

## Resurrection Matters (Part 1) – 1 Cor 15:29-34

Let's continue to worship by turning in our Bibles to 1 Cor 15:29-34; (p.961)

Part of our Issues series as we work our way through this book of the Bible

And a passage that at first glance, leaves us scratching our head; Mainly b/c of v29

*Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? [30] Why are we in danger every hour? [31] I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! [32] What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." [33] Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." [34] Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. (Intro)*

This text, is a perfect example of why it's good, really good, to preach through a book of the Bible; Otherwise we'd never even consider this passage  
Wouldn't touch it with a 10 foot pole; And most don't, b/c of the baptism thing

Which is unfortunate, b/c the paragraph in which it lies is one of the more significant passages in all the Bible . . .  
That links our *belief* about the future, to our *lives* in the present  
IOW what we believe about the resurrection, the resurrection of Jesus in the *past* and our resurrection in the *future*, determines to a large degree how we *live* in the present

And Paul's point here is two-fold, which I'm going to cover in two messages  
The first is that we can be *confident* about the resurrection – our resurrection  
And the second, is that it has real *implications* for our lives  
It's not some theoretical, theological mumbo-jumbo; These are real issues, that matter

- But to get what Paul's saying, to catch his drift – you have to follow his flow of thought from the beginning of the *chapter*  
That's where he *first* establishes in v4, the historicity of *Christ's* resurrection; Saying that *he was raised on the third day*

Then, in v12, he addresses those who were saying otherwise  
*Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?* How can you say his followers don't rise as well?

And after addressing that, he comes to the conclusion in v20, that *in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen sleep*; The guarantee  
Saying it explicitly in v22 – *in Christ shall all be made alive*

*Otherwise* [v29], *what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead?*  
That's the flow of thought; And v29 is the first of 4 arguments Paul makes, to refute the claim that there *is* no resurrection of the dead . . .  
And give us *confidence* in resurrection matters; The point being . . .

### Don't be swayed – your resurrection is real (v29-32)

In light of the fact that some in Corinth were saying otherwise, just like some people do today – Paul was saying, don't be swayed

It's not only going to happen for believers, but as we found last month, for unbelievers as well; Unbelievers to a resurrection of judgment, and believers to a R of life  
It's real; Every single person is going to rise from the dead

*Otherwise* [as Paul says in v29], *what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?*  
IOW why would people go to such great lengths, or take such *desperate* measures to ensure a good outcome – if there *is* no resurrection?

Again, it's the first line of reasoning Paul uses, to support his point that indeed, our resurrection is real

#### • People are desperate to ensure it (v29)

So desperate, that some of them were actually being baptized for those who were already dead; Trying to ensure their salvation or sanctification . . .  
And subsequent resurrection to life – apart from their own belief

And Paul's implication is that they were doing so, b/c of their *conviction* about the resurrection; That indeed, we *will* rise again someday; That there *is* life after death  
Something shared by every single person on the face of the earth  
B/c Eccl 3:11 says that God has *put eternity into man's heart*; We're hardwired to know that this isn't all there is

And some people act on it in desperate ways

Like the Mormons who practice this very thing; They baptize the living for the dead  
And point to this verse, among other non-biblical writings, to support it  
Which is interesting, b/c generally speaking the meaning of the biblical text holds very little interest for them; But that's not the issue

- The issue, is that just b/c Paul *mentions* it, doesn't mean it's legit; And this is very important; Paul's not condoning or supporting the practice of baptism for the dead . . .  
He's merely citing it as an example of the lengths to which some people go, to try to ensure a good outcome for those they love  
In which case it's not *prescriptive* – something *we* should do . . .  
But rather, *descriptive* – something others do

Otherwise, he'd be *contradicting* himself; Not to mention Jesus, and the other *Apostles*  
Who clearly say that salvation and our subsequent resurrection to life, come only as a result of personal faith and belief in Jesus, as Savior and Lord

Like he says in Jn 14:6 – *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* Except through faith and belief in me; That's the context  
And **Jn 3:18** says – *Whoever believes in him [in Jesus] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

It's a personal thing; Personal faith and belief in Jesus is prerequisite for salvation\*\*\*\*\*

And Paul himself says in Rom 10:9-10 – *If you confess with your mouth [your mouth] that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart [your heart] that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

