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Sermon Notes

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The Triumph of our Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Today is not Easter Sunday... yet we are assembled on this, the first day of the week, to celebrate Christ's mighty resurrection victory over the grave! I believe this is right and proper... every single day should be a celebration of Christ's resurrection for Christians around the world

And even the very pattern of corporate worship was changed forever in the New Covenant... we, the children of God, assemble on the FIRST DAY of the week, rather than the seventh day of the week. The Jews of old were commanded to meet on the seventh day every week and LOOK BACK at the mighty power of God in the first creation – the creation of this present heaven and earth by the word of his power. In six days he made heaven and earth and rested on the seventh day. So he commanded the Jews of old to assemble every week on the seventh day to LOOK BACK at that first creation.

But in the New Covenant, we Christians are commanded to assemble together on the FIRST DAY of the week to LOOK AHEAD at the New Creation which God has promised. And Christ's resurrection body is the first physical evidence of that eternal new creation... a new world that is coming, the New Heavens and New Earth, with all of the redeemed in resurrection bodies like that of Jesus Christ.

So the first day of the week is called “the Lord’s day” in honor of his mighty resurrection victory.

It is right for Christians around the world to celebrate this mighty victory today, and indeed every week on Sunday... and indeed every single day.

Today, as we finish our marvelous journey through 1 Corinthians 15, we come to the final nine verses of the chapter... and we come to drink in the marvelous truths in these verses... to pick up all the major themes like rare jewels, to hold them each up to the light of the Spirit’s illumination, and to see the glorious glow of the details like beautiful facets of a diamond... radiating out from this central reality: JESUS CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD!

For us, this is the greatest triumph because it overcomes our greatest foe... death, our personal enemy; death, the great thief which comes to steal and kill and destroy. Death, the enemy we could never defeat. We who live in the city of medicine and rightly celebrate the amazing scientific advances made by brilliant medical researchers. But all they have done as they research amazing cures for specific diseases, and as they come up with ever more remarkable patterns of surgery and genetically-designed therapies, all they have done is to postpone the inevitable. All they have done is divert the stream of death to flow by some other tributary... its powerful, pounding, relentless flow unstoppable by any human ingenuity or strength or governmental authority. Death, the great penalty under which God cast the human race, has stood over ever generation, and indeed every human being with this decree:

Hebrews 9:27 man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment

Genesis 3:19 dust you are and to dust you will return

Death is likened to a mighty tyrant, whose power cannot be broken by any sinful descendant of Adam

Romans 5:17 by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man

And incalculable has been the sorrow brought by this vicious, relentless enemy:

How many parents have had their hearts ripped to pieces by the death of a son or daughter? Martin Luther was one... as his little daughter was dying of an illness, he came frequently by her bedside to be with her. His heart was wrapped up in her life. When it became clear that she would die, he hugged her and, weeping, said to her

“Magdalena, my little girl, would you like to stay with your father here and would you just as gladly go to your Father in heaven?”

She answered “Yes dearest father, as God wills.” Her mother Katie could not stand to watch her die in her father’s arms and turned around while staying in the room.

At her funeral, as her little coffin was lowered into the earth, he said

“My darling, you will rise and shine like the stars and the sun.”

But even consoled by the promises of the gospel, Luther’s heart was breaking. He wrote to a good friend:

My wife and I ... cannot think of her without sobs and groans which tear the heart apart. The memory of her face, her words, her expressions in life and death – everything about our most obedient and loving daughter lingers in our hearts so that even the death of Christ (and what are all deaths compared to his?) is almost powerless to lift our minds above our loss. So would you give thanks to God in our stead? For hasn’t he honored us greatly in glorifying our child?

I believe this is why Jesus wept right before raising his friend Lazarus from the tomb. He knew that death was the final enemy and that only at the end would death finally be defeated... so this

vicious foe would rip the hearts of every one of his people that would ever live.

But here, in 1 Corinthians 15, we can celebrate ahead of time by faith this final victory over death that the resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees.

