

How to go to Church

DAILY BIBLE READINGS BOOK 3
EXPLORING 1 CORINTHIANS 15-16

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lower mountains
ANGELICAN · PARISH

Week Nine: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - Day 1

Introduction

The Corinthians liked Paul's gospel of salvation through Jesus. They didn't like Paul's 'sacrifice yourself for the salvation of others' lifestyle. They thought Paul was foolish, weak and disreputable because he suffered hunger, homelessness and hardship for the sake of the gospel. The Corinthians thought they knew a wiser, stronger and more honourable way of serving Jesus. But throughout the letter Paul has said that if they don't follow his example their faith is in vain. See 1 Corinthians 4:6-16, 11:1



1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.



Exploring the Passage

- Why does Paul write to the Corinthians? 15:1-2
- How did Christ fulfill the Scriptures? 15:3-4
- To whom did Christ appear? 15:5-8



Explaining the Passage

Paul wants the Corinthians to hold fast to his preaching – to the gospel that they received, believed, stand in, and are being saved by, 15:1-2.

We are confident of the gospel because the death and resurrection of Jesus really did happen. God said in advance in the Scriptures what was going to happen and why, and then he made it happen and he provided people to witness it happening. When 1 Corinthians was written, about 25 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, many of the witnesses were still alive. God acts openly and in public – the bodily resurrection of Jesus is historically verifiable, 15:3-8.

Our future resurrection to be with God forever is certain because Christ died for our sins and was bodily resurrected. But as we shall see tomorrow, Chapter 15 is about much more than proving Jesus' death and resurrection.



Going Deeper

- If someone asked you for evidence that Jesus rose from the dead, what would you say?
- If a friend wanted to explore the evidence, do you have videos or articles that helpfully show the evidence of the resurrection and its implications?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you sent Christ Jesus to die for our sins according to scripture and you raised him from the dead.

Confession: Sorry for when I have doubted that you keep your promises.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that you always keep your promises and fulfill your word.

Supplication: Help me to hold firmly to the word preached to me and to pass it on to others.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.



Week Nine: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - Day 2

Recap

Paul is writing to encourage the Corinthians to hold fast to his preaching of the gospel. He reminds them that they can be confident that Christ's death and bodily resurrection for the forgiveness of sins really did happen – it is verifiable.



1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.



Exploring the Passage

- Count all the references to Paul - 'I' and 'me'
- Count all the references to Christ - 'Christ' and 'he'.
- Why was Paul 'abnormally born' as an apostle? 5:8-9



Explaining the Passage

This passage is about more than Jesus' resurrection. This passage is about Paul's apostleship, preaching and gospel lifestyle. That is why Paul refers to himself so often.

The Corinthians are moving away from Paul and his preaching, 15:1-2. So Paul reassures them that he is a genuine apostle. An apostle must be appointed by Jesus and have witnessed Jesus' was bodily resurrected from the dead. Just like Cephas (Peter), James (Jesus' brother) and the other apostles, the risen Jesus appeared to Paul and appointed him to be an apostle, 15:5-8.

But unlike the other apostles, Paul was 'abnormally born'. Jesus appeared to Paul after Jesus had ascended to heaven. Jesus appointed Paul who was a persecutor of Christians! Jesus appointed Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles, that is, non-Jews like the Corinthians and most of us. See 15:8-9 and Acts 9.

To reject Paul is to reject Jesus.



Going Deeper

- Are there parts of 1 Corinthians where you would prefer to ignore or overlook Paul's teaching?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, in your grace you have given the church apostles and teachers.

Confession: Sometimes I find it hard to hear and trust your word.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that your word is powerful to save.

Supplication: Help me to hold firmly to the word preached to me and to pass it on to others.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.

Week Nine: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - Day 3

Recap

Paul is a genuine apostle of Jesus. The risen Jesus appeared to Paul as he did the other apostles. Genuine gospel believers remain in Paul's gospel.



1 Corinthians 15:7-11

7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.



Exploring the Passage

- How did the grace of God change Paul's life? 15:9-10
- What does Paul's preaching have in common with the other apostles? 15:11



Explaining the Passage

By the grace of God, Paul the persecutor became Paul the hard worker for the gospel. The grace of God not only turned Paul from persecuting believers to trusting in Jesus, but it also made him work hard for Jesus. Paul's life demonstrates the power of Jesus' resurrection to bring radical change as the gospel is preached. Paul is the genuine model of what it is to serve Jesus, 15:9-10.

