

Easter Joy (2)
1 Corinthians 15:22-23

3/31/24

Introduction: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the essential tenant of our faith! There are well over three hundred verses concerned with the subject of Jesus' resurrection in the New Testament. Paul's chapter on the Resurrection in First Corinthians 15 reminds us of this truth. If there be no resurrection of Christ, then faith, preaching, singing, witnessing, worship, service, commitment, and salvation is vain. We are all false witnesses with a faulty faith and a fake relationship with our Lord and Savior.

So, one may ask this Easter Sunday morning, "Is all our faith in heaven simply a handful of religious guesses?" Is there any basis for it in reality and historical fact? To be honest, when we push back the curtain and probe as deeply as we can, we still may not come up with all the answers we desire, it's all still a matter of faith. But "...*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Paul told us in Rom 10:17. And it is through the Word of God we learn that because of the resurrection of Christ, for those who are in Christ, our own resurrection awaits us in glory! This is the message Paul gives us in (1 Cor. 15:22-23).

I. There is a natural fear of death:

I find great comfort and help from this passage of God's Word because there is a natural fear of death...

A. There is a natural fear of death and dying –

1. If you have ever thought of your concern about death and dying was a sign of weakness, let me invite you to come into the garden of Gethsemane.
2. If you ever doubted the sheer humanity of Jesus, you won't doubt it anymore after reading of His agony in the garden.

B. Look at Jesus facing the cross – (Mt. 26:39-42; Mk. 14:35-39)

Was this a sign of weakness? Certainly not, but it was indeed a sign of His humanity.

C. We fear death and dying because of pain, suffering and separation –

1. **Paul calls death –** *Our "last enemy..." (1 Cor 15:26)*
2. **Now we know Paul tells us,** *(2 Cor 5:8)*

D. Some fear death and dying because they are not ready to meet their creator.

1. This kind of anxiety can be good – in the sense it can drive one to the Savior.
2. Jesus is our way to peace with God – (Rom. 5:1)
3. And when we have peace with God – We can have the peace of God (Phil. 4:7)
4. When we get right with God – by repentance and faith, believing upon Christ as our Lord and savior, then we know have nothing to fear from death.

II. There is a great victory over death: (1 Cor 15:20)

- Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead, but He is not the last!
- Because of Christ's victory over death, we can believe that by faith in Him we too will be raised to live with Him and all those who have lived and died in Christ. Just like Jesus, we too will have...

A. A real body – Jesus resurrected new body gives us our best glimpse of what our bodies are going to look like after our resurrection.

1. Scripture records that He appeared to many hundreds of people. (1 Cor. 15:6)
2. They touched Him, ate with Him, talked with Him, and saw His scars from the cross. (Jn. 20:27; Lk. 24:42-43)

B. A transcendent body – resurrected body was not limited like His mortal body had been. (Jn. 20:19; Lk. 24:30-31; Ac. 1:9-11)

C. An imperishable body- Paul tells us three key words that describe what our resurrected bodies will be like: Imperishable (1 Cor. 15:42)

D. A glorious body – (1 Cor. 15:43)

E. A spiritual body – (1 Cor. 15:44) Just think of the hope and joy this is for the ones who are in Christ: *One day we like Jesus are going to receive new, transformed, imperishable, glorious, spiritual bodies*, that will live forever with our Lord and those who are there with us!

III. There is life after death: (vv. 42-44) Death has three faces:

A. From the human point of view – death is seen as destruction.

B. From the Father's perspective – death is merely a departure from this world to be with the Lord. (*Ps 116:15*)

For the believer, they can face death fearlessly (v55), praise God continually (v. 57), and as the wait, they approach service to the Lord consistently (v. 58)

C. From a biblical point of view – death is not the end, but rather the beginning of eternity. It is a departure from this world, however...

1. *Jesus is first, but not the only one* (1 Cor. 15:22-23)
2. There is the resurrection of the church saints at the rapture. (1 Thess. 4:16-17).
3. There will be the resurrection of the tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4) and of the Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19) at the second coming of Christ.
4. There will be the resurrection of the unsaved dead at the conclusion of the millennial age (Rev. 20:5, 11-14).

Death is a departure, however: we are all created to be eternal beings – where you will spend eternity is up to you.

Conclusion: Some day we will all depart this world, and on *Easter*, it gives us great joy to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, because as He was raised – He promises to raise all who are in Christ!

This is our hope and joy: *For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (1 Cor 15:21-23)*

If you enjoy this world, you haven't seen anything yet, for the best journey is going to be journey home to glory!