

His Resurrection and How it Affects You

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the significance of the resurrection, focusing on 1 Corinthians 15. It emphasizes the theological importance and practical implications of Christ's resurrection, highlighting the foundational nature of this event for the Christian faith. The sermon explores the impact of denying the resurrection, the assurance it provides for salvation and eternal life, and the ultimate victory over death that believers will experience through the resurrection.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1, 1 Corinthians 15:14, 1 Corinthians 15:17, 1 Corinthians 15:20, 1 Corinthians 15:51, 1 Corinthians 15:58

Topics: "Resurrection", "Victory over Death"

Description

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Transcript

All right, so we're going to go to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, being Resurrection Sunday, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and I have on my heart just to share with you some verses from 1 Corinthians 15. I love 1 Corinthians 15, as you've probably gathered. It really is the heart of the Gospel, as we can see in our reading, and it deals with all of the theology around the resurrection, and I want to obviously deal with the theology but also with the practical application of it.

And the other problem with 1 Corinthians 15 is that it is a long chapter and it is complex, and so most folk read a few verses and somehow give up on it and don't get it. Now I'm not going to deal with the whole thing verse by verse, I'm just going to deal with some of the verses and trust that the Lord will minister to us through that. So 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and I'm going to read the first 11 verses, which I'm not going to deal with this morning, but that will set the context.

So 1 Corinthians 15, verse 1. Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you, which you also received and in which you stand, by which you also are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you, first of all, that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he rose

again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that he was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remained to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

After that he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all he was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach, and so you believed. Then what Paul is going to do is deal with proof for the resurrection in the next section from 12 through 19, and basically he's calling eyewitnesses that testified that they had seen the risen Christ, the twelve, Paul out of due time.

Obviously Paul didn't see Jesus while before the ascension, but after the ascension Paul had seen the Lord Jesus, and then five hundred brethren in Galilee who had seen him. Of course these witnesses are absolutely essential because what they do is they testify to the resurrection, and not most but many of them died for their testimony. If you were manufacturing a lie then certainly by the time you get to have to die for your lie you would probably recant and say, well you know it was just a story we made up.

But not one of them recanted, every one of those who were martyred died with a testimony on their lips that Christ is indeed risen. There are other proofs as well, but that's not the purpose of this morning. Then he deals with the objections because people are saying, well there is no resurrection, there's no resurrection of Christ, there's no resurrection for those of us, for those who die in Christ, and Paul deals with those.

And then what I'm going to deal with this morning is he deals with the problems that we have if there is no resurrection, and then he deals with some of the benefits, and then the ultimate victory. So let's get into verse 14. If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty, and your faith also is empty, the James says, vain, of no consequence, of no value.

Our whole faith is built on this concept of the resurrection. It is the only faith in the world. I guess every day there's a dozen new ones coming up, all sorts of religions, believing all sorts of things.

But there is only one that has a leader who died, and remember that his death was not just dying, but he died an atoning death, he shed his blood, died in our place. But there is only one leader who rose again, and who rose from the dead. All of the others are dead, Mohammed is dead, Krishna is dead, all of the rest of them, they don't exist anymore.

But Jesus rose from the dead. That really sets Christianity apart. But not only is our preaching based on that, not only do we have a cult where we have some idea, and we're propagating this idea, and we've built our whole religion around this idea, but in fact it is not just the substance of what we are preaching, but it really, everything hangs on this.

Everything hangs on the resurrection, and we'll see in a moment, it deals with our sin. And so what Paul is saying is, if Jesus wasn't raised, well, we may as well close the doors. This really is where everything hangs upon.

There's a new trend in evangelicalism today to say, well, you know, in order to be a believer, you don't have to believe in the resurrection. All you have to believe is in Jesus, whatever that means. And there are many people, the Hindus believe in Jesus, the Muslims believe in Jesus, but that doesn't save them.

And Paul is very specific in the beginning of this passage, that our gospel is based on His death, burial, and resurrection, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that He was buried, that He rose again on the third day according to the scriptures. This he says is the gospel that you received. This is the gospel in which you stand.

So it all hangs on this concept of the resurrection. And obviously there are other things that are attached to that. So to say that you can be a Christian and not believe in the resurrection is patently false.

And yet there are many, many, many Christians in the world today, there are entire seminaries that are teaching that the resurrection is not real. They have all sorts of explanations, and I'm not going to get into the details of those. I do not believe that you can be born again.

I do not believe you can be a Christian without believing in the resurrection. Paul speaks about that in the book of Romans as well. And so if He is not risen, then our preaching is empty, and our faith is also empty.