Paul received and preached the same gospel as the other apostles, 15:11. Paul preaches the genuine gospel. Because Paul is a genuine apostle of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, a genuine Christian will believe and remain in Paul's gospel, and will follow the example of Paul in working hard for the Lord. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:16 and 11:1 – 'follow my example'.



Going Deeper

- How is the grace of the gospel evident in your life?
- What changes do you need to make to your thoughts and attitudes to follow Paul's example and teaching?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, in your grace you take sinners like Paul from death to life.

Confession: Forgive me for when I work for my own good, and neglect the good of your church.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that you transform people and have taken me from death to life.

Supplication: Help me to believe and remain in the gospel, and work hard for you.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.



Week Nine: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - Day 4

Recap

Today we will read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and summarise the key point.



1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.



Exploring the Passage

- What is Paul's key point in one sentence?



Explaining the Passage

Paul urges the Corinthians to remain in the gospel that he preached and modelled to them, 15:1-2. He does this by reminding the Corinthians that:

- Jesus really did die and was bodily resurrected so their sins can be forgiven. This is historically verifiable, 15:3-8.
- Paul is a genuine apostle who has given them the genuine gospel and model of how to live for Jesus. Paul is in accord with Cephas, James and the other apostles, 15:5-11. To reject Paul's preaching and gospel lifestyle is to reject Jesus and his gospel.

Christ's death and resurrection will impact the way we live now. The grace of God not only saves us. It also changes us so that we want to follow Paul's example in working hard for the work of the Lord. We will guard against being like the Corinthians who distanced themselves from Paul because they thought Paul was foolish, weak, and disreputable because he suffered for the sake of the gospel – 4:10-11.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58



Going Deeper

- Have you ever fallen into the trap of not associating with people you considered weak?
- How could you encourage someone this week to remain in the gospel?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you bring life where there is death.

Confession: Forgive me for when I only see worldly weakness and not the wisdom of God.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that you transform people and have taken me from death to life.

Supplication: Help me to believe and remain in the gospel, and work hard for you.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.

Week Ten: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34 - Day 1

Recap

Paul urges the Corinthians to stay in the gospel he preached, and to follow his way of living for the gospel. Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sin caused Paul to work hard for the gospel.



1 Corinthians 15:12-19 and 30-34

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied ...

30 And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31 I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

“Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die.”

33 Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” 34 Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.



Exploring the Passage

- What are some people in the Corinthian church saying? 15:12
- How were the Corinthians living for this world only as though there is no resurrection of the dead? 15:32b-34
- If there is no resurrection of the dead, what does that mean for the gospel the apostles preached and for the Corinthians faith? 15:13-19



Explaining the Passage

Some Corinthians were living as though there is no resurrection from the dead – as though ‘only for this life we have hope in Christ’, 15:12 & 19. Their lack of belief in the resurrection of the dead was displayed in their attitude of ‘let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’ which led to sin. They did not follow Paul’s example of facing death for Christ every day in response to the grace of God, 15:19, 30-32.

To deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny Christ was raised from the dead – it is to deny the gospel. If Christ has not been raised then Paul preached a false gospel that misrepresents God, and the Corinthians faith in Jesus was worthless – they were still in their sins without the hope of life with Christ after they died. How futile. How pitiable! 15:13-19.



Going Deeper

- What behaviours in the Corinthian church that Paul has rebuked in chapters 1-14 show they are living for ‘today’ and not for eternity? Living as if there was no resurrection of the dead.
- Do you have any behaviours that show you don’t really believe - or put into practice your belief - in the resurrection of the dead?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you brought hope and life into the world through the resurrection of your son.

Confession: Forgive me for when I am misled, corrupted, and stuck in sin.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that Christ has been raised from the dead and that my faith is not in vain.

Supplication: Help me to live for eternity and not today.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.



Week Ten: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34 - Day 2

Recap

Some Corinthians said they believed the gospel but they lived as though the resurrection of the dead will not happen. As a result, they continued in sin and did not follow Paul in doing the work of the Lord.



1 Corinthians 15:20-28

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.



