

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-14 • TV081A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH, 1978

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Transcribed, edited and published
MAY 11TH, 2017

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1 Cor. 15:12-14

“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”

I want you to open your Bible with me to the **Book of 1 Corinthians, chapter 15**. I’m going to be reading for you **verses 12 through 14**.

My message today is on the subject: **“THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.”**

Now, this ought to be interesting to you and it ought to be important to you and I want you to listen carefully to the entire message: **“THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.”**

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 15** beginning with **verse 12**: *“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”*

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Now the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ preached a total and full and complete salvation. They began with the sin of men, *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* That was their message, *“All ye like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.”*

And John wrote, *“If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves. If we say we have not sinned we make God a liar and His Word is not in us.”*

And then Paul wrote in **Romans Chapter 3**, *“There’s none good, no not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. We have all together become unprofitable.”*

Men have sinned and are guilty before God. Again Paul wrote in **Romans 3:19**, *“What things ever the law saith it saith to them who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty, guilty before God.”* So the disciples began with the sins of men.

And then they preached the power and sovereignty of God. They preached what we are by nature. They preached who God is. They preached a God who is sovereign in creation, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* And John wrote, *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made.”*

God is sovereign in creation. He made all things according to His will, according to His wisdom, and for His glory. They preached that God is sovereign in providence, and that, *“All things work together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to His purpose.”*

And Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1**; *“That God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”* God is almighty. God is sovereign. He’s sovereign in creation. He’s sovereign in providence and God is sovereign in salvation.

In **Romans 8:29** the apostle Paul said, *“For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. In whom he predestinated he justified. In whom he justified he called and whom he called He glorified.”*

“What shall we say to these things? If God be for us; (if God be for us in elective grace, if God be for us in redemptive mercy, if God be for us in a substitutionary sacrifice); who can be against us?”

The disciples preached who man is, what man is, what happened in the garden, the results of the fall, and the disciples preached God’s power and God’s sovereignty in all things, in creation, in providence, and salvation. Let God be God and man be man.

Then the disciples preached the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s summed up in these words by the apostle Paul: *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.”*

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The Word was with God and was God and by whom all things were made and He became flesh. And John said, *“We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

Who is this man Jesus Christ? He’s none other than God almighty. Who is this man Jesus Christ? He’s none other than the Son of God. Why, God the Father said, *“This is my beloved Son in whom I’m well pleased.”*

And the disciples preached the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Paul in **1 Thessalonians chapter 1:4** said, *“Knowing brethren, beloved, your election of God. For our Gospel came not to you in word only but it came to you in power in the Holy Ghost and with much assurance.”*

The Holy Spirit makes the Word of God effectual in convicting men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. It is the Holy Spirit who takes the things of God and shows them unto us. It is the Holy Spirit who not only convinces us of sin but reveals Christ to our heart.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 2**; *“Eye hath not seen; (that is the natural eye of man). Ear hath not heard, (that is the ear of natural man). Neither hath the heart of man understood (or looked into or barely grasped) the things that God prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”*

And I’m fully aware of this; if my voice is the only voice you hear, whether I am reading the Word of God or whether I am giving the arguments of Scripture or whether I’m illustrating as our Lord illustrated with parables and stories.

Or whether I’m preaching to you truth, as true as it can be; it will not be effectual, it will not bring forth eternal results unless the Holy Spirit gives you eyes to see the glory of Christ, the power of Christ, the wisdom of Christ, and the person and work of Christ.

Unless the Holy Spirit gives you ears to hear, not just the voice of a man but the voice of God who speaks through that man and the voice of God who speaks through His Word, unless the Holy Spirit gives you a heart to understand.

The Gospel is called throughout the Word of God a mystery: *“Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of the angels, preached to the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up to glory.”* This is a mystery and God hath revealed them, (these truths of His Gospel) by His Holy Spirit.

The disciples preached a full message, a complete message, man’s need and God’s power, Christ’s sacrificial work, substitutionary sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying power.

And they preached the perseverance of the saved and the perseverance of the saints. I know it goes by different names, the security of the believer or the security of the saved, or the preservation of the redeemed but it all means the same thing.