We may as well go home, or convert the building into a nightclub, or into a supper club, or into a debating society, or whatever it is. But there is no point anymore if Jesus is not risen, and yet He is risen. And then verse 17, if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins.

Now that takes a little bit of understanding, because we say, well, Jesus shed His blood to wash away my sin, that my salvation was gained by the atoning death, by Him dying in substitutionary death, that He died in my place on the cross of Calvary. Yes, that is true. And yet there are many martyrs who have died for God's cause.

There are many heroes who have died for someone else, someone taking a bullet and protecting someone else. Does that make them a savior? Does that save the person? Yes, it saved the other person that they protected. They jumped, remember a story not so long ago of a father, I think it was, jumping into the sea to save his son, and he saved his son, but he himself perished.

Does that make him a savior in the spiritual sense? No. He saved the life of his child, but He didn't give him eternal life. And so, how do we know that God accepted the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus? Because that's what it all hangs on.

If Jesus made a sacrifice which was unacceptable, or that the father rejected, well then we were still in our sins. And the proof of the father's acceptance of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus is in the resurrection. If Jesus had sinned somewhere along His life, He would have to die for His own sins and He could not die for our sins.

If Jesus sinned while He was on the cross, was it possible for Him to sin? Yes, I believe it is possible. And again, there are others who have different ideas. But if He thought a wrong thought that while He was hanging on the cross and they were taunting Him and they were mocking Him and spitting at Him, do you think that He was tempted to just get angry for a moment? I'm sure He was.

And if He did the wrong thing, if He thought the wrong thought, if He reacted in the wrong way at that last moment, and of course we say, well, that's too terrible to contemplate. But if that happened, how do we

know it didn't happen? How do we know that He didn't in the end have to die because He had sinned? Because the Father raised Him on the third day. And the Father puts His stamp of approval on His sacrifice.

And the Father makes a declaration to all of us, to all believers who would come and to all the world, in fact, that He accepted the sacrifice of His Son and that the price was indeed finished, the price indeed was paid, and that there is atonement and there is forgiveness. And so if He didn't die, if He didn't rise, we would still be in our sins. And so what we're remembering, and this is the thing that I was just thinking about during this week, is that so many people are celebrating the resurrection today, people who are not even Christians are celebrating.

Now I know others are chasing bunnies and Easter eggs and other nonsense, but there are many sincere people who are celebrating the resurrection. But it's not personal. The reason we celebrate the resurrection is because we are reminded that Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient and paid for my sins.

And so we're remembering not just a fact of what happened 2,000 years ago, but we're remembering what effect it had on us and the guarantee that we have, not just of our sins being forgiven, but the guarantee of eternal life. And we'll see that in a moment. So if Christ has not arisen, your faith is futile or empty, and you are still in your sins.

Verse 18, and I'm just jumping through, just selected verses. Verse 18, then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. So verse 17 deals with the forgiveness of sins.

Verse 18 deals with eternal life. Is it possible to have forgiveness of sins and not have eternal life? Yeah, they're two different things. Because our sins have been forgiven, we have eternal life.

But it's possible to be forgiven and still not have eternal life, to really just perish. The word here perish means you just die, like an animal, like a bird. There's nothing beyond that.

And again, there are Christians who believe that. But he says that if those who have fallen asleep, in other words, who have died in Christ, those who have died as believers, have perished. In other words, there is nothing.

Let's eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow we're going to just die. There's nothing beyond the grave. No, there is a life beyond the grave.

And the guarantee and the knowledge we have of that is because Jesus was raised from the dead. Verse 19, if in this life, notice each of these begins with if, in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are all men most pitiable. Now, Paul is speaking for himself here.

And he's speaking against the background of his sufferings. And he is saying, if this is all it's about, all that Christianity is about, now, remember, there are many blessings of being a Christian. We understand those.

And yet for some Christians, like Paul, and Christians in North Korea and in China and other parts of the world, being a Christian is very, very hard. It's not easy. I listened to a testimony of an Anglican bishop from Josh, where Byron was at one time, of the persecution of Christians there and Christians and pastors being killed in Nigeria.

If that's all it's about, Paul says, we're of all men most miserable, most pitiable. We may as well give it up, because it's just not. What's it worth? Just suffering and having a hard time and being persecuted, and then in the end you just get to die? Paul says, no, it just doesn't make sense.

But obviously the answer is that we are not most pitiable, because we have hope. And those martyrs who have died for Christ, those martyrs who are continuing to die for Christ, even today, they have hope of the resurrection. The problem for us in the West is that our hope really is right now to get out of COVID and to get into some kind of normal life and to be able to have Fourth of July again and Thanksgiving and all of those things, to be able to do all the things we used to do.