Exploring the Passage

- What has Christ done for those who belong to him? 15:20-22
- What will happen when Christ returns? 15:23-28



Explaining the Passage

Christ's resurrection is the 'firstfruits' that guarantees a massive crop of people raised from the dead. Christ has reversed the effects of Adam's sin. We are either 'in Adam' and will die for our sin, OR we are 'in Christ', forgiven and made alive. But it is only when Christ returns that his people shall be raised to live in Christ's eternal kingdom – that is why their death is described as 'fallen asleep', 15:20-22.

Only when Christ returns will His enemies be destroyed, and everyone will see that God is victorious. God doesn't destroy his enemies now because this is the time of salvation. When Christ returns, salvation will no longer be on offer, 15:23-28.

This is why believers are to be like Paul and 'die every day' as they join Jesus in bringing the gospel to those opposed to God. Some Corinthians disliked Paul's gospel work because it didn't look powerful but when Christ returns it will look glorious.



Going Deeper

- What actions of yours show that you are willing to 'die every day' for the gospel?
- How does your life reflect that you are living in the 'time of salvation'?



Prayer

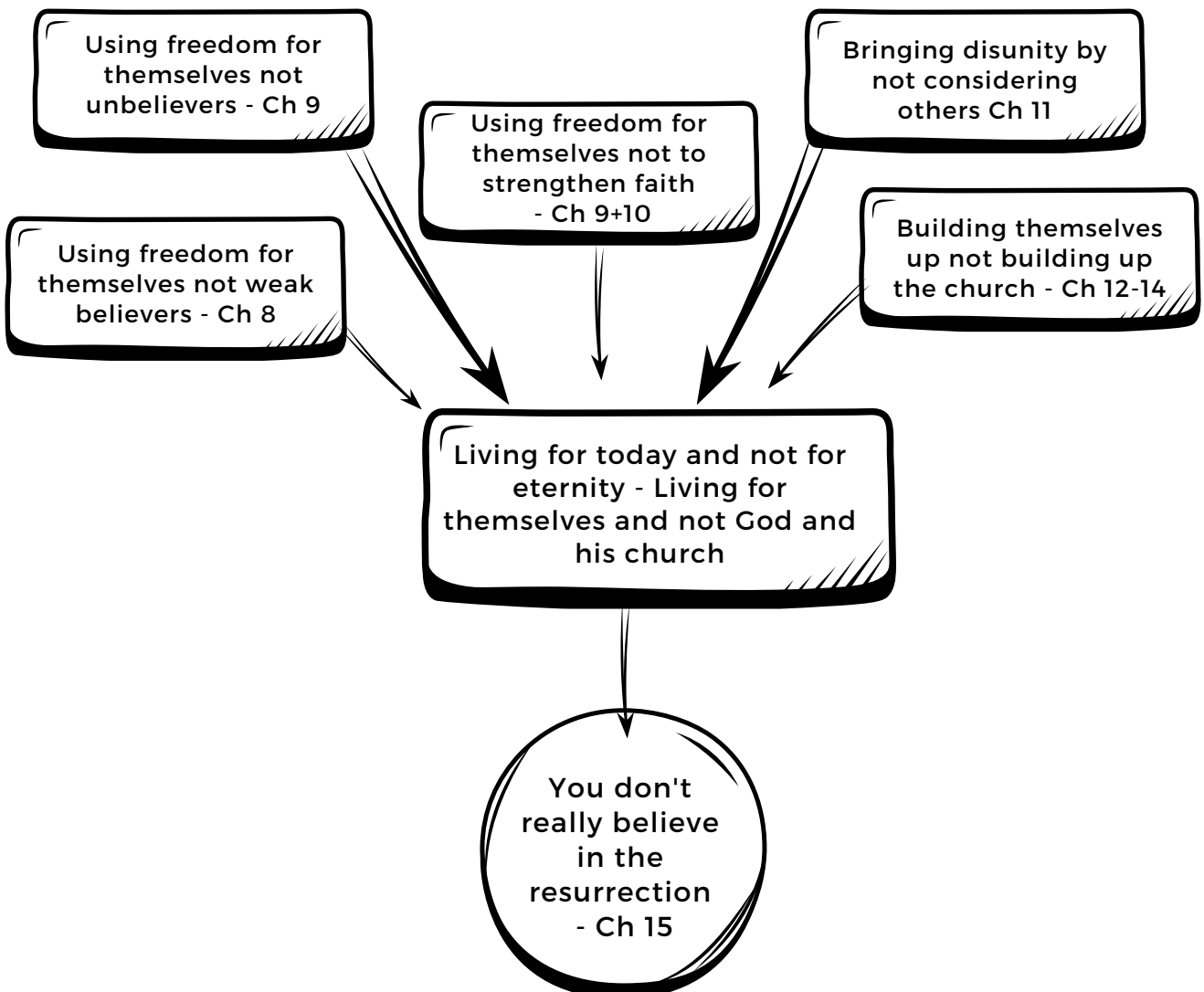
Adoration: Father in Heaven, you have given all things to your son and put everything under his feet.

