

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

December 4th, 2011

Focal Passage: I Corinthians 15 (ESV)

The Declaration of the Gospel

Cross References: Acts 9:1-3, Rom 5:20-6:6, Lev 23:10-20, Rom 5:12-20, I Cor 5:6, Hosea 13:14,

Central Idea: The resurrection of Christ is foundational to Christianity. Without the resurrection, we are wasting our time, energy, and resources.

Lesson Idea: Let us remember the importance of the Gospel of Christ as laid out in I Cor 15:1-8. If any part were removed, it wouldn't be the gospel. Let us remember the death, but let rejoice in the resurrection!

Background: Basically I Corinthians deals with abuses of liberty. The correction Paul gives is not to cause them to question their salvation, but to cause a challenge to them in their sanctification. Although the apostle is dealing with several different issues, the general theme of the epistle could be summed up in this, the practical implications of progressive sanctification in the context of the Christian community.

Chapter 15 brings us to a special problem that was being dealt with in the church in Corinth at this time, and the problem of the identification of the opponents is hard, because they were no doubt a mixed bag, an amorphous entity of several factions. This can be seen in the understanding of Corinth itself, a large city with a constant influx of new ideas. We could draw a parallel between the Church in Corinth and the Church in California in the 60's and 70's, California had such a diverse influx of ideas, fads and whatever you want heresies that to pin down any unified group as *the* opponent of the church would be very difficult. Similarly in Corinth, we can state the different groups that were being dealt with as Jews, (early) Gnostics, libertines, ascetics, anti-resurrectionists, as well as others. It may be slightly overstating to say all of these were opponents, but we see factions that existed that caused problems within the Church (I Cor 1:10-17), and these problems needed to be dealt with.

Bible in a Year Readings

November 27-December 4, 2011

November 27: 1/2 Thessalonians

November 28 Acts 18:19-19:41

November 29: I Corinthians 1-4

November 30: I Corinthians 5-8

December 1: I Corinthians 9-11

December 2: I Corinthians 12-14

December 3: I Corinthians 15-16

December 4: II Corinthians 1-4

Highlights of the Week:

I Thess 1: Paul's encouragement for growth

I Thess 3: Paul sends Timothy

I Thess 4: Directions for growth

II Thess 1: Encouragement in persecution

Acts 18: Paul returns to Antioch

Acts 19: John's disciples receive the Spirit

I Cor 1: Reports of divisions

I Cor 2: Heavenly wisdom

I Cor 3: Ministers as fellow workers with God

I Cor 5: Discipline for fornicators

I Cor 6: Suing other believers

I Cor 7: Principles for married life

I Cor 8: Liberty and the weaker brother

I Cor 11: Principles of public prayer

I Cor 12: Diversity of the Gifts of the Spirit

I Cor 13: The love chapter

- I Cor 14: Using gifts in public worship
- I Cor 15: The fact of Christ's resurrection
- II Cor 2: The appeal to forgive
- II Cor 4: Christ is the theme of ministry

I Corinthians 15:1-11 **The Fact of Christ's Resurrection**

¹Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

DISCUSSION:

- Paul is taking a stand on the Gospel of Christ here in chapter 15, when is a time you have had to take a stand on the gospel of Christ?
- Why did Paul consider this information to be of first importance? When you are communicating the gospel, what do you consider to be of first importance?
- Why does Paul stress Christ's appearances? Does this prove the resurrection? Why or why not?
- How would you counter someone who explains away the resurrection in some naturalistic way (his body was removed from the tomb, he fainted, etc.) or just plan think these Bible verse are fiction?
- Why did Paul stress God's grace in Verses 9-11? (Acts 9:1-3)

I Corinthians 15:12-34 **The Importance of the Resurrection**

¹²Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

²⁹Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? ³⁰Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! ³²What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ³³Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." ³⁴Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

DISCUSSION:

- What false teaching was being spread among the Corinthians (Vs. 12)?
- In this chapter, Paul argues the issue of the resurrection from many angles and presents his arguments several times over. Why?
- Summarize the seven "if-thens" in Vs. 12-19 from first to last, (some are repeated).

- Look at the “if-then” statements in a positive way: IF Christ was raised from the dead, THEN, what are the implications of this?
- Why are we told believers should be most pitied or miserable if Christianity has only earthly value?
- What are “firstfruits” (Vs. 20,23)? Why does Paul make the analogy of Christ with firstfruits? (Lev 23:10-20)
- Compare Vs. 20-28 with Rom 5:12-20. How could we summarize these verses?
- In Vs 32 Is 22:13 is quoted, and Vs. 33 is a quote from the Greek poet Menander. What do these verses imply? (1 Cor 5:6)

I Corinthians 15:35-58

Bodies of the Resurrected

³⁵But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, 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 imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?"

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

DISCUSSION:

- What problems could make it difficult to believe in the resurrection of the body?
- What 3 analogies does Paul use in discussing the nature of resurrection? (Vs 36-41) What do these analogies teach us about our resurrected body? (Vs 42-44, 49)
- Who is “the last Adam” in Vs. 45? (John 3:13, 31, Phil 3:20-21)
- In Vs. 45-49, Paul compares the natural body of Adam to the spiritual body of Christ and to our resurrected bodies. What can we say about this spiritual body? (Matt 28:9, Mk 16:9, 12, Lk 24:15-16, 36-37, 41-43, John 20:26)
- Compare Vs. 55 with Hosea 13:14.

APPLICATION

- Where would you be now except for God’s grace? What will you do this week to not take the grace of God for granted? Rom 5:20-6:6.
- Discuss Vs. 34. How does this apply to your life?