**The Resurrection Story Changes Everything**

**1 Corinthians 15**

**Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. 2It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place.**

**3I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. 4He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. 5He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. 6After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. 8Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him. 9For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I’m not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God’s church.**

**10But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace. 11**So it makes no difference whether I preach or they preach, for we all preach the same message you have already believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

12But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? 13For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. 14And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. 15And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can’t be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. 16And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. 17And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. 18In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! 19And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

20But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

21So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. 22Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. 23But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

24After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. 25For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. 26And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27For the Scriptures say, “God has put all things under his authority.” (Of course, when it says “all things are under his authority,” that does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.) 28Then, when all things are under his authority, the Son will put himself under God’s authority, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.

29If the dead will not be raised, what point is there in people being baptized for those who are dead? Why do it unless the dead will someday rise again?

30And why should we ourselves risk our lives hour by hour? 31For I swear, dear brothers and sisters, that I face death daily. This is as certain as my pride in what Christ Jesus our Lord has done in you.32And what value was there in fighting wild beasts—those people of Ephesus—if there will be no resurrection from the dead? And if there is no resurrection, “Let’s feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!” 33Don’t be fooled by those who say such things, for “bad company corrupts good character.”34Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don’t know God at all.

The Resurrection Body

35But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” 36What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies first. 37And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting. 38Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different plant grows from each kind of seed. 39Similarly there are different kinds of flesh—one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

40There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the glory of the earthly bodies. 41The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory.

42It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. 43Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. 44They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.

45The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.” But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. 46What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. 47Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. 48Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man. 49Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.

50What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.

51But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! 52It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. 53For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

54Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.
55O death, where is your victory?
    O death, where is your sting?”

56For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. 57But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

A Different Way to do life and death

The difference is like night and day

Like your life depended on it.

Vs 1-11

This begins the greatest sustained discussions of a topic that Paul ever wrote.

Resurrection of Jesus and the future resurrection of those who believe in Jesus.

Illust: showing a photo album to tell the family roots. It’s a long story and it’s a short story and you weave them together.

The Corinthians were forgetting their roots and now the new gospel story had exploded into a new life with the Messiah. – most with his death and resurrection.

If you understand this story of the death and resurrection of Jesus – you understand sexual morality.- you were bought with Gods body Jesus – and he will raise your body to new life. Also in chapter 11 we understand communion in light of a longer story. In chapter 13 we have an incredible poem where love lasts into the new world that God will make.

Resurrection is a rock bottom reality for a Christian – sot some wacky thing he has dreamed up. Do we really believe it.- this is what we ask ourselves at the edge of a gravesite.

Story makes sense. Like taking pics out of the video: Jesus. His shameful death. His resurrection. The people who saw it. And the last guy on the scene like cutting on the video floor….Paul. It all happened and at this time there was no gospel stories written. He didn’t just quote a bunch of OT sayings or prophecies…the story was in search of an ending and this is the ending. Jesus rose from the dead.

Everything is DIFFERENT NOW!!!

This is the ending that gives meaning to the whole story and gives meaning to us now. And itès not just generally life after death…..itès the whole deal being that people already dead would be given new bodies and would return to an embodied life not completely unlike the one they had before.

Heres how we get there and it is different:

1. **The Resurrection Story tells us that GRACE is alive in us**

Different: GRACE

God’s grace at work in and through the most unlikely of people

Believe the Story: it is about an event that really happened and because of grace the world can never be the same

\*\*\*\*\*The myth became true it is a true myth – C.S Lewis

Christianity is just a path to spirituality. It isn’t just a rule for life. It isn’t just a political agenda. It includes and gives life to those things but at the heart it is something DIFFERENT

Those who believe it and live by it will never be the same again.

**16And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. 17And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. 18In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! 19And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.**

1. **The Resurrection Story tells us that there is HOPE**

Vs 12-19

We are living in a state of wonderment – like being chosen on the team – and the world around us tries to make it not that big a deal. Like Jesus is just one leader among many or it is just a good set of commands

This is something completely different.

Death is always linked to sin as humans turn from the life-giving God and uselessly try to find life in other places.

If death has been defeated, then sin has been defeated as well

The resurrection is the foundation of the Christian counterculture. If Jesus is Lord, then Ceasar is not. And there is no other lord – not consumerism, not any power or any person.

If Jesus is not resurrected, than things are really hopeless.

Vs 17-19

This not what we believe. With Jesus’ resurrection, a new world has opened up, in which the all embracing power of sin and death no longer has the final say. The world we know with all its beauty and majesty and all the life that is there are mocked by death and decay and corruption and just beaking down has been given notice that there is a way forward into a life yet greater and more beautiful and more powerful than this one. Take away Jesus’ resurrection and all this is doubtful.

DIFFERENT: Without resurrection – life really is hopeless.

Christians are realists. The whole rest of the world is living in denial or delusion.

Christians are not the hopeful Pollyanna ones who just live in an alternate reality. Or on the other end of the spectrum, they are not just the negative condemning ones who believe that everything all going to hell in a handbasket.

They are the ones who stare death in the face and say “this is not the end” This is not how it has to end because Jesus has come back to life. His body actually came back to life and so will we.

People can forget the implications and then start saying well, it really isn’t that big a deal whether we say that he came back in the body. When you say that you are really taking everything out of Christianity. No great event has happened through which the whole world has been changed. Christianity just takes it’s place alongside a whole lot of others in the shopping mall of world beliefs.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus is where the whole thing either rises or falls.

**21So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. 22Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. 23But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.**

1. **The Resurrection Story tells us that God IS PUTTING BACK IN ORDER what is really messed up**

Vs 20-28

God is putting back to order what has been messed up. It’s really messed up here on earth.