Confession: Forgive me for when I live for my own kingdom instead of your kingdom.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that I belong to you, and that I am made alive in Christ.

Supplication: Help me to live everyday for your kingdom and your glory.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.



Week Ten: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34 - Day 3

Recap

When Christ returns his people will be raised from the dead. Until then they are to work hard for the Lord in a world opposed to God. This work will feel weak now. Glory will come when Christ returns in victory.



1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? 30 And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31 I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes,

what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

“Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die.”

33 Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” 34 Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.



Exploring the Passage

- What happens to Paul as he works hard for the Lord? 15:30-32a

Note: ‘fought beasts at Ephesus’ probably means ‘persecution’.

- What is the problem with the Corinthians attitude to life and death? 15:32b-34



Explaining the Passage

Controversy surrounds what 'being baptized on behalf of the dead' in 15:29 means. But what both precedes and follows this verse is the idea that Paul worked hard and risked his life so that those 'in Adam' who are under God's judgment of death would come to know Christ. Paul faced death hourly for the sake of 'the dead' coming to know Christ, 15:30-32.

Paul is the one with the death-shaped ministry that the Corinthians don't want to share in. They don't want to be baptised into Paul's cross-shaped gospel and its heading-for-death lifestyle.

Paul is asking 'why do people get baptised into our message if the dead aren't raised'? Paul wouldn't stupidly endure all this persecution if the dead aren't raised, instead he'd be partying. We only do this difficult stuff of facing danger, death, persecution, if there is gain – a future to look forward to.

If we don't think that we will be raised in Christ then we will be like some in Corinth and live for the best this world has to offer – to 'eat and drink' and revel in sin, 15:32-34. Christians who continue to live for the world show that they do not know God and the salvation he offers in Christ. When we know God and his gifts of forgiveness and life forever, we want others to know of this salvation too.



Going Deeper

- Were you baptised expecting to face death and hardship? Or were you baptised into the 'easy message' of comfort and temporary happiness?
- Does your life and ministry look more like Paul who works hard and suffers for the sake of the gospel, or the Corinthians, who live for the best that this life has to offer?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you give hope greater than any human hope.

Confession: Forgive me for when I am misled, corrupted, and stuck in sin.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that Christ has been raised from the dead and that my faith is not in vain.

Supplication: Help me to live and suffer with hope, knowing that the resurrection is sure.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.

Week Ten: 1 Corinthians 15:12-34 - Day 4

Recap

Today we will read 1 Corinthians 15:12-34 and summarise the key point.



1 Corinthians 15:12-34

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? 30 And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31 I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

“Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die.”

33 Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” 34 Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.



Exploring the Passage

- What is Paul's key point in one sentence?



Explaining the Passage

Paul warns some in Corinth that their 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die' lifestyle denies the resurrection of Christ and his people. If Christ was not raised then Paul is a false preacher and people remain in sin. But Christ was raised! His resurrection guarantees every believer will be raised to life. When Christ returns everyone opposed to God will be destroyed and God will be seen as glorious and victorious.

Our view of the resurrection shapes our life now. If we know Christ is returning, we will not live the so-called 'good life' in the drunken stupor of continuing sin. Rather we will follow the example of Paul who faced danger and persecution and death for the sake of living Christ's way and making Christ known.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58



Going Deeper

- How does the resurrection shape your life now?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you brought hope and life into the world through the resurrection of your son.

Confession: Forgive me for when I live for my own kingdom instead of your kingdom.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that I belong to you, and that I am made alive in Christ.

Supplication: Help me to live and suffer with hope, knowing that the resurrection is sure.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.

Week Eleven: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 - Day 1

Recap

Our future resurrection from the dead shapes our life now. Christ's people no longer live only for this world, continuing in sin. Instead, they follow Paul's example in working hard for the Lord as he rescues people to be raised from the dead.



1 Corinthians 15:35-42

35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

39 Not all flesh is the same:

People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.

41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.



