

## THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

### RESTATED

#### 1 Corinthians 15:29b-30

INTRO: Today we are commemorating resurrection Sunday. In one sense, it is the most glorious of all days ever! Without the resurrection, Christianity is foolish. We ought to all go back to the world's way of thinking: Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. And when we die, it is all over. But in every rational human being there lies this innate knowledge that it is not all over when we die.

For the last good number of years we have been going through 1 Corinthians 15 on resurrection Sunday. In 1 Corinthians Paul deals with a number of issues that needed correction in the Corinthian church and one of those matters was regarding the resurrection. In 1:10-6:20 he deals with various church division issues. You see, as soon as there were churches, there were divisions. Then in 7:1-40 he deals with marriage related problems. In 8:1-11:1 he deals with the Christian's rights. In 12:1-14:40, he deals with problems related to spiritual gifts. In 15:1-58 he deals with the resurrection. In 16:1-4, he talks about financial collections in the church and in 16:5-24 we have concluding matters.

So, in the last number of years I have been working my way through 1 Corinthians 15. It is the resurrection chapter of the Bible. And here is how I outline this chapter. From 1-11, we have the importance of the resurrection declared (read). In verses 12-19, we have the denial of the resurrection refuted (read). Trent spoke to you about that last year. In verses 20-34 we have the hope of the resurrection restated and in 35-50 we have the resurrection questioned, and Paul gives answer to those questions.

So, in 15:20-34 we have the hope of the resurrection restated. As I outline this smaller section, in verses 20-28, we have the future with this hope (read). In 29-32, we have the futility of the Christian life without this hope. Then in 33-34, we have the foiling of this hope (read). So, we are in verses 29-32 (read). In the last message we dealt with verse 29a. This morning we are in 29b-32.

Now the message of the resurrection was a central theme to early Christianity. In the book of Acts, the cross is not mentioned at all. Crucifixion is mentioned 3 times, while the resurrection is

mentioned 10 times and Christ's resurrection referring to Him as being raised occurs 16 times for a total of 26 times. The resurrection in the Christian life is of utmost importance. Without the resurrection, the Christian life is vain.

In verses 29-34 Paul makes two great observations. One, if there is no resurrection, baptism is as useless as getting baptized for the dead. Second, if there is no resurrection, suffering for being a Christian is absolutely senseless. Our first point then is, "Why get baptized if there is no resurrection?"

#### I. WHY GET BAPTIZED IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION? 818

Two years ago we considered verse 29a (read). You will likely have forgotten this by now, so let me briefly give my explanation of verse 29 to you again. The NKJV says, "Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all?" Now we have covered the first part of that verse. I shared with you that there are many explanations as to what being baptized for the dead means. But, that living people cannot get baptized for dead people should not be hard to understand. Nowhere is it ever taught, besides this verse, if indeed that is what it teaches here.

But here is my understanding. I have told you that in the original language there is no punctuation. There are not even word divisions. You can listen to the previous message if you want more information. But I believe the punctuation is wrong in the English translation, and probably in most translations. Here is how I believe the original read, "Otherwise, (that is, if there is no resurrection) what will they do who are being baptized?" End of sentence. As I understand it he is saying, "If there is no resurrection, what will they do who are being baptized?" You see, that is the end of the sentence, as I understand it. Then he continues to reason like this: "Baptism is on behalf of the dead if the dead do not rise at all."

If that is correct, it reads like this: "Otherwise, what will they do who are being baptized? Baptism is on behalf of the dead if the dead do not rise at all." That brings us to the first point in this morning's message. Paul then goes on like this, "Why are they then baptized on behalf of the dead?" And here we have Paul's first point on the futility of the Christian life without the hope of the resurrection. Baptism is futile if there is no resurrection because that is what baptism ultimately signifies!

At Corinth a teaching had gone around that there was no resurrection. Out of that Paul now raises two questions. First, if the dead do not rise, and there is no resurrection, then why get baptized? His question is this: "If there is no resurrection, what will they do who are getting baptized?" And here is the second question: "And if there is no resurrection, why then do we stand in jeopardy every hour?" It is those two questions in light of the preceding thought that we will now examine.