And the list goes on and on; I could literally spend the rest of our time citing Scripture after Scripture that says salvation is for those who receive Jesus personally  
Those who believe in his name  
But I'd have to *close* right now if I had to cite a single verse saying that someone *else* could do it *for* us; Or even work *out* our salvation for us – like with a proxy baptism

So Paul's not *condoning* the practice of baptism for the dead, but simply citing it as evidence for the lengths people go, to satisfy their conviction that the dead are raised  
To satisfy their sense of eternity, and placate their fear of a resurrection to *judgment* for their loved ones  
In any case, it's the first reason in this paragraph that you can have confidence in your resurrection – people are desperate to ensure it

Not only that, but . . .

• **People risk their lives to proclaim it (v30)**

That's the second reason Paul cites to confirm that our resurrection is real – People like him risk their lives to proclaim it  
Asking rhetorically in v30 – *Why are we in danger every hour?*  
If the resurrection isn't real, why am I risking my life every single hour of every single day, to proclaim it? It doesn't make sense

It doesn't make sense to incur *labors*, and *imprisonments*, and *countless beatings*, *often near death* as he says in 2 Cor 11 (**2 Cor 11:24-27**)  
*Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. [25] Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; [26] on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; [27] in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.*

• Our resurrection is real, b/c people like Paul, and countless others throughout the centuries, have risked their lives to proclaim it\*\*\*\*\*  
People like Watchman Nee and Hudson Taylor in China; And Richard Wurmbrand in Romania; Brother Andrew in Eastern Europe  
Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Roger Youderian, Ed McCully, and Pete Flemming in Ecuador  
Many of whom not only *risked* their lives, but *lost* them – proclaiming the resurrection to those who had never heard

Or a little closer to home, how about David Brainerd to the Indians in New Jersey?  
Or any number of the Puritans who came before him? They risked their lives  
Or more recently, the countless “ordinary people” who have been martyred for their faith; Like Bonnie Witherall, Josephine Desmond, John and Betty Stam . . .  
Ella Schenck, Stanley Ridgway, or Mildred Kratz  
Ordinary people who risked their lives, and lost their lives, proclaiming the gospel – the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the certainty of ours as a result

And by all means, don't leave out some of our *own* global partners  
Men/women like Paul, who put their lives on the line every single day to some extent

Whether it's the risk of infection due to poor living conditions, or the risk of reprisal from those who oppose them; (Email from Indonesia)

• Don't be swayed – your resurrection is real  
B/c people the world over have risked their lives to proclaim it, and still do  
Which in and of itself doesn't *prove* it – people risk their lives for all kinds of crazy beliefs; But when you combine it with the evidence that does . . .  
That does prove the resurrection, like we saw at the *beginning* of the chapter – it should fix your conviction that much more

And, prepare *you* to do the same if God should call; To add your name to the list  
To risk *your* life in proclaiming the resurrection, just like countless others have, knowing full well that should you lose it, you'll gain it; It's real  
B/c people are desperate to ensure it; People risk their lives to proclaim it; And third . . .

• **People give their lives to declare it (v31-32a)**

Give, as in surrender, give up, sacrifice; Look at v31  
*I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! [32] What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus?*  
Once again, Paul is citing *himself* as an example – this time, of those who give their lives over and over again to declare the resurrection  
They don't necessarily lose their lives, but surrender them; And do so *every single day*

• Something to which every single one of us is called  
You may not be called to *risk* your life, but you are called to *give* your life  
Which could include giving your life to your *kids* as a mom  
Or loving your wife as a husband, in a Christ-exalting way  
Or living an ordinary life in extraordinary ways, by blessings others every chance u get  
Or maybe it's excelling in generosity so that others can excel in declaring the truth  
Or giving your life to full time ministry

You may not be called to *risk* your life, but you are called to *give* your life – every single day; Whether it's quietly and ordinary, or publicly and extraordinary  
God calls different people to different lives and different ministries; But we're all called

Not to the same things, but different ones; Which those who are first growing in their zeal for the Lord, often get wrong at some point along the way  
They think that the thing *they're* doing, is the thing everybody should be doing  
And it creates a crisis in them, until they realize and remember, that we're a body, comprised of different parts, that do different things  
But nobody's called to keep their life; That doesn't declare anything

• And when Paul says – *I protest, brothers, by my pride in you* . . .  
He's objecting to their unbelief in the resurrection – b/c of his love for them, and labor for them, and progress he's seen in them as a result  
The same kind of pride and delight he feels for the Lord, b/c it's ultimately *his* work in them that's made the difference

But that only *adds* to his frustration, b/c he expects *more* of them  
Seeing the investment *he's* made in them, and the work of *God* in them . . .