Exploring the Passage

- What foolish questions do some people have about the resurrection of the dead? 15:35
- What does Paul tell us about the resurrection of the dead in 15:36?
- What illustrations does Paul use to support his point?



Explaining the Passage

Paul says the Corinthians questions about how can a dead body be raised, and what our future body will be like, are foolish, 15:35-36. Paul answers these questions with illustrations about God's world.

Paul's first illustration is that in God's world dead-looking seeds become living plants. In God's world death often leads to life. Be assured God is able to take your dead body and make it something very different.

Paul's second illustration is that in God's world the end is often unlike the beginning – dead-looking seeds look nothing like what the plants will be. In the same way our resurrected body will be very different from our earthly body.

We are not to expect our life to look imperishable, glorious and powerful now. In this life, our earthly bodies and our work in the Lord will feel weak, death-bound and even futile. But the hope of our future body will push us on in the work of the Lord now.



Going Deeper

- Take a moment to reflect on your future body. How does that change your attitude to your present body?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, your splendour is beyond my wildest imagination.

Confession: Sorry for when I think the things of this earth are all there is.

Thanksgiving: Thank you for sharing your splendour with me in the new creation.

Supplication: Help me to remember your glory always.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.



Week Eleven: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 - Day 2

Recap

Just as dead-looking seeds become living plants, so Christ's people will be raised from the dead to life. Just plants look nothing like the seeds from which they came, our future imperishable and glorious body will not be like our death-bound earth body.



1 Corinthians 15:42-50

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 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.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.

46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.



Exploring the Passage

- What is the illustration that Paul gives to show that it is foolish to ask 'How are the dead raised?' 15:38
- How does Paul apply this illustration to our resurrection in 15:44-50?



Explaining the Passage

As Paul addresses the Corinthians' questions about the resurrection of the dead, he shows that in God's world not all created things are the same. God has created different types of bodies in his world - humans, animals and heavenly bodies. Similarly, there is a natural (that is sin-led) body and a spiritual (that is Christ-led) body because there are the two key men in creation who are not the same.

The first man is Adam. He is of the dust and he brought death for everyone through his sinful life. The last man is Christ. He is of heaven and he brought those who receive him eternal life through his death. We all die because we are born into Adam. But when we trust in Jesus, we inherit the Kingdom of God and we will have a new physical body like Christ's body.



Going Deeper

- Whose image do you bear?
- How does your life reflect the image of the man you bear?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, in you is life, glory, and power.

Confession: Forgive me for when I focus on the perishable and believe that the natural is all there is.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that the perishable is raised imperishable, weakness is raised is glory, and the natural made spiritual.

Supplication: Help me live out the image of your son.

In the name of Jesus, the heavenly man, Amen.



Week Eleven: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 - Day 3

Recap

Through his death Christ brought us life. He reversed the effects of Adam who through his sinful life brought death. Therefore, we can be assured that God will raise our perishable, dishonourable and weak body to become like Christ's imperishable, glorious, and powerful body.



1 Corinthians 15:51-58

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

55 “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.



Exploring the Passage

- When does God's promise of the defeat of death come to pass? 15:54-55
- In what ways do we still experience the sting and power of death? 15:56
- Why does Paul give thanks to God? 15:57
- What does the grace of God look like in every believer's life? 15:58



Explaining the Passage

Christ's resurrection guarantees that when He returns, we will be raised from the dead and dramatically changed to be like Him, 15:51-53. This wonderful future resurrection radically changes the way we live now. We won't expect a triumphant and impressive-looking life now, 15:54-56. We will expect an ongoing battle with sin and death. And when we do sin, we will give thanks to God for his grace to us in Christ, 15:57.

Like Christ on the way to the cross, and Paul in his ministry, we will spend our earthly bodies for the work of the Lord – for the salvation of others, 15:58. We will not be like the Corinthians who thought being spiritual was looking impressive and powerful in this world. Instead we will work hard to make Christ known even though this work feels futile.

In eternity those you have influenced for Christ will be glad you gave up things in this world so you had time to share the gospel with them.



Going Deeper

- How is the resurrection, or the world, shaping your life?
- How are you using your earthly body to make Christ known while you wait for your heavenly body?
- Does thinking about death fill you with anxiety or hope? What reasons does this passage give for hope in death?



Prayer

Adoration: Thanks be to God! You give us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Confession: Forgive me for when I do not give myself fully to your work.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that the sting of death is gone.

