Jesus’ Resurrection and Our Future

Zanesville, OH | December 1, 2019 | John Pollard | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Jn. 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:20-58

**Intro**:

* The Resurrection of Jesus is timeless and seismic in terms of its impact in both the physical realm and the heavenly one. It reaches into the past to fulfill all of the OT and God’s plan from the beginning including giving salvation to all who did not love their lives even when faced with death. It drastically affects the present by changing the lives of all those who believe in its power according to faith by giving them a fresh start because of the establishment of the kingdom on the day of Pentecost. This is all possible because of the resurrection of Jesus.
* No greater chapter is there in the bible that tells us what Jesus’ resurrection does for our future than that of 1 Corinthians. The saints in Corinth struggled with belief in the resurrection. Such a belief had severe repercussions that would affect their present as well as their future not to mention it would be a waste of their past. In the first 19 verses of the chapter, Paul set the record straight about what the resurrection meant for them and for Christianity as a whole. In the remaining verses of the chapter he attaches that significance to the future because the greatest impact of Jesus’ resurrection is with respect to our future!

1. **Jesus’ Resurrection as the “First fruits” (vv. 20-24)**
   1. Paul first establishes that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead. This serves as the foundation for which he will build on throughout the remainder of the chapter. He then proceeds to state that Jesus’ resurrection is the first fruits of all those asleep.
   2. The idea of “first fruits” goes back to the OT idea of harvesting (Lev. 23:9-14). The first fruits were a sign of the full harvest to come. Paul uses this idea as a metaphor to state that Jesus’ resurrection is the sign by which all can expect another resurrection (cf. Jn. 5:28-29).
   3. Christ’s resurrection is the guarantee or the “down payment” of the great harvest that is yet to come (cf. Matt. 13:24-30). Jesus’ resurrection is God’s promise to us that death will not be the end and our faithful efforts will not be a waste of time.
   4. Because Jesus suffered and died but rose from the dead to conquer death itself, we too can be assured that the day will come when we will come out of the graves to a life we have never imagined and an experience far beyond physical and human phenomena.
   5. Adam’s introduction of sin into the world gave rise to the curse of death. We die because of that curse. We fear death because it separates and it puts a wedge between the relationships we value and we enjoy. Jesus’ resurrection, however, reversed that curse. We will not remain dead but we will come to life when Jesus returns. His resurrection has set these future events in motion.
2. **The Resurrection makes this life “worth it” (vv. 29-34)** 
   1. Paul argues that the life of a Christian would be completely worthless and depressing if it were not for the resurrection. The Corinthians seemed to understand that there was a reward to be had and Paul assured them that such a reward could only come because of Jesus’ resurrection.
   2. Their practice of “baptism for the dead” was predicated on the reception of a heavenly reward. Even if such a practice was divinely approved (it wasn’t) they wouldn’t receive the reward if there was no such thing as the resurrection.
   3. Paul put his life on the line every day for the gospel and he was physically exhausted, beaten and worn down by the rods of persecution he faced constantly. If it were not for the sake of a bright future, he would have been considered to be “out of his mind” as some had already accused him of being (cf. Acts 26:24).
   4. Paul stated that due to the fact of Jesus’ rising from the dead, not only was this life worth it but what was ahead was certainly worth any amount of suffering whether it be physical or emotional. He was content to die because it meant he would live again.
3. **The Transformation of the Body (vv. 35-49)**
   1. Jesus’ resurrection which sets in motion our own resurrection to come assures us of a transformation of the body. The body we have now is not the one we will have at the resurrection when Jesus returns.
   2. This body is merely a seed or a kernel of what God will make it to be in the end. Our current bodies are weak, perishable and sown is dishonor. The one we will receive will be imperishable, honorable and strong.
   3. When Jesus rose from the dead, His body was also transformed, albeit, it still demonstrated the nail imprints on His hands and the piercing on His side. He was able to walk through doors (Jn. 20:19, 26).
   4. Although Paul describes the general idea of this bodily transformation, we would do well not to press the description for details that are not there and cannot be known until the day it actually does happen (cf. 1 Jn. 3:2).
   5. Paul’s point is that we know enough to know we will be changed and we need to have faith that it will be far greater than what we have now and far greater that what we imagine it to be.
4. **Death is Conquered and the Victory Won (vv. 25-28, 50-58)**
   1. Jesus’ resurrection is said to defeat one of our greatest enemies: **death.** God will not allow His enemies to go unpunished and undefeated. Death will be the last enemy to be placed under the feet of Christ.
   2. There will no longer be any death when He returns and that which all man has feared the most will be done away with. It is abolished. Because of such an anticipation and understanding, all men ought to live as though death was non-existent. It has no power over us because of Jesus’ resurrection.
   3. Christ’s victory over the grave guarantees us of our victory over the grave. And even if we should not die before He returns, the promise remains true. When the trumpet sounds, we will all be changed.
   4. When that day comes and we are found faithfully waiting for Christ and the mortal puts on immortality then we can all look death in the eye and resound the powerful taunt, *“O Death where is your victory, O Death where is your sting?”*
   5. God and only God secures this level of victory over death. He is able to reverse the curse that affects all mankind and turn it into one of hope and everlasting life. We are raised and changed into the likeness of Jesus Himself.
   6. This is the future that awaits those who walk by faith and not by sight. This is the future that all men can have if they believe in the power of God. This is the future that is promised to those who love God and who are steadfast, immovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord. This is the future that Jesus’ resurrection makes possible.