He expects more of them than casual belief, or obstinate unbelief; Just like I do of you

B/c I've invested myself in you, I expect more of you than the typical person

I expect more of you than the anti-supernatural mindset so common in the world – the one that rejects the resurrection

I expect more of you than the easy-come easy-go attitude so prevalent in the church

I expect more of you than the spectator mentality of the crowds; Or the selfishness of your neighbors

I expect great things of you, b/c of my pride in you, and labor for you, and love for you – just like Paul expected great things of them; And gave his life every day to ensure it

Don't be swayed; Your resurrection is real

B/c Paul, and countless other pastors and missionaries and laborers after him – have given their entire lives to declare it

And continue to do so – out of love for the Lord, love for the truth, and love for you

- Even, if it means enduring significant opposition along the way; Like Paul did in

Ephesus; That's what he means in v32 when he says . . .

*What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus?*

Beasts, most likely referring to ornery people instead of animals, b/c he was *writing* from Ephesus, and says in chapter 16:9 – there were many *adversaries* there

The point being, that Paul had nothing to gain by fighting the good fight, if the battle is of this world only; If our resurrection isn't real

It's not worth the trouble; Or the angst; Or the potshots that people take at you

Nobody in their right mind would subject themselves to that, if this is all there is

But b/c some do, like Paul and others whose minds and hearts have been opened to the gospel – it's yet another indicator that adds weight to the truth

The truth that our resurrection is real; People give their lives to declare it; And last . . .

- **People discipline their lives to preach it (v32b)**

After citing the desperation of some to ensure a favorable resurrection . . .

And the risk and sacrifice of himself and others, to proclaim the resurrection . . .

He then says in v32b – *If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."*

If it's not true, if our resurrection *isn't* real – we may as well live it up while we can

B/c there's certainly no gain in giving our lives, or risking our lives, or enduring opposition if it's false

We may as well indulge in all the sex, drugs, porn, drunkenness, hedonism, and gluttony we can get our hands on; Why hold back? YOLO – you only live once

That little mantra of the young and dumb, when they want to rationalize something wrong or harmful; And if this is all there is, there's no reason not to

- But since those who have been gripped by the greatness/glory of God *don't* do that . . . Since those who are *convinced* of the resurrection *discipline* themselves to preach it with their words *and* their lives . . .

Since they're so utterly compelled, they can do nothing else . . .

It's yet another factor that confirms the truth of our resurrection

I think that's what Paul's getting at when he cites the absurd by saying – *If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."*

He's obviously not advocating that; Especially in light of what follows, where he says stop sinning

Rather, I think he's drawing attention to the unthinkable at one extreme, hedonism . . .

In order to highlight and advocate the preferable, at the other – dedication, discipline

Or to say it another way – b/c people like himself, discipline themselves to do just the opposite of indulging themselves . . .

It's one more reason to rest firmly in the resurrection they preach

- The question is – *do* you? Do you rest firmly in your resurrection, un-swayed by the doubts of others and the fears of your own?

I trust you do; There's certainly good reason for it

And do you *discipline* yourself to "preach" it? Constantly filling up on God's Word, so that you can *overflow* with it?

So you can be a winsome witness to others who *don't* know or don't *believe*?

What about *giving* your life to declare it? Whether it's in the mundane, extraordinary, or otherwise – how's that going? Are you being intentional?

And are you so desperate to see others embrace the same truth you have, that you're willing to *risk* your life if God's calls? To add your name to the list? **(Summary)**

I hope so; B/c *their* resurrection, just like yours – is real, and matters

Pray – God, help us to discipline our lives to abstain from sin, and pursue righteousness – in order to preach the truth, words or not

And remind us God, to give our lives like Paul – to die every single day for your sake and the sake of others

And prepare us to risk our lives should you call – desperate to see others know the power of your resurrection, just like we do

We give now, out of obedience and desire – wanting to see your kingdom come, and your will be done, more and more