

1 Corinthian Series #40
“How Do The Dead Rise?” - 1 Cor. 15:35-58

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Power of Hope

1. In 1965, James Stockdale was one of first pilots to be shot down over Vietnam
2. 7 years as a POW
 - a. tortured in attempt to break him
 - b. try to get him to denounce American involvement
 - c. chained with hands above his head for days at a time , so that he could not even swat the mosquitos
 - d. years after his release he bore the marks and pains of the torture
 - broken bones
 - horrible beatings
 - e. one of the worst things they did was to keep him in isolation from his fellow POW's for months at a time
3. 7 years! How could anyone endure it
4. Stockdale said the one and only thing that enabled him to endure was hope
 - a. he had a fierce hope of one day going home
 - b. he hoped each day would see his release
5. He had seen others who had given up hope
 - a. they quickly died
 - b. he never gave up hope
 - c. and as a result, he made it through 7 years of hell

B. Our Hope

1. The Christian has a hope that others do not
2. The Christian's hope is real and enduring
3. The person who does not know Christ may hope in this or that, but ultimately, their hope will fail
 - a. they may hope in better economic times
 - b. they may hope for the next election
 - c. they may hope in the kindness of strangers
 - d. they may hope in the lottery
 - e. they may even hope in fate
 - f. whatever it is, if hope is not in Christ, it is doomed to disappoint
4. The Christian's hope is real and lasting because it is

founded, not on well-wishing or grand dreams; It is founded on fact

7. Jesus rose from the dead!
8. And because He rose, all who believe in Him shall rise too!

C. Today

1. For the last two weeks we have been looking at Paul's words in 1 Cor. 15
2. There were some in Corinth who were denying the reality of the resurrection
3. Paul affirmed the truth of the resurrection and showed how the whole Christian faith either stands or falls with it
4. In our text today, he turns to speak about the nature of our resurrection

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 35-49

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"

36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

1. Paul had heard the scoffing questions of the skeptics of Christianity before
2. On Mars Hill In Athens he had preached to the philosophers there about Christ
 - a. they had stayed with him till he mentioned the resurrection
 - b. then they had turned away in mocking
 - c. the miracel of the resurrection was just too much for them
3. Paul knew there were those critics of the faith in Corinth who would mock the resurrection and ask this question
 - a. not out of a sincere desire to really understand
 - b. but to pose a question that thought sure would shut Paul up
4. **"How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"**
5. Paul very tactfully responds, **"Foolish one."**
6. The rest of the chapter is Paul's answer to their question
 - a. though he doesn't give the explanation of how the resurrection occurs

- b. he does reveal the essential reality of the resurrection

7. He begins by using a simple illustration from farming.

37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain; perhaps wheat or some other grain.

38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

- 8. Jesus had used this same illustration in John 12:24
“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”
- 9. Each seed has it’s own shape.
 - a. sunflower seeds come in a hard shell; small, shaped like a tear
 - b. avocado seed large, surrounded by a soft fruit
- 10. By looking at a sunflower seed, could never tell that it possesses the potential to produce the plant it does
- 11. Or an avocado seed, such an immense tree
- 12. What must happen if a seed is to grow, it must first drop from the source of its life
 - a. when it does, it dies
 - b. but once dead and buried, something miraculous happens
 - c. it bursts forth into new life
 - d. and what comes forth is the seed in a new form
 - e. it is a different form but it is still the same seed

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

- 13. Little Karesse loves animals
 - a. she will point at a picture of a dog and make barking sounds
 - b. or a cat and make what we can only guess are meows
 - c. horses, cows, she seems to love animals and can distinguish between different kinds
- 14. Paul’s point is that in God’s order of creation, each creature is fitted with that body, that form which will serve it best in it’s proper domain.
- 15. For life on this earth, our present bodies are best

16. But to live in the realm of heaven, we will need new bodies
17. In v. 40, Paul repeats this idea and develops it even more
...

40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

42a So also is the resurrection of the dead.

17. When you look up into the night sky, at first glance all the stars look the same
 - a. but the longer you look the easier it is to see subtle differences between them.
 - b. some larger, brighter
 - c. some twinkle more
 - d. some even seem to cast a different color, red, yellos, blue
18. Paul is saying that in all of creation, everything is unique
19. The resurrection will not annihilate the uniqueness of creation
 - a. our resurrection will not see us all merged into some kind of cosmic consciousness
 - b. One famous pantheist of the last century was once asked if he feared death
 - he said that he didn;t really care one way or the other
 - he said that when he died he would just re-emerge with the universal mind
 - like a drop falling into the ocean
 - c. the bible knows of no such metaphysical nonsense
 - d. in the resurrection, we will still be unique individuals
20. The idea of resurrection was completely undesirable to the Greeks of Corinth
 - a. they thought of resurrection in terms of resuscitation
 - b. that this body would be patched up and re-animated
 - c. since they hated the flesh, the thought of being eternally linked to it was a ghastly thought