Let's walk through these themes:

The fact of Christ's resurrection

The link to our resurrection

The nature of our resurrection

The necessity of our resurrection

The timing of our resurrection

The triumph of our resurrection

The application of our resurrection

I. The Fact of Christ's Resurrection

A. Some Corinthians Were Questioning the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:12 how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

B. Foundational to the Gospel of Our Salvation:

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time

C. Must be Accepted BY FAITH

John 20:27-29 Jesus told Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

On what basis? The Scripture's testimony to it!

D. Faith in Christ's Resurrection Essential to Our Salvation from Sin

Romans 10:9-10 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

II. The Link to Our Resurrection

A. What Good Would it be TO US if Christ Rose from the Dead, But We Don't?

B. The Joy of Jesus' Power of Resurrection is THIS:

John 11:25-26 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

C. And in our chapter today, THIS:

1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:23 Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

We celebrate because we believe that Christ's resurrection has guaranteed our own! We believe that Christ has destroyed death FOR US! His victory over the grave is OUR victory over the grave!

III. The Nature of Our Resurrection

A. Paul Addresses Questions We All Have About this Doctrine

1 Corinthians 15:35 But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"

B. The Nature of the Resurrection Body: Continuity and Contrast

1. First: continuity (vs. 36-38)... the body that is SOWN into the ground is RAISED from that ground
2. Second: contrast

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

- a. A series of magnificent contrasts with the present physical body:
 - i) Perishable vs. imperishable
 - ii) Dishonor vs. glory
 - iii) Weakness vs. power
 - iv) Natural vs. spiritual
- b. The present body is SOWN like a seed... in death, in the grave
 - i) It is sown as a perishable seed... it immediately begins to DECAY; as Martha said “a bad stench”
 - ii) It is sown in dishonor... there is a sense of shame connected with the decaying of the corpse
 - iii) It is the very picture of weakness... the physical body is WEAK in that it is subject to illness, and ultimately death
 - iv) The present physical body is a natural body... it is subject to the laws of nature as God restrained it
- c. By contrast, the resurrection body will be IMPERISHABLE, GLORIOUS, POWERFUL, and SPIRITUAL
 - i) IMPERISHABLE... it CANNOT DIE... and no decay at all, no wearing out or loss of attributes over time, no aging, etc.
 - ii) GLORIOUS:

Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

- iii) POWERFUL: able to do anything God wills for the body to do... characterized by POWER... no weakness, no fatigue, no illness; just astonishing energy and ability under God
- iv) SPIRITUAL: a deep mystery... a “spiritual body” having all the attributes of a physical body, but essentially SPIRITUAL... like Jesus’ resurrection body... having attributes of a physical body...

Luke 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

But very different as well:

John 20:26 Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

IV. The Necessity of Our Resurrection

- A. The bodily resurrection MUST take place... we MUST be transformed if we are to be fit for heaven

1 Corinthians 15:50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

- B. It is of the essential nature of both HUMANITY and GOD that this transformation must take place
 1. Human beings were created by God to be BOTH physical and spiritual
 2. For us through sin to lose our physical side and be disembodied spirits forever means God failed in his attempt to redeem humanity fully
 3. So for us to be perfectly redeemed in heaven, we MUST have bodies... but those bodies CANNOT be our present corrupted bodies... we MUST be transformed

If we spent eternity in these corruptible bodies, it would be excruciating torture

4. Paul says our present bodies are PERISHABLE...
CORRUPTIBLE; they are NOT FIT for ETERNITY!!
5. And God Himself cannot dwell in the presence of our corruption...
he MUST have us pure, or he cannot look upon us or live with us
6. Our bodily resurrection is an ABSOLUTE NECESSITY for us to
live ETERNALLY and FULLY HUMAN with a holy God in
heaven as he intended

V. The Timing of Our Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

A. The Mystery: Not Everyone will Die

1. There will be a final generation, alive and walking the earth, when Jesus Christ returns and ends human history in this present age
2. Paul says “we will not all sleep” = we will not all die physically
3. The circumstances of the Second Coming of Christ