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God said, *“I will not depart from them and they will not depart from me.”* And our Lord Jesus said, *“My sheep hear my voice and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. And neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands. My Father which gave them me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hands.”*

And then in **Philippians chapter 1:6** Paul said: *“I am confident (I am as sure and confident as I can be) that He that hath begun a good work in you, shall perform it, (shall complete it) until the day of Jesus Christ, (until the day of the revelation of the Son of God, in His triumphant glory).”*

God’s going to complete this work. God’s going to finish this work if He started it. Now if salvation is something you’ve done for yourself or something you’ve done for God, or something the church has done for you, or something that a group of people have given to you; then it shall not be completed.

But if it’s something that God has done, if it’s something that God has accomplished; this is a work that God has begun. And He is called: *“The author and finisher of our faith.”* He that has done a work in you and a good work for you, shall perform it and perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.

So, you see the apostle’s message was not unbalanced. They didn’t ring just one note; they preached a balanced message; they preached man’s need and God’s power and Christ’s sufficiency and the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying power and work, and the perseverance of the saints.

And then their message didn’t stop there. Paul said, *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”* If this is all we’ve got to tell you, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, *“We are of all men most miserable”* because we are not much now are we? We are not much at all; there’s much that needs to be done for us.

And we know this that Christ not only redeemed our souls but He redeemed our bodies. That’s right; the Lord Jesus Christ as He raised us by His power from a spiritual grave; He will one day raise us from a natural grave.

As He raised us from the grave of darkness of sin; He shall raise us from the grave of death and corruption. Paul said: *“He’s able to perform all that He promised.”* If you can find a promise in God’s Word you can be sure it will be performed; wherever He promises *“He’s able to perform.”*

And He’s not only able to perform all that He promised *“but He’s able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him.”* He’s an able Saviour, a sufficient Saviour. He’s able to save the man who’s gone to the uttermost extent of sin, to the uttermost extent of blaspheme, to the uttermost extent of depravity, and depression, and despair.

Yes, He is able to save to the uttermost; He is able to save from satanic power; Christ is able. His blood can make the vilest clean. He said, *“Though your sins be as scarlet; I’ll make them as*

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white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, (ever dyed) I'll make them like wool." He is able!

And not only that; but "*He's able to keep us from falling.*" I hear so many say: "Well I'd like to be a Christian but I just don't believe I can hold out." Well let me promise you, you can't! Christianity is not you holding on to God. Christianity is God holding you, "*Unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless.*"

That's right; we do hold to Him. We do look to Him. We do believe in Him but He holds to us. We love Him because He loved us; we seek Him because He sought us. We look to Him because He looked to us as an object of His mercy.

No, it doesn't depend on me. If it did for five seconds; I would spend four of them in hell and so would you. He keeps me. He's able to keep me. And not only that, Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:20**, "*He is able to change our vile bodies.*"

I've heard people say, "Christ died on the cross, now it's up to you." You've presented me with a hopeless task. You've presented me with an impossible task.

To begin with, I can't put my sins away and I can't write my name in the Book of Life. But more than that I can't get my body out of the grave; I can't even put it there, someone's going to put me there.

When I die they will put me in the grave and I can't do anything about it then. Somebody is going to have to get me out. And I know the someone who is, "*able to save me to the uttermost and to keep me from falling*" is the one who can lift me out of the grave someday and bring this dust back to life and change my vile body, my corrupt body, "*that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body.*"

Yes, the resurrection of every believer from the grave through the cross of Christ was the central theme of the disciple's message; that's right, a complete salvation. From eternity past to eternity future, from the beginning to the end; the whole work of salvation, in its planning, in its execution, in its application, in its sustaining power, in its ultimate perfection, is of the Lord.

And in blazing and beautiful letters across the skies of eternity will be these words uttered by Jonah, "*Salvation is of the Lord!*" And that's what the disciples preached.

Let me show you something interesting; in **Acts chapter 1:22**, when the disciples were going to choose an apostle, a disciple; (I don't know whether they were right in this or not, nobody's ever been able to figure it out).

I've heard people say: "Well Paul was the 12th apostle, perhaps so." But when they took it upon themselves or by divine direction or whatever, to select an apostle, to take Judas' place; do you know what they said in **Act 1:22**; they said, "*He must be one who will be with us, a witness of*

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the resurrection of Christ.” That was important. “He must be one who has witnessed and can be a witness of the resurrection of Christ.”

All right, in **Acts 2:31**, Peter’s message on Pentecost; you read it sometime. Sure, he told who Christ was and that His death was foreordained and predetermined in the councils of God and these wicked men with their wicked hands and their wicked plans had only carried out what God determined before to be done.

