

Intro

~ The Corinthians had some misunderstanding of the gospel and the resurrection

~ Paul asks questions in this chapter that point us in the direction Paul is headed with his defense of the resurrection

- V12 If Christ is preached how can some say there's no resurrection from the dead
 - This shows me some didn't believe in a resurrection
- V29 some held to a pagan religious view that taught you had to be washed in the sea to experience the bliss of the afterlife. Paul is saying if they didn't believe in the resurrection then why are some (in the greek it says not we) being baptized for the dead? Why are you doing this?

~ To correct their faulty understanding he spends this whole chapter teaching about the resurrection

~ Paul also taught on the rapture of the church in 1 Thess 4:13-18 to help them understand resurrection

~ Paul lays the foundation in V1-50

~ V1-4 the gospel explained

~ V5-8 Proofs of the Resurrection – that the gospel is true

- V5 – 2 appearances (Cephas then of the 12)
- V6 – 500 hundred at once
- V7 – 2 appearances (James half-brother of Jesus <In 7:5 and Acts 1:14> then the apostles)
- V8 – Paul –born out of due time means he didn't walk with Christ in his earthly ministry

~ V9-10 Paul, a preacher of the resurrection – grace made him so

- In between the proofs of resurrection (V5-8) and place of the resurrection (v11-19) Paul finds himself
- Paul emphasizes the grace of God because after the resurrection of Jesus Paul persecuted and killed those who were witnesses of the resurrection
- The resurrection was an important aspect of the message of the early church in Acts
 - Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; Acts 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30,33,34,37
- Now Paul finds himself a witness of the resurrected Christ (3 times the resurrected Christ appeared to Paul (Acts 9 – his conversion; Acts 22:17-21 – warned concerning coming persecution; Acts 23:11 – The Lord stood by Paul and comforted him)

~ V11-19 Place of the resurrection – what it means to us

- There's three things which are in vain if Christ isn't raised from the dead
 - Our faith, our preaching and our hope

~ V20-34 Christ is the second Adam by which all men are made alive and the Father has placed "all things" under his feet

- The word "all" is used 11 times in v22-28
- V24 all rule, all power and all authority
- V25 all enemies
- Because Christ has risen from the dead and accomplished redemption the Father has placed Christ over everything to be ruler over all
- V28 The Father placed all under Christ so that Christ may be "all in all"
- Because Christ is all in all we practice letting him be all in all in our conduct
- V32 We don't simply live for today because there is a tomorrow
- V33 Don't be deceived because evil people will corrupt good conduct
- V34 Paul says to awake to righteousness

~ V35-50 Paul speaks about the resurrection body we'll have in heaven

- It's not a body of flesh and blood but it's a spiritual body that's raised in incorruption

Paul gives us in these closing verses of 1 Corinthians 15 some things we all familiar with – A mystery, a trumpet, a door, bad news (death, grave, sin), but then closes with good news and a victory

Outline

- A Victorious Mystery (v51-53)
- A Victorious Life (v54-57)
- A Victorious Practice (v58)

Text

A Victorious Mystery (v51-53)

~ The mystery that Paul's going to explain is the method of how the Christian takes on the resurrection body he just spoke about in v35-50 – It's by rapture or death

~ It can seem as if Paul is saying he believed the Lord would return in his generation. But Paul always lived as if it's imminent. He lived so as to be ready for either death or the Lord's return

~ Paul never put off the Lord's business till tomorrow but did it today

~ 1 Thess 4:13-18 is a similar passage to our text here. It also speaks of believe asleep and a trumpet

~ Paul says it will be in a moment

- Moment (823 atomos) The word means uncut. The smallest indivisible part, an atom of time
- Think about it. We're driving, working, drinking coffee, in church and the moment of time
- This should prompt us to live ready for the Lord's return

A Victorious Door (v54-57)

~ This door is a passage, it's a vehicle

~ This speaks of our transformation when we walk through the door of death or get raptured

~ There's a transformation that takes place

~ Victory is mentioned 3 times

~ This door is the means for corruption to be put away

~ Either death or Christ's return will be the door for us to take on incorruption

~ Jesus said he is the door of the sheep (Jn 10)

~ We go through a door to leave one room to enter another, to leave the house and go out into the world, to leave the world and go into your home

~ The door being mentioned here is the portal by which we enter into eternity

~ Paul says this door is a mystery

~ Death, sin and the grave are all connected

~ Paul asked the Corinthians questions and now he asks question of death and the grave (v55)

~ 3 things are swallowed up

- Corruption – now become incorruption (there is a pollution)
- Mortality – now becomes immortal (there was a limitation/end)
- Death is swallowed up in victory (there was an end)

~ Through Christ we're victorious over death, grave and sin

~ We're saved from the penalty, power and presence of sin

- Penalty – the condemnation of sin that dooms a person to an eternity apart from God
- Power – the power sin has to rule our lives
- Presence – the very presence of sin in our lives

~ A great comeback is when the Boston Red Sox were down 3-0 to the Yankees and came back to win

~ A great victory when your team wins the championship but still doesn't compare to this victory

~ Death is swallowed up in victory

- Swallowed up (katapino 2666) means to drink down, to gulp entirely
- Peter uses this same word in 1 Peter 5:8 where the devil walks about seeking people to devour

- Victory (nikos 3534) A conquest and triumph.
- A similar word appears when Paul says we are more than conquerors through Christ (Rom 8:37)
- In Romans Paul says were victorious in this present life and here victorious in the next life

~ Death where is your sting?

- This word sting is used in Rev 9:10 of the scorpions that stung with their tails
- AT Robertson, "The serpent death has lost his poison fangs."

~ Grave where is your victory

~ The sting of death is sin

~ The strength of sin is in the law

~ Despite how bleak things seem in v54-57 Paul says thanks be to God who has given us victory

~ As the victor Christ is the 2nd Adam

~ The Father has "put all things" under Christ's feet (v24-28)

A Victorious Practice (v58)

~ Because Christ is the door we have a victory and because there's victory we live differently

~ Therefore – I love the "therefore's" Paul uses

~ Therefore means there's a conclusion coming

~ It's the practical application of something Paul has just said

~ Here the therefore is a reminder to the Corinthians to

1 be steadfast

2 Immovable

3 Always abounding in the work of the Lord

~ The reason is because our labor in the Lord isn't in vain

~ Paul has already told us that if Christ didn't rise from the dead our preaching, faith, hope is in vain

~ Now Paul tells us that because Christ did rise from the dead we have a door and victory and therefore our labor in the Lord isn't in vain

~ This is the practical application of this message

Conclusion

~ Therefore appears 113 times in Paul's writings (Romans to Philemon)

~ Therefore is Paul drawing a conclusion based on what he's told us about the resurrection

~ The "Therefore" is an application word in Paul's writings

~ I've never played it but there's a game "Call of Duty"

~ Therefore is a call to action

~ The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ should prompt us to the application in v58

~ Steadfast, immovable and always abounding in the Lord's work

~ Why? Because there's another thing that's not in vain – our labor in the Lord