That seems to be the big thing we're all hoping for, and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm also hoping for that. But there needs to be a greater thing.

There needs to be a greater hope, and our hope is in the resurrection, not just his resurrection, but our resurrection, that those who have died in Christ will live again, as Jesus said to Mary, though if you believe in me, though you die, yet you will live. And that's what makes life worth living. It's not about getting out of it.

It's not about Christmas. It's not about holidays. It's not about retirement.

It's about eternal life in the presence of God. And so we are not pitiable. In fact, we are to be envied because we have what no one else has.

Everyone else's hope is in this world and in the things of this world. I'm going to come back to that idea in a moment. Our hope transcends these things.

And so even when all of these things are taken from us, even if our life is taken from us in martyrdom, our hope endures. This hope we have as an anchor to the soul, which extends beyond the veil, the veil of death, into the very presence of God. That's where our assurance lies.

Verse 20, but now Christ is risen from the dead. So he's been saying, if he didn't die, our faith is empty. If he didn't die, our preaching is useless.

If he wasn't raised, our preaching would be—our faith would be useless and vain. If he wasn't raised, then we would still be in our sins. But—there's that word that I love so much—but, in other words, he did not not rise, but Christ is risen from the dead.

And I like the tense here. It doesn't say he was raised. Was he raised? Yes, he was.

But it's far more than that. He is risen. He is still alive.

Remember, there were other people who were raised from the dead—Lazarus, amongst others. Jesus raised three different people. They were raised from the dead.

Now as far as we know, they all had to die again. They didn't have eternal life the same way as Jesus had eternal life. But is Lazarus still alive? Can you go to Bethany in Israel and go and visit Lazarus there with a long beard? No, he died again somewhere along the line.

But Jesus is risen. He is alive. Not just was he raised, but he is still alive.

And he has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. The firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. And so when the farmers in those days, and I guess today to some extent, would go out into the fields or into the vineyard, and the crop begins to ripen, they would taste the fruit, the firstfruits.

And that would give them an idea as to what the rest of the harvest was going to be like. I've told you about our citrus tree. We still don't know what the thing is.

And most years the fruit is terrible. It's somewhere between a lemon and an orange. But last year, I went out and I tried another one.

And it was absolutely sweet. It was beautiful. And all the rest of them were beautiful last year.

Don't know what's going to happen this year. So every year I go to the orange tree and I taste the firstfruit. And it tells me whether we're going to have a good harvest or a bad harvest this year.

We use the same word in technology today. We speak about the prototype. We speak about prototypes of motorcars.

And when they make a prototype, you're able to look at it and you're able to say, well, we can actually do this. We can make a car with three wheels or whatever. And this is what the others are going to look like.

Now, remember, the others don't always look exactly the same as the prototype, but you've got the idea. And Jesus is the prototype. He is the first.

He proves that it can be done, that the Father can raise us from the dead. And so he is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. And of course, this guarantees our resurrection.

Because if Jesus just came and said, well, you know, if you believe in me, you'll have eternal life. Well, talk is cheap. Anyone can make that kind of promise.

Muhammad makes that promise. All sorts of other religions make that promise. Muhammad promises 27 virgins or whatever it is.

You can promise whatever you like, but delivering is another story. How do we know that you're going to get 27 virgins? I don't even remember if it's 27, if you die as a martyr for Islam. You've got Muhammad's word on it.

That's all you've got. No one has been there and come back and say, yeah, that's the way it is. But Jesus rose from the dead, and he is our guarantee.

He proves that God can and will raise the dead. And so he is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in Christ. Verse 22, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. Now, I'm not going to go into the theology much, but remember that because of Adam, sin passed on all flesh. We don't die because of Adam's sin.

We die because of our own sin. But the death, the day you eat of that fruit, you will die, and that is passed on to the generations. But because of Christ, we're able to have a reversal of that process, and we're able to have eternal life.

But I would just want to focus on the last part of that verse. Christ, in Christ, all will be made alive. And obviously, he's not meaning all people.

He's meaning all believers, all of those who are in Christ will be made. This is a promise, I will give you eternal life. Verse 25, for he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet.

So he's now talking about where we're at right now. Jesus is reigning in heaven. Many people say, well, I don't quite see it, because the world is broken.

But he is reigning, and he is waiting for the enemies to be put under his feet. And of course, the last enemy will be death, as we'll see in a moment. But then, verse 26, the last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

So death is not destroyed yet. We know that we all still die, but Paul says to be absent from the bodies, to be present with the Lord. That is our hope, but we still do not have true eternal life in that sense.