So, the question he is asking is this: If there is no resurrection, and you practice baptism at Corinth, then they must be getting baptized on behalf of the dead. And then he gives this logical question: What use is it to get baptized for the dead? Now it is noteworthy that the word 'for' in the phrase 'for the dead' is *huper*. It means *for the sake of* or *on behalf of the dead*. From these words those of the Mormon faith get the teaching that living believers can get baptized for their unsaved friends or relatives who have already died and they had not become Mormons before they died. If you can get baptized on behalf of those who have already died, in that way they can be saved too. We know that is not theologically sound.

Let me take a moment to explain the word 'for the sake of' or 'on behalf of' the dead. I ask you, why do we get baptized? For whom is it? Is it for ourselves? Why then invite people? Some do it for themselves. They think if they get baptized it will do something for them. But baptism is not for ourselves. Or second, do we get baptized for the Lord? Is it for the sake of, or on behalf of the Lord that we get baptized? Why invite people to the baptism then?

I would propose to you that we get baptized, not for ourselves, nor primarily for the Lord, but for the sake, or on behalf of other believers. Baptism is on behalf of the living, not the dead! There is no question we cannot benefit anyone who is dead, once they are dead. It cannot mean that. Nor is that taught anywhere else in Scripture.

Now, let me ask you, how can we benefit the living by being baptized? Well, do we not say that baptism is an outward expression of an inner experience? Outward to whom? Well, for other believers around us. We are declaring to others by baptism that we have died with Christ, we have been

buried with Him; and most important of all, that we have been raised with Him. Now, by declaring that we have been raised with Him, what does that mean? It means I will live differently than I did before. If I do not, you ought to excommunicate me. I am declaring that I am a new creature in Christ and will no longer live in sin!

I want to read Romans 6:1-14 and as I read it, note how many times it indicates that baptism pictures newness of life, a life free from sin (read).

Now notice verse 4, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We were buried with Him into death. Why? That just as Christ was raised from the dead, even so we should be raised with Him and walk in newness of life." When? Now! And I ask: Who sees that? The dead? No, it is the living. Those around us. In the NT, baptism came with believing. The way you showed you believed is by being baptized. How the truth of that profession by baptism was demonstrated, was by life, and that is for the benefit of the living, not the dead. And if a professing believer did not live like one who had died and was raised with Christ, if it was serious enough, he was to be excommunicated.

Now look at verses 5-6, "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." By baptism we show death burial and resurrection. And resurrection means a new walk of life; a Christian walk of life. And whom does this baptism benefit? The dead? No! The living! But now, if the teaching that there is no resurrection was true, whom is baptism for then? Well, Paul reasons, it must be for the dead. And so he raises this most important question: "Why then are they baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" If there is no resurrection, it is useless to get baptized. It is useless for the living, because when they die it's all over. And it is useless for the dead, because they are dead and will never rise. So, if there is no resurrection,

baptism is?? Foolish! Useless! Senseless! Like doing something for the dead!

Then Romans 6:7-10 says, "7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God." What is the purpose of baptism? It is a witness to our faith in Christ. And whom is our faith a witness to? The living! Not the dead!

And so, if the dead do not rise, then baptism is for the benefit of the dead, and just what benefit is that? Absolutely none! And Paul reasons that if there is no resurrection, then baptism is for the benefit of the dead, which is useless, of course. But, baptism, is not *huper*, on behalf of the dead; it is on behalf of the living. If there were no living people to witness one's baptism, and life after that, there would be no sense in baptism. It is a testimony to the living; not to the dead. But if the dead are not raised, then why in all the world, would one be baptized? Why would one live a new life here if there is no resurrection? The philosophers would be correct: Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die."

You see, resurrection with Christ is to newness of life; a changed life. Jesus Christ died, was buried AND was raised. And in baptism, we picture our union with Christ to those who witness this baptism. And the significance to them is that we have died with Christ, we have been buried with Christ, BUT we have been raised to newness of life. And now, we will show by that new life that we have been raised to newness of life in Christ. Our life is to be a new life. If we get baptized and live the old life, we have lied to those who witnessed our baptism. Our baptism is for the benefit of the living, not the dead.