Supplication: Help me to stand firm and not be moved.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.

Week Eleven: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 - Day 4

Recap

Today we will read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 and summarise the key point.



1 Corinthians 15:35-58

35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. 41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 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.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

47 The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

50 I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.



Exploring the Passage

- What is Paul's key point in one sentence?



Explaining the Passage

The resurrection of the dead can seem unlikely to us. But God's world teaches us about the resurrection: dead-looking seeds become living plants; living plants look very different from the seeds they came from; and there are different sorts of bodies in God's world.

In other words, be assured God raises the dead. Christ's resurrection guarantees that when He returns, we will be raised from the dead and dramatically changed to be like Him, 15:51-53. Our perishable, dishonourable and weak body will become imperishable, glorious, and powerful. God does this through Christ who brings life and reverses the effects of Adam who brought death. When we trust in Jesus, even though we die, we are raised to life with a body like his body.

When we are convinced of the resurrection, we will follow the example of Paul and work hard for the Lord. We will not seek to live our future glorious and powerful resurrected life in this world. But we will give ourselves to the weak and futile-looking work of the Lord so that many come to share in the resurrection.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58



Going Deeper

- Where in life are you tempted to call 'dead' what God calls 'alive' and 'weak' what God calls 'strong'?



Prayer

Adoration: Thanks be to God! You give us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Confession: Forgive me for when I focus on the perishable and believe that the natural is all there is.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that the perishable is raised imperishable, weakness is raised is glory, and the natural made spiritual.

Supplication: Help me to stand firm and not be moved.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.

Week Twelve: 1 Corinthians 16 - Day 1

Recap

When we know that we will be raised to life in Christ, we will follow Paul's example in working hard for the Lord. We won't live only for this world. But we will give ourselves to the weak and futile-looking work of the Lord, to the spread of the gospel and building up of Christ's church, so that many come to share in the resurrection.



1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

3 Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.



Exploring the Passage

- What does the work of the Lord look like in 16:1-4?



Explaining the Passage

When we know the love of Jesus, we love others by being generous with our money, even generous to believers who were previously our enemies before we came to Christ. Jesus generously gave his life to create a new humanity marked by unity between Jews and Gentiles who were opposed to each other. (The Jews were God's chosen people in the Old Testament. Everyone else was considered a Gentile, that is, not one of God's people.)

Paul encouraged the Gentile churches, that he had established on his mission journey in Galatia, to give generously to the Jewish-background Christians in Jerusalem which was ravished by famine. Their giving was to be sacrificial: they were to put money aside each week rather than just give any spare cash they had when Paul arrived.



Going Deeper

Such generosity is only possible because the gospel is strong enough to bring unity between people of different backgrounds.

- How are you going in the work of the Lord – in financially giving to Christ's world-wide church?



Prayer

Adoration: Loving Father, you provide for your people.

Confession: Sorry for when my heart, my wallet, and my home have been closed to you and your people.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that transform people and give them generous hearts.

Supplication: Help me to love you and love your people even at the expense of myself and my finances.

In the generous name of Jesus, Amen.



Week Twelve: 1 Corinthians 16 - Day 2

Recap

We sacrificially give ourselves to 'the work of the Lord', to the building of Christ's church, because we are looking forward to our resurrection in Christ. This includes generously giving our money to the cause of the gospel.



1 Corinthians 16:5-12

5 After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. 6 Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

10 When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. 11 No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.

12 Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.



Exploring the Passage

- What does the work of the Lord look like for the Corinthians in 16:6, 10-12?



Explaining the Passage

Those who have received Jesus' gospel are committed to the work of the Lord. For the Corinthians the work of the Lord meant helping Paul and Timothy as they spread the gospel and strengthened Christ's church, even in the midst of opposition. Paul sent Timothy to strengthen the church in Corinth until he was able to make a significant visit himself. The work of the Lord for the Corinthians also meant going without their favoured bible teacher Apollos (recall chapters 1-4), and instead respecting and listening to Timothy who they were tempted to look down on.



Going Deeper

When we have received the blessing of the gospel of Jesus, we will generously use our money, time, and prayers to support those who are freed from everyday work for full-time gospel work.

- How are you going in supporting gospel workers?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you open doors for the proclamation of your gospel.

Confession: Forgive me for when I have treated your people and leaders with contempt.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that you work through people - including me.

Supplication: Help me to take opportunities to tell others about you.