But then, here's this verse, verse 33. Do not be deceived, evil company corrupts good manners. We know that verse, and we apply it in many ways.

We apply it particularly with people, Christians who get saved and continue with their worldly friends and get dragged back into the world by their friends. And of course, that's true. But have you ever thought why it is in this chapter, and it is sandwiched in between everything that has to do with the resurrection? Is it just a chance thing that Paul, just out of the blue, said, well, yeah, let me put this idea down here.

No, obviously it has to do with the context. The context is the resurrection, and there are those who say there is no resurrection. And so he is saying that if you associate with people who are worldly minded, as far as spiritual things are concerned, as far as the resurrection is concerned, you will begin to think like them.

So pastors who go to seminaries that are liberal and do not believe in the resurrection will come out of those seminaries. Even if they went in believing in the resurrection, they'll come out not believing in the resurrection. If you read books, if you watch preachers who do not believe in the resurrection, evil company corrupts good habits.

It will influence you. That's the point he is making. He's saying to the Christians in Corinth, be careful who you're listening to.

Because there are people amongst you who are saying there is no resurrection. And if you keep company with them, it will affect your doctrine, your theology also. The idea that you can fill your mind with wrong doctrine and wrong theology and it's not going to have an impact, it does have an impact.

And so it's just interesting that that verse is there and I felt the need to go there. Now, verse 51, so we're jumping down to the end of the chapter. Now, Paul is dealing with the nature of the resurrection of the believer.

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. We know this is at the rapture and the resurrection, the two things happening simultaneously.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible. And we shall be changed. I like that word shall be changed.

Not maybe, we could be, we shall be changed. And this corruption must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality. Now, there's a whole theology about that because basically we cannot come into the presence of God in our human form because we are sinful and God cannot abide our presence.

Therefore, we need to be changed. Even if we are born again, our bodies need to be changed. And we need perfect bodies in order just to endure his presence, just to survive in the brightness of his image and the brightness of his glory.

Verse 54, so when this corruption is put on incorruption and this mortal is put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. This is our hope. So the resurrection affects us in two important ways.

The first is that it guarantees our salvation, the beginning of our faith. But it also guarantees the end of the story. And it guarantees our resurrection and our transformation, that we will be changed.

In the previous verses that we didn't deal with, Paul deals with how we would be. And of course, we don't know exactly what we're going to be like at that time. But what we do know is that for all intents and purposes, we will be like him.

We will not be him, we will not be little gods, but we will be like him. We will live forever. We will know all things even as we are known.

And so it's going to be a wonderful, there's no pain, there's no suffering, there is no dying. All of these things will change in the resurrection. But for me, one of the most wonderful things about the resurrection is that there will be no more sin, there will be no more temptation.

The stuff that we struggle with between the flesh and the spirit, these things will pass away. And we will just enjoy his presence without interference of all sorts of thoughts, as you're thinking it's maybe hot right now, or wish the preacher would get done so we can go home, or whatever it is. Those things will not be there, because we will be transformed, and we will be in his image, and that will be a wonderful thing.

And so mortal will put on immortality, will be eternal, or live forever at least. Then shall be brought to pass the saying is written, death is swallowed up in victory. That is going to be the ultimate victory.

Many Christians like the message of victory. Many preachers are preaching that you can have all sorts of kinds of victory. And yes, we can have victory in certain areas, but the ultimate victory is over death, and that is guaranteed by the resurrection.

Death, where is your sting? Or Hades, where is your victory? This is the reality. This is what the resurrection translates into. And we need to be careful that it doesn't become that the resurrection does not become a theoretical thing that happened 2,000 years ago, but it is a reality that pervades every area of our lives.

That it is the resurrection because of the resurrection that we are not in our sins. It's because of the resurrection that we have the hope of eternal life. And when we use the word hope, it's not in a vague hope like hoping to win the lottery, it's an assurance.

This hope we have as an anchor to the soul. It is firm, it is steadfast, it is immovable. The hope that one day, or the knowledge that one day, death will be swallowed up in victory.

Now the last verse, and I'm almost through. Therefore, it's interesting when people read these passages and preachers preach on these passages, they seem to never get to the last verse. But here's what it's all about.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast. You see, it's not just about the theology of the resurrection. It's about living today.

And I love the way that Paul just brings it back into practical reality. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable. And I'm not going to analyze those words, but I think we understand what they mean.