21. We can say a hardy “amen” with the Greeks if resurrection means a re-animation of this body
22. But Paul says resurrection is not re-animation.
 - a. it is transformation
 - b. like the metamorphosis a caterpillar goes through in becoming a butterfly
 - c. the caterpillar’s body is fine for the life it lives
 - crawling around on its belly
 - through the muck and mire of this world
 - munching on soggy leaves
 - d. but when it is time to fly, it goes through a change in form
 - it enters a coffin,
 - dies to its old way of living and emerges in a different form
 - one fit to sail through the skies as it feasts on the sweet nectar of the flowers
23. So it will be for us
 - a. now we live in these bodies, these forms
 - b. but one day, we too will enter a coffin
 - c. the body will rest
 - d. and when Jesus Christ comes again, that body will be changed, transformed
 - e. become something new, yet retaining its unique identity

42b The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

24. Paul is simply continuing his answer to the question of how the dead are raised.

25. Through Adam came death, decay and disintegration
26. Through Christ comes life, liberty, and love

B. Vs. 50-57

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

1. Many people think all they have to do to get in to heaven is be a good person
2. But Paul says that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven
3. It's like this;
 - a. you get an invitation to a party
 - b. and on the invitation it says that formal attire is required
 - c. but you never take the time to rent a tux or buy a formal dress
 - d. the day of the party comes and you show up at the door but the doorman won't admit you because you aren't dressed properly
 - e. you argue and debate with him
 - f. but he always responds with the same words
 - g. It was on the invitation, "Formal attire required."
4. Life in heaven requires a different attire than the one we wear in this world
5. And the only way to get a change of clothes is to believe in Jesus Christ

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

6. HOW God will transform our physical, mortal, corruptible bodies into spiritual, immortal, incorruptible bodies is a mystery
7. But just because it is a mystery to us does not make it hard for God
8. One day, Jesus Christ will come again,

- a. then, as it says in 1 Thess. 4, the dead who have died in faith will rise from the dead
- b. that is, their bodies shall be resurrected
- c. and we who are alive at that point will be suddenly changed without ever having to die
- d. and all of us shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the heavens

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

- 9. We cannot read these words today without wanting to shout them out
- 10. Man's last enemy, man's unconquerable foe, has been defeated
- 11. Death itself will die
- 12. The grave is not the inevitable end of every life
- 13. It is but a door into a wider existence
- 14. Took a literature class in college
 - a. love to read some of today's bestsellers
 - b. but especially the classics of English literature
 - c. one of the things you see as a recurring theme throughout literature is the preoccupation authors have with death
 - d. the shadow of death seems to be cast across every page
 - e. there is a strong sense of futility that marks the writing of so many great authors
- 15. But for the Christian, death has lost its power, the sting of death has been excised by the resurrection of Christ and the certainty of our resurrection
- 16. So certain is the resurrection of the Christian that the NT calls death a sleep.

56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 17. When a boy, terrible allergy to bee stings

- a. but loved to go barefoot in summer
 - b. our yard covered with clover, bees loved it
 - c. one summer, several stings on my foot
 - d. one from a bumble bee, between my toes
 - e. whole foot swole up and couldn;'t walk on it at all
 - f. when it first happened, ran in to my mom
 - she got out a magnifying glass and tweezers
 - after a lot of work, got the stinger out
 - g. I could not have started getting better until that stinger was removed

 - h. I'll never forget that as I was crying from the pain of the sting, my mom told me that the bee which had stung me died after it stung me
 - I guess she thought it would make me feel better
 - it didn't
 - I figured the little bugger deserved to die
 - i. a bee can only sting once, and then it dies
18. Death is the result of sin; and sin is so powerful because of the law
 19. Every one of us has trodden down the law of God and as a result we have been stung with death
 20. The only way to recover is to remove the stinger
 21. That is what Jesus did at the cross
 - a. he took the sting of sin and death in His own body
 - b. and by doing so we put sin and death to death

III. CONCLUSION

A. V. 58

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1. Paul cannot conclude such a powerful truth without calling for their response to it
2. Truth is not meant merely for the filling our our heads
3. It is for the filling of our lives, our actions, our choices.

4. Because we have the promise of the resurrection, nothing can shake us
 - a. not even a 6.6 earthquake

- b. nay, not even a 7.8 or and 8.5
- 5. For what is this life but the opportunity to live for the glory of God?
 - a. it may be 90 years, it may be 20.
 - b. the question is not how long we live but how well we live for Him.
- 6. Anyway you look at it, this life is short, and then we go home.
- 7. Therefore, be strong and secure in the hope of the resurrection
 - a. don't let anything knock you off your hope
 - b. instead, abound in the work of the Lord
 - c. knowing that what you do is not vain
 - d. for He is coming again with your reward!
- 8. Because the grave is empty, our faith isn't

B. What Are YOU Living For?

- 1. This message today for Christians
- 2. We have a hope
- 3. What is your hope in?
- 4. What are you living for?
 - a. more money, friends, things
 - b. better car, job, house
- 5. Death will take it all from you, then what will all your living have accomplished for you?
- 6. Nothing.
- 7. Life without Christ is vain
- 8. Life with Christ is real life!