Matthew 24:38-41 In the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

4. So, normal life will be going on right up until the moment Christ appears in the skies to end the world

B. BUT we will ALL BE CHANGED

1. "We" = all Christians... all those being fitted for eternity in heaven
2. We will be changed, transformed, made new... as we've been saying

C. "In a Flash, in a Twinkling of an Eye"

1. The change will be **instantaneous**...
2. Good translation of "flash" = "split second"... literally: a period of time so brief it can't be cut in two
3. "In the blink of an eye"...
4. This is **no process**, no training regimen, no exercises needed, no diet change required, no pills to take, no weights to lift, no pain involved at all
5. This is GLORIFICATION... the final stage of salvation... instantaneously made physically perfect, conformed to the perfection of Christ

D. "At the Last Trumpet" = the Second Coming of Christ

1. Paul is speaking of the Second Coming of Christ here... this is the timing of this resurrection from the dead

1 Corinthians 15:52 For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

2. Just as he said earlier in the chapter

1 Corinthians 15:22-24 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come

3. And elsewhere

Matthew 24:30-31 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and

they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

VI. The Triumph of Our Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

A. These Words are FILLED with Triumph!!

1. For all of human history, death has seemingly reigned undefeated and undefeatable by medical science or black arts or meditation or meticulous care
2. Death is “the final enemy”... and a bitter enemy is has been

Death entered history as an enemy, death plunders like an enemy, death is a universal enemy, death is a mocking enemy, death is a sudden enemy... this great, powerful enemy is more than we can handle, and unless we have a Savior, we shall like trampled under death’s boot forever!

B. But in Christ, eternal victory is snatched from the jaws of the monster

1. Death is addressed directly and boldly
2. As at the end of a battle, the vanquished foe is taunted, derided, mocked
3. **“Where now is all your vaunted power, O death? What has become of all your weapons?”**

C. Death is SWALLOWED UP in Victory!

1. Christ didn't just eke out a narrow victory over death... he demolished it! Christ's resurrection SWALLOWED UP death totally! Consumed it! Overwhelmed it!
2. How so? Because death cannot do anything to him ever again! He won an ETERNAL victory over death!
3. And Christ has rescued a multitude greater than anyone can count from every nation on earth... and death will have no power over them either!!
4. So death is taunted here... Paul quotes Isaiah 25 and Hosea 13, but changes them slightly from the Old Testament to focus on the victory aspect... to rejoice over death and celebrate it totally

D. Where Death Got Existence and Power

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

1. We should not imagine that death is merely a BIOLOGICAL issue; like death is part of life; etc.
2. Death entered the world through Adam's sin as a penalty for sin
3. The law came to draw sin out... not to conquer it

Romans 5:20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase.

Romans 7:9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.

4. God's holy law actually PRODUCES SIN, and then JUDGES IT
5. Christ's death on the cross has paid the penalty for our sins and removed the stinger from death entirely

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. Exactly like what Paul says at the end of Romans 7

Romans 7:24-25 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord!

VII. The Application of Our Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

A. What's at Stake: The "Work of the Lord"

1. Paul is zealous for their WORK and their LABOR

^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

2. He uses two words that together refer to everything they were doing for Jesus Christ... it is the "work OF THE LORD" and the "labor IN THE LORD"
3. Any work done for Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit... but especially the use of their spiritual gifts to build up the Body of Christ to full maturity, and ESPECIALLY the courageous proclamation of the gospel
4. Paul wants this tempted, tried, assaulted church to continue doing those same works for the Lord... to not give up through discouragement those very labors that God will use to build the church in Corinth and around the world

B. "Be Steadfast, Immovable, Always Abounding"

1. Defensively: "Let nothing move you..."
 - a. Become... (ginomai... a sense in which this is something they must BECOME, not that they already are... let God work astounding stability in you)
 - b. Steadfast and immovable: two words in the Greek that give a sense of unshakable determination in the face of overwhelming forces that would sweep them from their labors in the Lord