And he said: *“This same Jesus that you crucified God hath made Him both Lord and Christ.”* But this was the theme of his message; this was the theme of his sermon: *“This Jesus hath God raised up of whom we are all witnesses.”*

We saw Him come forth. We saw Him after He arose. This was his message. And it was then that the people cried: *“Men and brethren what shall we do, Christ is risen?”*

And then in **Acts 4:1 and 2**; the disciples were arrested and put in jail. Do you know what the charge was? They were preaching the resurrection of the dead. That was the charge; read **Acts 4:1 and 2**.

They were arrested and thrown in jail and this was the charge against them; they preached the resurrection of the dead. And then in **Acts chapter 4:31** says, *“When they were filled with the Holy Spirit they preached the resurrection of the dead, the final, glorious, resurrection of the dead.”*

And then in **Acts 17:18** Paul was accused of preaching strange gods because he preached the resurrection of the dead. And then in **Acts 23:6** Paul was called in question by the highest, religious, leaders of his day, the religious authorities, the religious leaders, and he was charged with preaching the resurrection of the dead.

You say: “Is it all that important preacher?” Is it important? The resurrection of Christ from the dead is of equal importance with the crucifixion of Christ on the cross. That’s right! He justified us by His death but His death means nothing if He didn’t come forth out of that tomb.

Let me show you that. Turn to **1 Corinthians 15**. If Jesus Christ is still in the grave like Buddha, Confucius and Mohammed, or any other self-proclaimed Messiah; *“He’s a liar and the truth not in him,”* and His soul is in hell and He has no hope.

And He was an imposter. He must come forth from the tomb. That’s the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity. That’s the distinguishing attribute of what we believe, our Lord is raised from the grave.

All right; watch this in **1 Corinthians 15:12**: *“If Christ be not risen;”* now listen to this, here are six tremendous statements:

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First of all: *“If Christ be not risen from the grave, our preaching, is in vain.”* Our ministry is all in vain.

Secondly: If Christ be not risen from the dead, your faith in God is in vain, all in vain!

Thirdly: If Christ be not risen from the grave; here’s a serious charge, you’ve lied on God, you’re false witnesses of God!

Fourthly: If Christ be not risen from the grave, you are dead in your sins; you don’t have a Saviour, you don’t have a Mediator, you don’t have a substitute, and you don’t have a prayer!

Fifthly: And listen to this; If Christ be not risen, those who die, all your children, infants, and all of your loved ones and friends, and those who are dead who have believed in Christ are perished, totally perished; forget them, you will never see them. There is no hope; they’ll never be raised up again, if Christ be not risen!

If all Jesus Christ is, is a good man, a good preacher, a great healer, a prophet; we are in trouble. Listen to this: *“If Christ be not risen we are of all men the most miserable.”* Bless God according to the apostle John, in **1 John 3:2 and 3:** *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”* He will appear because He arose and we have hope of being perfectly conformed to His image.

Now I want to give you four things for you to remember about the resurrection, the resurrection of the dead:

First of all: Christ died and so will you!

Now, I know that there may be some who are alive and remain when He comes and they shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *“for this old flesh must put on incorruption and immortality.”*

But if Christ doesn’t come by the time you reach the end of your life; you’re going to die. Christ died and we’ll die, I will die some of these days. *“It’s appointed unto men once to die.”*

Now this death delivered us from the curse of sin, the curse of the law. His death delivered us from condemnation and judgment. His death delivered us from the penalty of sin and the law. But His death did not deliver us from the results of sin.

When Adam sinned *“death and condemnation passed upon all men.”* And physical death still awaits us. Physical death is still in our future. *“Life is like a flower; it blooms today in its beauty and fragrance but tomorrow it’s gone and the place thereof, shall know it no more.”*

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Life is like a vapor. What is your life? It is like a vapor; here today and tomorrow it's gone. What is life? It's like a shadow, a fleeting shadow.

And all men have died since Adam except Enoch and Elijah. All men have died and you and I are going to die. One of these days we are going to die and the body is going back to the dust from which it came and the soul to God who gave it.

Secondly: Now remember this; Christ arose from the grave, our representative, our substitute, our Lord; He died, and so shall I, but He arose and so shall I.