So Paul says in Corinthians, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things have become new." So in our passage, Paul is arguing that there is a resurrection. And he is saying, "It is ridiculous to claim there is no resurrection, and then to be baptized. If one does that, that baptism is for the benefit of the dead, and what benefit is it to them? None,

whatsoever. But if there is a resurrection, now the baptism serves for the living. When they see a changed life, they see that one truly has been saved.

## II. WHY SUFFER IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION?

Paul now begins another absurdity if there is no resurrection. He says in verse 30: "And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?" If there is no resurrection, why on earth would we suffer persecution, or anything else for that matter. If there is no resurrection, it is absolutely useless to live the Christian life. And so, our second point is: Why suffer if there is no resurrection?

Well, if Jesus was not truly resurrected, the 11 apostles were of all men the greatest fools who ever lived. If they did not see Christ alive after He was crucified, but made up the story as some of the Jews claimed, they were very, very foolish. No one is more deserving of hell than they. They have lied to the world, and suffered martyrdom for nothing! But they were not fools. They saw Christ with their own eyes. Even doubting Thomas had his feelings satisfied.

And Paul, brilliant man that he seemed to be, what a fool he actually was if Christ was not resurrected. And you and I, what fools we are if Christ was not raised. But the facts are He was raised and history clearly proves it, and Paul was nobody's fool. He paid a huge price for his faith in the risen Lord. Paul had those among the Corinthians who professed to be better Christians than Paul was, and they slandered his character and even claimed that he was no apostle at all. This happened at Corinth, which is not a surprise. The unsaved Corinthians were so wicked that when somebody was very immoral, the secular world had this saying, 'He played the Corinthian.'

Turn to 2 Corinthians 11. In this second letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes of these very wise Corinthians who claimed that he, Paul was not an Apostle. Look at verse 23. He says, "Are they ministers of Christ? - I speak as a fool - I am more." From time to time Paul does what might be looked at as a little boasting. But it is in fact just the facts. Then he says, "...in labors more abundant..." Did these guys who claimed I was not an apostle labor with their own hands? Not nearly as much as I did. As a matter

of fact, I was, and I quote, "...in stripes above measure." Paul was scourged time after time. He was scourged five times more than Christ. Scourging was so cruel, some people died from it. The flesh on their backs would hang in ribbons. Paul says, "...in stripes above measure..." Now if there is no resurrection, Paul, what a fool you were.

Then he says, "...in prisons more frequently..." I doubt any of those who thought themselves so very spiritual, and who argued Paul was not an apostle had gone to prison at all for what they believed. But Paul had, frequently. Then he says, "...in deaths often..." He was in situations where he was at death's door, and this happened often. What a horrible fool he was if there is no resurrection. One time in my ministry have I stood where I expected a bullet at any second. I could say, "In death, once." In stripes? For me? Never! Not that some wouldn't like to do that.

Earlier we spoke of his stripes. Now he explains. He says, "From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one." This is simply indescribable. Listen! Do you know what he is saying in our text? If there is no resurrection, why would I stand in jeopardy every hour? Why would I take even one whipping? He is saying that he knows how foolish that is.

Then he says, "Three times I was beaten with rods." May I ask you, if you had a choice between a cat-o-nine tails or a hard stick or rod, which would you choose? Then he says, "...once I was stoned". I haven't got any stories like this. But I'll tell you something, if there is no resurrection, I too have been a very foolish man. So have you.

Then he says, "...three times I was shipwrecked..." I ask you, if Jesus was not resurrected, what kind of a fool do we have here? Do you know what it is like to be shipwrecked on the high seas? You don't get shipwrecked in calm water. Then he says, "...a night and a day I have been in the deep..." Only twice have I been in any kind of danger on the high seas, and it was on pleasure trips, not doing missionary work. I wonder, when you hear of Paul, do you feel like a Christian yet?

Then he goes on like this, "...in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the

city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness..." And you know what he is saying in our text? If there is no resurrection, why on earth do you think we would stand in jeopardy every hour?

But that is not all. Then he says, "...besides (that is beside all those things he listed) the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches." I suffered all those things, besides doing my job as a missionary! Ask me, as a pastor, and I say that is enough in itself.

Our first point was, if there is no resurrection, why are people being baptized? If there is no resurrection, they are getting baptized for the dead, and what on earth is the point in that? And now, second, if there is no resurrection, why on earth suffer for the faith?

