

**Men's Sunday Night**  
**The Book of 1 Corinthians**  
**Christian Conduct**  
**Lesson 14 - 1 Corinthians 15**  
**"Our Hope is Christ"**

The Greeks did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. So carnal was the city of Corinth that the term "Corinthian" was synonymous with "party animal." This was due in part to the fact that Corinth was the center of the Epicurean philosophy, which said that, because there is no eternity, man should eat, drink, and be merry on earth. Part of this Epicurean mentality had filtered into the church. When Paul preached the resurrection at Athens, some of the people actually laughed at this doctrine. Their philosophers taught that the body was the prison of the soul, and the sooner the soul was set free in death, the better off a person would be. The Greeks looked upon the human body as a source of weakness and wickedness, and they could not conceive of a body that continued to exist after death. It was this kind of thinking that Paul had to deal with when he wrote this chapter.

The Corinthians did not doubt the resurrection of Jesus, so Paul began there in his argument for the resurrection of the human body. The resurrection of Jesus is an historic fact proved by the message of the Gospel, the testimony of witnesses and the conversion of Paul himself. If there were no resurrection, there would be no salvation, for a dead Savior can save nobody!

Paul now deals with the Bible doctrine of "the two Adams" (He uses this argument also in Romans 5). It was through the first Adam's sin that death came into the world; but through the Last Adam (Jesus), death has been conquered. Jesus is the first fruits, that is, He is the first of a great harvest that is yet to come. Jesus is God's "Last Adam," and He will reverse the wrong that the first Adam brought into this world.

Next, Paul deals with the second coming of Jesus and what it means to both the living and the dead. "We shall not all die (sleep)," because some saints will be alive when Jesus returns; *"but we shall all be changed."* This mystery concerns the rapture of the church. When Jesus returns, the dead shall be raised first, the living caught up with them, and all will be changed to be like Jesus. And all of this will happen in the twinkling of an eye.

Several times in this chapter Paul uses the phrase *"in vain."* It means "empty, without content." Because the tomb is empty, our faith is not empty! But if the tomb is not empty, then everything else is in vain: our preaching is empty, our faith is empty, and our works are empty. Thanks be to God for the victory we have in the resurrection of Jesus.

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-19. Pray and answer the following questions:**

What happens after death? Do we live on as disembodied souls, as the Greeks taught? Do we go through countless cycles of reincarnation, as the Hindus believe? Do both body and soul cease to exist? This chapter brings us face to face with the ultimate reality, the final enemy each of us will face. What does the Christian faith have to say about death? How does the resurrection of Jesus relate to our hope? What meaning does it have for our present hope? Paul devotes the longest chapter of his letter to these questions about the future.

1. How would you describe, in your own words, the importance of the gospel to your life? How does Jesus appear or make Himself known to us today?
2. According to Paul, why is the resurrection of Jesus so crucial to the Christian faith?
3. Why is “fallen asleep” (vs.18-19), a good way to describe the dead in Jesus?

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-34. Pray and answer the following questions:**

Nothing is more important to the Christian faith than the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. Because Jesus was actually raised physically, all believers will be raised to eternal glory as well. Jesus’ resurrection puts everything in a new perspective. Life and death, work and recreation, values and priorities, all look different when viewed in light of the resurrection that is to come. Because Jesus lives, you can live now with confidence in God and hope for the future.

4. What hope does Jesus’ resurrection provide for your daily life?
5. In verses 23-28, what does Paul tell us about the future? What meaning and purpose should this overview of history give to our own lives today?

6. When have you ever associated with bad company that could have corrupted you? Explain?

7. Why is it important to avoid people who want to distract you from your commitment to the gospel?

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58. Pray and answer the following questions:**

Paul has given a strong argument that Christians will be raised from the dead when Christ returns. We know bodily resurrection is possible because Jesus was raised. Hundreds of people saw Him. And if He wasn't raised, then He wasn't Christ, and our sins are not forgiven. Furthermore, if we will not be raised, then there is no point in risking our lives and limiting our pleasures for the gospel; we might as well indulge ourselves like pagans.

Okay the Corinthians might answer. We see that the whole gospel, the Christian hope of salvation, eternal life, and the Kingdom of God, rests on the resurrection of Christ and His people. But that doesn't get us past the problem that physical matter just seems incompatible with eternal life. How can bodies that age and decay exist in the Kingdom of God? This next section addresses these questions.

8. What are the differences between our present bodies and those we shall have in the resurrection?

9. In verses 50-58, what message is there for those who grow weary of this physical world and long to escape to heaven?

10. What does the idea of "victory in Jesus" mean to you personally?

11. What encouragement can we take from the fact that the work we do for the Lord is not in vain?

### **Summing up this Week's Study**

The coming resurrection is the hope and motivation of the church and of all believers. Whatever happens to our present bodies, whether they are healthy or unhealthy, beautiful or plain, short-lived or long-lived, or whether they are indulged or tortured they are not our permanent bodies, and we should not hold them too dearly. Our blessed hope and assurance is that these created natural bodies one day will be recreated as spiritual bodies. Although we have only a glimpse of what those new bodies will be like, it should be enough to know that *“we shall be like Him.”* John MacArthur

### **Life Application**

Compare your notes and daily Scripture references. Take some time to pray and meditate on what God showed you in a practical way this week and how you can apply it to your Christian walk. Write your insights down for review and group discussion