There is an order to the events.

Death is the enemy. When you are faced with losing someone you love…this is so in your face. To say that death is anything other than an enemy is to deny the goodness, beauty and power of God’s good creation. And th point of the resurrection is the defeat of death.

We are living in the in between time and at a final moment in the future death itself will be conquered. Death is the unmaking of God’s creation, resurrection will be it’s remaking. That is the Christian hope.

Vs 29-34

This section is just reminding us of how if this all was not true, this is what it would mean. Like gladiators having their final meal of drinking and eating with diening tomorrow. It would be stupidness to go through the hardships of this life as a Christ follower and taking on the difficulties if this were not true.

**42It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. 43Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. 44They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.**

1. **The Resurrection Story tells us WHAT KIND OF BODIES we will have after this life**

Vs 35- 49

This is a DIFFERENT car:

Imagine standing outside a car showroom, a hundred or more years from now. An advertisement has brought you and many more people to see a new and different type of car. Different from all that went before, the slogan had said.

Looks pretty much the same to me – says one person.

Well, its similar replies another but the engine seems different somehow.

The inventor makes a short speech.

I know it may look like an ordinary car, he says but what makes this one totally different is what it runs on. We’ve developed a new fuel nothing to do with oil and gas. It’s clean its safe and there are limitless supplies. And because of the type of fuel, the engine will never wear out. This car is going to last forever.

This is not reality but we never know what might happen next right?

This is a very dense passage

What will the resurrection body be like?

Vs 44They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.

When we hear the term spiritual bodies – we may begin to think of like a ghost like existence. As if the stuff that we are made of will be different.

This is not the case. The contrast he is making is between a body that is animated by one type of life and a body animated by another type. The difference between them is found in what the bodies run on. The present body is animated by the life which all humans share. The word Paul uses for this often means ‘soul’ he means it in the sense of the ordinary life-force on which we all depend in this present body, the ordinary energy that keeps us breathing and our blood circulating. But the body that we shall be given in the resurrection is to be animated by God’s spirit. This is what Paul says in a simpler passage, Romans 8:10-11. The spirit of Jesus the messiah dwells within you at the moment, and God will give life to your mortal bodies through this spirit who lives inside you.

But when the spirit creates a new body, it wont wear out. Refering to the car illustration, the fuel will not only preserve the engine for ever but the bodywork too. That is what this word tells us.

**42**It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. 43Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength.

Vs 42 and 43 tell us that we break down, get sick, we wear out, we are getting older and ultimately our bodies return to dust. The new body wont do any of these things. We feel some sense of shame and embarrassment because we know we were made for more than this growing older falling apart thing.

Illustration: Grappling with our brokenessFor those with good health – not true for those with We think we are invincible through our teens and twenties and then in our thirties….maybe forties we begin to realize that we are vulnerable to this breaking down sort of thing. When I was about 35 I had a root canal, gross I know, an infection set in, I ignored it, it ate into my bone around a back tooth. At about the same time playing hockey, my elbow pad slipped down my arm and I landed hard on my elbow on the ice, I chipped the bone and cut it open, went had had some stitches. At the same time, in my SI joint which is an ongoing issue, in my lower back, it flared up and I had this numbing down my leg and I was hunched over when I walked. Im just a mess and going…is this how it all breaks down? This is what aging is about?

We joke about the aging process. This is old people humor. Cards that help us go into denial.

We do botox and face lifts and tummy tucks and we are forever pursuing the fountain of youth.

How we long for our bodies to not do what they are doing. There is this low level anxiety that can set in like. Where did all the years go? What do I have to look forward to?

Illustration: Gordon McDonald had lunch with him and his wife. Heard him say as he is in his 70s now He is a former athlete “There is a whole lot of stuff in this aging thing that I do not like at all. There are some things that I see now that I never saw in my younger years and it is so good.” He is not stuck there. He is hopeful. You just are forced to become more realistic with your mortality. How do we hope for new bodies if we don’t look at things as they are.

The underlying theme of the whole chapter is new creation. New Genesis. God will complete the project he began in the beginning, and in the process will reverse and undo the effects of human rebellion, especially death itself, the great enemy that drags God’s beautiful world down into decay.

The ultimate contrast between the present body and the future one is between tow basic types of humanness. God already has the new model in store, waiting to bring it out to show at the proper time. The prototype, the resurrection body of Jesus himself has already been launched.

The overall point of the chapter is that in the resurrection of Jesus himself the power of the creator God was at work to bring about the renewal of the world, and that through the work of the spirit this same creator God will give new, glorious, deathless bodily life to all his people.

**57But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.58So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.**

1. **The Resurrection Story tells us that what we do in the PRESENT – IT MATTERS AND LASTS FOR ETERNITY**

Vs 50-59

The Christian message is that he has already done the new thing in the messiah Jesus and that he will do it for all Jesus’ people through the power of the spirit. And in that new thing death and decay will be gone, swallowed up forever.

It’s not just future hope but also a truth about the present significance of what we are and do.

If it is true that God is going to transform this present world, and renew our whole selves bodies included, then what we do in the present time with our bodies, and with our world, matters.

To those who are doing ministry, away from the public eye, unsung heroes and heroines, getting on faithfully and quietly with their God-given tasks, that what they do in the Lord in this present time will last, will matter for all time. HOW God will take our prayer, our art, our writing, our political action, our music, our honesty, our daily work, our pastoral care, our teaching, our whole selves – how God will take this and weave its varied strands into the glorious tapestry of his new creation, we can at present have no idea. THAT he will do so is part of the resurrection, and maybe one of the most comforting parts of all.