospel? Can I be bothered to share it? What does it say about me when I choose to avoid the awkwardness or risk of declaring the gospel to those who desperately need to hear it?

Application: Paul was constantly putting himself in jeopardy in pursuit of the opportunity to spread the gospel. The best outcome, Paul declares in Philippians, is that he would die and go to be with the Lord. I need a little of Paul's attitude in my life. Not that I want to die, but an understanding that the "worst case scenario" is apathy and disobedience to God, not awkwardness or negative feedback.

1 Corinthians 15:33-34

Observations, Questions, and Application:

O: "Do not be deceived!" The Corinthians thought they could entertain worldly philosophy and not be degraded by it. They thought that there was a place for human reason and wisdom alongside the gospel, and that they could somehow compliment each-other. Paul says, "wake up" from the apathy and get back to the process of Sanctification that God wants to be doing in you. There were even folks who were being prevented from coming to a saving knowledge of Christ because of how the gospel had been compromised in the Corinthian Church.

- **Q:** Are there any unwholesome influences that I have allowed to keep speaking into me? Political, cultural, social? How do the messages of podcasts, magazines, online influencers stack up to the gospel? Do I actually believe I can continue to expose myself to that stuff and not be affected? Why or why not?
- **Q:** How does the way I act, interact, or talk with those around me point them to Christ? Is it possible that I am being a stumbling block for somebody else's journey to their Savior? What could I do to change my interactions to help rather than hinder?

Application: We live in a time when the sheer number of opportunities to be influenced and distracted by secular culture is staggering. It can take some serious dedication and introspection to identify and then eliminate those "bad company" elements in our lives. I don't want to be a Christian who is hobbled by the world and rendered ineffective for Christ. Thankfully the process of Sanctification is not one that we have to tackle alone. It begins with surrendering to God's will, and then being obedient as He shines a light on those "bad company" elements I need to eliminate.