- c. The focus here, clearly, is on the hearts of the Corinthian Christians... their MORALE in the face of all that Satan is doing to stop them from their labors for Christ... demons assault them with temptations... they become discouraged and stop reaching out with the gospel... their resolve swept away before the Satanic flood...
 - d. NO! Become “steadfast and immovable”
2. Offensively: “Always abounding in the work of the Lord”
- a. Let’s turn the image of the flood around... when Satan comes at you like a flood, tempting you to give up, DON’T... be STEADFAST and IMMOVABLE, then join in the church’s rush at his evil Kingdom like a flood ourselves

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

b. Be ALWAYS ABOUNDING

- i) The word “abounding” = to be rich in something, to have it in a super abundance... let not your works and labors for Christ be few... let every single day be lived FULLY to the glory of Christ; do ALL the good works God ordains for you every single day
- ii) “always” = Paul adds this word... don’t let some of your days be rich in good works for Christ and other days be poor; let your life be always abounding in the Lord’s work

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

1. HOW do we KNOW this? What is the source of this knowledge?
2. It is none other than BY FAITH... we trust that the sovereign power of Jesus Christ will establish the works of our hands
3. BUT it goes infinitely deeper than that
4. It is the whole point of this chapter

- a. The application of 57 verses on the resurrection of the body is this:
 - b. **WORK HARD FOR JESUS YOUR WHOLE LIVES!!!**
- 5. Why? Because of the absolute certainty of the bodily resurrection from the dead, we **KNOW** that our labor in the Lord is not in vain
- 6. What does “**IN VAIN**” mean?
 - a. Greek word = “kenos”... nothing, empty, a wasteland
 - b. Like Solomon in writing Ecclesiastes: “Vanity of vanities... everything is vanity”... the feeling someone gets when they build an entire building, pouring countless hours into the construction project, and then the thing is totally destroyed by a fire the day before it is dedicated
 - c. **BUT** this word is **NEGATED** in verse 58... it is **NOT IN VAIN**... it produced a valuable outcome, a bountiful harvest, something worthwhile
 - d. The clear idea here: at the end of all things, when the resurrection of the body occurs, you will look back at your labors for the Lord and you will be deeply, richly satisfied with all of them... not a single thing you did for Jesus will be wasted... not one of those good works will have been **IN VAIN**

D. SO WHAT IS THE LINK???

- 1. Vs. 58 begins with a Greek word “**hoste**” which is translated “**therefore**”
- 2. Paul thinks that a right understanding of the doctrine of the bodily resurrection from the dead logically results in a life of abundant, confident labors for the Lord
- 3. Understanding and trusting that link is the main purpose of my message to you today
- 4. Paul felt that the 57 verses of 1 Corinthians 15 leading up to this exhortation logically resulted in that exhortation... in other words, he believed that a thorough, careful treatment of the doctrine of the

resurrection of the body would PRODUCE the kind of life of self-denying, Christ-exalting, immovable determination to ABOUND in the works of the gospel

E. To Non-Christians: BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!!!

1. The resurrection of Christ is only good news if you BELIEVE IT!
2. God is spreading a banquet feast here and inviting you to sit and eat!
3. He is offering in Christ to forgive all your sins, to free you forever from fear of death
4. He is offering to give you eternal health, power, vigor in a glorious resurrection body
5. TRUST IN HIM AND LIVE!

F. To Christians:

1. Rejoice in your future resurrection!
2. Ponder the details of your resurrection body: you will spend eternity in an imperishable, powerful, glorious, spiritual body
3. Do not fear aging, dying or death!!
4. Be steadfast and immovable in temptation!
5. Be always abounding in the work of the Lord
 - a. Use your spiritual gifts to build up the Body of Christ
 - b. Offer hospitality ... Pray regularly... Do mercy ministry
 - c. BE RICH in good works with an eye to the resurrection!
6. Be active in EVANGELISM and MISSIONS!!! Nothing can stop this resurrection victory!!