He said this, "*Because I live ye shall live.*" If my hope is in Christ, if my life is hid with God in Christ, if I am one with Christ, then He did not stay in the grave and I'm not going to stay in the grave; because what He is I am and where He is I am and what He has I have.

"*I'm a joint heir with Jesus Christ*" and I must be raised to enter into my inheritance. I must die but I shall be raised. Our inbred sins require our flesh to return to dust. But as the Lord our Saviour arose so all His people must.

And as you stand next time at the open grave of a loved one and you watch that body lowered into the grave and you watch them throw the dirt in on that vault or that casket; remember the words of our Lord: "*Thy brother shall rise again.*"

How? He says: "*Because I am the resurrection and the life and he that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live.*"

And I want you to listen carefully to this; here's the third thing:

Thirdly: How are the dead raised up, how are they raised up and with what body do they come?

Now, that question is asked right here in **1 Corinthians 15:35 and 36**. You turn to it and look at it carefully. This will be interesting to you; "*How are the dead raised and with what body do they come?*"

Well, the next verse says: "*Thy fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. And that which thou sowest is not the body which shall be but bare grain. It may be wheat, it may be corn, or it may be some other grain but God giveth it a body as it has pleases him.*"

Now here's what they are asking. Here's what these people are asking in the church at Corinth. They watched the old people; they are gray headed and wrinkled and stooped and their bodies are weak and they look like death itself.

And they put that little wrinkled, stooped, broken, corruptible, weakened, body and put it in a grave and watch it go back to the dust. And they say; "Well, how is this going to be raised?"

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Paul said: *“Don’t be foolish.”* When you go out and sow a grain of wheat or a grain of corn. You don’t put in the ground what shall be. You don’t put in the ground a stalk of corn with ears and with leaves and with a tassel on the top.

You just put in one little wrinkled grain of corn. That’s all you sow, one little wrinkled grain of corn. When you prepare the ground, you better plant the seed in the ground, because if you leave it on the shelf over there it won’t come up.

It’s got to germinate. It’s got to die; it’s got to rot. When it rots it gives life. And after a while the soil breaks open and up comes a beautiful, green, tall, six foot stalk of corn, with many ears of corn on it, and beautiful leaves. And you didn’t sow that stalk; you sowed bare grain.

And when this body gets old and wrinkled and tired and weary and corruptible and you put it in the ground, what’s coming out is a glorified body; *“That which is sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption. That which is sown in mortality shall be raised in immortality.”*

“That which is sown in weakness shall be raised in power and strength. That which is sown in shame shall be raised in glory.” And God gives a new body. It’s just like planting corn. We don’t plant what’s going to be; you just plant bare grain.

And when we put people in the ground, believer’s, dead people; we don’t say what’s going to be; we don’t say what a terrible likeness of what’s going to be (withered, like the seed). God gives it a body as it pleases Him.

Fourthly: Who’s going to be raised in His likeness?

That’s a good question isn’t it? Well, if you want the answer; you turn to **John chapter 6** and you will find the answer. Who’s going to be raised with this glorified body, with this new body, with this immortal body, with this body liken unto the glorified Christ?

John 6:39; now listen to the Master; He said: *“I didn’t come down from heaven to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me. And this is my Father’s will which is sent me. Of all which He hath given me I’ll lose nothing but raise it up again at the last day.”*

Our Lord’s going to raise up at the last day every child given to Him of the Father, every believer, given Him by the Father, every one of His elect He’s going to raise him in His image. That’s what he says in **John 6:39.**

Now, listen to **verse 40:** *“Everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on him hath everlasting life. I’ll raise him up at the last day.”* Everybody out there listening to me who has with eyes of faith seen Christ in His glory, in His redemptive work, in His substitutionary sacrifice, and has believed on Him and trusted Him and received Him, He said, *“I’m going to raise you from the dead.”*

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And then let's read **John 6:44**: "*No man can come to me except my Father which sent me draw Him. And I'll raise Him up at the last day.*" Everybody listening to my voice, who by the seed of God's Word is drawn with repentance toward God and faith in Christ; our Lord is going to raise him up at the last day.

There's your answer. Who will Christ raise? He tells us in **John 6:39**: "*All that my Father giveth me I'll raise him up. Everyone who seeth the Son and believeth on Him, I will raise him up.*" And every man supernaturally, spiritually drawn by the Father, will be raised!