The Resurrection, Christ Reigns in This Life and the Next

1 Corinthians 15:12-34

12 But 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? 13 For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. 15 And 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. 16 And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 NLT

Christ’s resurrection is the support for our belief in the resurrection. There are at least ten logical reasons to believe in the resurrection…

1. Prophesied in the Old Testament
2. Jesus Himself prophesied it
3. The Number of Witnesses
4. The Honesty of the Accounts

 Crucifixion would have been shameful and embarrassing

Women had a key role as witnesses

1. The Historical Details
2. The Failure of a Decent Alternative Explanation for the empty tomb (Some say the body was stolen)
3. What the Arguments (of those who don’t believe) Admit

 Jesus really did die on the cross and was buried.

The Jewish/Roman authorities had power and control over the tomb.

On the third day that tomb was empty.

The authorities never produced the body even in the face of a rapidly growing Christianity that threatened their influence and power: Acts 6:7

1. The Changed Lives of the Disciples and Saul of Tarsus (the apostle Paul)
2. The Events on Pentecost and the Establishment (and current existence) of the Church

 The day of worship changed

 Jewish Christians stopped offering sacrifices

1. The Newness of life that we have received at our conversion.

And it is this newness of life that the Apostle Paul is trying to emphasize in this passage. Upon belief we are made new spiritually and the primary role of our physical bodies has changed. Before we believe it is a normal thing to live to please ourselves and we tend to make our whole life aimed at that very thing. But the new creature that we become at conversion will never be satisfied with that kind of life.

This is what Paul is writing about in 2 Corinthians 5 when he said:

“4 While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it’s not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. 5 God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit.

6 So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. 7 For we live by believing and not by seeing. 8 Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. 10 For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

11 Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. 12 Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. 13 If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. 14 Either way, Christ’s love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. 15 He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.”

2 Corinthians 5:4-15 NLT

This new life we have been given is a life that is to be lived for Christ and for others. Which is why, from a self-centered worldview Paul’s next statement in 1 Corinthians 15 rings true when he writes:

17 And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. 18 In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! 19 And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

1 Corinthians 15:17-19 NLT

If our hopes and dreams are focused on our earthly achievements and our worldly comforts then Christians really are to be pitied. A person who lives life for God and for others is not focused on their own agenda they are to be focused on God’s purposes.

This is what Jesus meant whey He said…

24 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.”

Matthew 6:24 NLT

The normal things that worldly people have their sights set on are not the same things that Christians have their sights set on. Servants and slaves serve and Lords Lord.

Slaves and servants live for their masters. And this is exactly how the Bible describes us as believers.

“…As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. 7 Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 8 Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.”

Ephesians 6:6b-8 NLT

“22 Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

23 Again I say, don’t get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. 24 A **servant** of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people.”

2 Timothy 2:22-24 NLT

As Jesus also said…

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?”

Matthew 16:24-26 NLT

As Christians we know that this life is not about us. It’s about Christ our Redeemer.

As Paul wrote:

“19 Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT

The cool thing is that, as Christians, we recognize this and accept it and often times embrace it and rest in it. When we live as God’s servants, though the world pities us, it is when we feel the most free.

As one website states:

Being a bondservant of Christ is not drudgery. His “burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). Also, we have this promise: “Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life” (Romans 6:22).

The result of living with Christ as our Lord is the richest life we can possibly have. It is what we were made for. Our sinful side doesn’t want it but our spiritual bodies crave it and thrive on it.

This is why Paul goes on to tell the Corinthians:

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

21 So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. 22 Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. 23 But 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.

24 After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. 25 For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his feet. 26 And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For 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.) 28 Then, 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.

29 If 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?

30 And why should we ourselves risk our lives hour by hour? 31 For 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. 32 And 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!” 33 Don’t be fooled by those who say such things, for “bad company corrupts good character.” 34 Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don’t know God at all.

Paul is not sharing these truths to help the Christians sit back and wait for Christ’s return. He is sharing the truth of the resurrection to help the 1st century Christians, and us, to embrace the fullness of living under Christ’s authority as a King who is alive and well and ruling their lives in the present as well as in the future.

I will leave you with one application question today. It is a big question and your joy in this life and the next depends on it.

Are you living your life as a servant of Christ or a servant of self?