Faithful, unchanging, not swayed to the left or to the right by winds of doctrine, not unstable. But steadfast, steadfast to what goal? To the goal of the resurrection. Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

That's what carried him through. And he sets his face as a flint to Jerusalem, and he says, I'm going to go to the cross. I'm going to do the work that the Father has called me to.

But beyond that, his eyes is on the goal, the joy that was set before him. When we have the goal, not just getting out of COVID or getting to Christmas time or holiday time, but if our goal is the resurrection, it will bring a stability into our lives. It'll bring a decisiveness of steadily moving towards that goal, of saying I want to be part of that resurrection.

Immovable, not moved by fear, not moved by temptation, not moved by worldly and material things. The material things keep sucking us down, keep trying to get us to anchor in this world. But we will not be moved by those things.

And not only will we be immovable and steadfast, but we will always be abounding in the work of the Lord. We've been speaking on Thursday, and we'll continue to speak on Thursday in 2 Peter chapter 2, where Peter speaks about the false teachers who think that there is no judgment coming. And Peter says, no, the Lord is coming, and judgment is coming for them.

But in the same way, so why did the men that were entrusted with the estate of the master, remember, we made reference to that as it connects to 2 Peter chapter 2. The Lord Jesus says, gives a parable, and he says, a man gives his estate to trustees to manage his affairs, and he goes away. And when he doesn't come back, when they expect him to come back, they begin to abuse their fellow servants. And they begin to eat and drink with the drunkards.

But he says, the master, one day he came, and he took those servants, and he dealt very severely with them. You see, here's the problem today. Why do Christians, why do preachers get into stuff they ought not to get into? Because they've taken their eyes off the goal.

They've forgotten that the master is coming back. They've forgotten about the resurrection. And so they live as though there is no tomorrow.

As though there is no judgment. As though there is no resurrection. But what keeps us going, abounding in the work of the Lord, this is the flip side of the coin, is the recognition that Jesus is coming.

That the resurrection is coming. That the day is coming that we will be changed, and we will be transformed, and we will be made like him. The day is coming that we will see him face to face.

The day is coming that we will, for the first time, be able to fully understand how much it cost him to die for us. You see, our minds can't comprehend that right now. But on that day, we will understand, because we will have the capacity to fully appreciate the price he paid for us.

And so we're abounding in the work of the Lord, because we have our eyes on the goal. I've told you many times before that one of the things that has changed my life, and is with me almost every day of my life, is a song that that old missionary lady sang when I was 17 years old. That when I see him, I'll wish I'd given him more.

More, more, so much more. You see, it's the resurrection. It's the coming of the Lord Jesus, and they're really the same thing.

It just depends on whether you're dead or alive at that time. That's what needs to be the focus. That's what needs to be in our thoughts when we get up in the morning.

That needs to be in our thoughts when we are tempted to get into sin. That should be in our thoughts when we're tempted to give up, when we're tempted to take the easy way out on something. Your eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith.

And you know, again, the book of Revelation just is filled with this idea, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. The beginning at the resurrection. The end, sense, but the beginning of a new period, our resurrection.

And so abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. It's not about the results we produce now. It's about well done, good, and faithful servant.

Enter into the joy of your Lord. It's about the resurrection. And folk, I believe that this is the problem I have with Resurrection Sunday.

It's just like Mother's Day. Seems to be the only day we really care about mothers. The Resurrection Sunday seems to be the only day we really know the resurrection must permeate every aspect of my life.

It should be there every moment that I live. And I know our brethren here that are much older than I am. I know that this is much more real to them.

And as I'm getting older, it's becoming more and more real. But for those who are younger, we need to live our whole life. It's no good waiting until you're Henry's age or Roger's age that you begin to focus on the resurrection.

No, it needs to be part of my whole life. Because that is what it's all about, is the day that I'm going to be changed. And I'm going to be like Jesus.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord, for the resurrection. Lord, there is no greater power than the dead being raised to life.

Lord, we know that all of the electricity in the whole world brought to bear on a dead body cannot raise it. And yet you raised Jesus from the dead. And because he lives, we will also live.

Thank you, Lord, that we are not involved in a vain, empty, hopeless religion. Or in a religion that has hope, but no substance. But Lord, that there is the guarantee that Jesus was raised from the dead, to which brethren testified.

Lord, because he was raised, we have the guarantee that he will raise us also. And so, Lord, I pray that you would become real to us. That not just the cross, but the resurrection would be real to us as we come to your table this morning.

I pray, Lord, for those who leave us now, that you would go with them, keep them, protect them, and bring us together again safely on Thursday, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

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