Paul says in verse 30, "And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?" If there is no resurrection; if it is not true that Christ was raised, then why on earth suffer anything for it? Why stand in jeopardy? The word jeopardy means to stand in peril. To stand in peril means that one is in danger of death at any time.

Now notice 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." When Paul says, "I affirm" it is a word used to substantiate an oath. I would put it like this, "I want to tell you in no uncertain terms, make no mistake about it..." In Greek it is one simple word, *nay*. This is a difficult verse. I think he may be saying, "I want to tell you in no uncertain terms, make no mistake about it, I came to you at tremendous cost, the Lord knows and saw me through it, and I live in such a way that I stand ready to die daily. My life is a perilous life."

Let us go to 2 Corinthians 4 (read 8-18). In life at times Paul was hard pressed on every side. There were times when there seemed to be no way out. And his question in our text is this: "Why suffer all such things if there is no resurrection? He is saying, many times I have been perplexed. I did not know where to turn. Why suffer all such things if there is no resurrection? Many times I



suffered persecution. Why suffer such things if there is no resurrection?"

Then he said he was, "...always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." If Jesus had not been resurrected, the life of Christ could not have been manifested through Paul. Then he says, "For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you."

There is the principle of the kernel of wheat. If it abides alone, it does not bring life. If it dies, it reproduces. And what kept Paul going in all that? He says, "And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believed and therefore I spoke,' we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment 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. For 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."

Now, what Paul is saying in our text is, if there is no resurrection, why live in such perils? It does not take a brilliant man to figure out it is sheer foolishness to suffer all those things if there is no resurrection. You see, our chapter tells us Christ was the first-fruits. Now the first fruits of the harvest always said there is more to come. Christ arose from the dead on the day of first-fruits. That means there are more to be resurrected. And if all of that is not true, we are of all men among the most miserable.

I might put that before us: If there is no resurrection, why would we go through the church troubles we have faced? If the whole Easter story were true, except the

resurrection, would it be worth suffering at all? Why stand in any kind of jeopardy? It is simply not worth it!

So, Paul has said in verse 30, if there is no resurrection, why stand in any kind of jeopardy. Then he says in verse 31, "I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." What he is saying is, "I daily hover on the brink of death."

In verse 32, he goes on like this: "If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me?" Now we have a question before us, is this fight literal or figurative? Was he thrown down to the wild beasts in the arena, while all the people sat in the bleachers and watched? Or is this figurative, that he had very strenuous opposition from people?

It is my personal view that Paul puts a real fight with the beasts in the arena in such a manner as not to appear to be boasting. It is unimaginable, to be thrown to the wild, starved beasts, and to survive. But I think that is what happened. And Paul is saying, "If there is no resurrection, why would anybody let himself into a danger like this?" And as he very well knows, the answer is that only a very foolish man would do that.

And then he goes on like this, "If the dead do not rise, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!'" Instead of faith, instead of religion; if there is no resurrection, turn philosopher. There is no danger in that profession!

CONCL: And so, Paul has asked two very serious questions: If there is no resurrection, why on earth get baptized? Christ died and was buried, but He was not raised. And in baptism, we picture resurrection. Why, baptism is for the dead, it is on behalf of the dead, if the dead don't rise. And try to make sense of the value of that! It is simply ludicrous!

Second, if there is no resurrection, why suffer for what you believe? There is no more brilliance in that than there is in getting baptized. It is for morons. It is for fools. No, it is for the dead! And if they don't rise, it is totally useless!

So, let me read you the account of the resurrection from a harmony of the four Gospels:

*And now, when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they*

might come and anoint him. And in the end of the sabbath, very early in the morning when it was yet dark, as it began to dawn at the rising of the sun, toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre to see the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.

And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre for it was very great. And they entered into the sepulchre, and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. Then Mary Magdalene ran, and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed about that, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments, and they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid: You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, but he is risen; behold, come and see the place where the Lord lay and remember what He said to you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, "The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

But go your way, quickly, and tell his disciples and Peter that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, that He is going before you into Galilee, and there you shall see Him, as he said to you. Lo, I have told you. And they remembered his words, and they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; with fear and great joy; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to anyone; for they were afraid and ran to bring his disciples word, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.