In the saving name of Jesus, Amen.



Week Twelve: 1 Corinthians 16 - Day 3

Recap

We sacrificially give ourselves to 'the work of the Lord', to the building of Christ's church, because we are looking forward to our resurrection in Christ. This includes generously giving our money to the cause of the gospel.



1 Corinthians 16:13-24

13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. 14 Do everything in love.

15 You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, 16 to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it. 17 I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

19 The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. 20 All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.

22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord!

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

24 My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.



Exploring the Passage

- What does the work of the Lord look like for the Corinthians in 16:13-24?





Explaining the Passage

The work of the Lord is to remain in the gospel of Jesus and to courageously love Jesus and his people, 16:13-14. This will look like recognising people like Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus who devoted themselves to building Christ's church by speaking the gospel, and supporting the speaking of the gospel, to those who are saved and those yet to be saved. To do the work of the Lord is to follow their examples, 16:15-18.

The work of the Lord is also to recognise we are family with everyone who belongs to Christ's world-wide church by sharing greetings and encouragement, 16:19-20. It is not to be like the Corinthians who thought they were better than other believers.

Those who do not love Jesus will be cut off from him forever. But those who know Jesus will be eager for his return, remain in his grace and love those who are in Christ Jesus – just as Paul did, 16:21-24.



Going Deeper

- What does it look like for you to put verse 13 into action?
- What reasons has Paul given us in 1 Corinthians to love others?
- Who in your church could you recognise and follow the example of?



Prayer

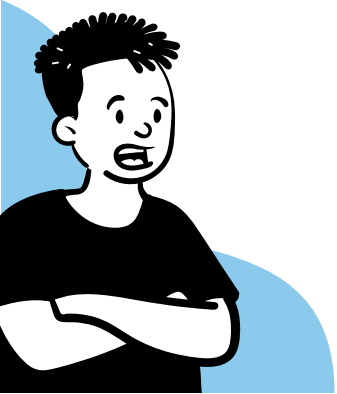
Adoration: Father in Heaven, you have shown me love in Christ Jesus.

Confession: Sorry for when my love falls short and is lacking.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou for my friends and church family who refresh my spirit.

Supplication: Help me to stand firm in the faith and do everything in love.

In the gracious name of Jesus, Amen.



Week Twelve: 1 Corinthians 16 - Day 4

Recap

Today we will read 1 Corinthians 16 and summarise the key point.



1 Corinthians 16

Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 3 Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

5 After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. 6 Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

10 When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. 11 No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.

12 Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers.

He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. 14 Do everything in love. 15 You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, 16 to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it. 17 I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. 18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

19 The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. 20 All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.

22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord!

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

24 My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.



Exploring the Passage

- What is Paul's key point in one sentence?



Explaining the Passage

The work of the Lord is to give ourselves to the building of Christ's church by spreading the gospel and strengthening believers.

It is to see that we are part of Christ's global church and not just our local church. It will involve generously and sacrificially giving our money to churches that are in need. It will involve supporting and respecting those who have been freed from everyday work for full-time gospel work. It will involve recognising and following the examples of those people in your church who are devoted to serving believers. It will involve encouraging believers, our family in Christ, in the churches we have links with throughout the world.

In short, it is to love Jesus, remain in his grace, long for his return and to courageously love and serve his people by speaking his gospel and supporting those who speak his gospel, 16:13-15 and 21-24.



Going Deeper

- Write down one tangible way that this exploration of 1 Corinthians 8-16 is going to change your life as you follow the example of Paul's cross-shaped ministry.



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you open doors for the proclamation of your gospel.

Confession: Forgive me for when I have treated your people and leaders with contempt.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou for my friends and church family who refresh my spirit.

Supplication: Help me to stand firm in the faith and do everything in love.

In the name of Risen King Jesus, Amen.

Recommend Resources:

The following resources have enabled the completion of this booklet and are helpful for further exploring 1 Corinthians -

Andy Gemmill

Talks from St Helen's Partnership Summer School 2009 -

<https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/series/4317/>

And CrossPreach -

https://www.crosspreach.com/speaker/3539/andy_gemmill

St Helen's Bishopsgate

Central Focus Review Evenings, 1 Corinthians, 2020 -

<https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/series/5213/>

Peter Orr on 1 Corinthians 15:58

<http://thebriefing.com.au/2014/09/the-work-of-the-lord/>