

## 1 Corinthians 15-20-28

### Consequences of the resurrection

**Prayer for illumination:** please join me in prayer...

#### **Sermon introduction:**

Over 40 million Americans over the age of 18 suffer from anxiety.

Americans are anxious about a lot of things. But most of our anxiety has to do with the future.

We are worried about what might or might not happen in our future.

Will I have enough money when I retire?

Will my company be around in 3 years?

Will I get heart disease like my parents?

Will I be able to find a good job after college?

Will I be able to pay for my car repairs next week?

Who will be our next president?

Will we have religious freedom in 20 years?

The future is scary.

If your financial planner, life coach, doctor, parent, teacher, boss, or professor could guarantee you a bright future wouldn't you listen to them?

But no one can guarantee us a bright future... that is, no one but Jesus. This brings us to the incredibly good news of this morning's text.

Here is the main point of the text... Since Jesus has been raised, the best is yet to come.

Before we look at this lets briefly review.

Two weeks ago, we looked at the proof that Christ was raised (1 Cor. 15:1-11)

Last week we looked at the implications of Christ not being raised. (1 Cor. 15:12-19)

This week we will look at the implications of Christ being raised. (1 Cor. 15: 20-28)

#### **Since Jesus Christ has been raised, the best is yet to come!**

What does this look like specifically??? We will look at three things-

*Since Christ rose, you will rise*

*Since Christ rose, death will die*

*Since Christ rose, God will reign*

**First, since Christ rose, you will rise!**

**Are you sure? Yes, your resurrection is guaranteed!**

**1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV) – 20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Paul reminds the Corinthians of what he already said in 15:1-11. It is a fact, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. Then Paul proclaims that the resurrected Christ is the firstfruits of those who have died.

**1 Corinthians 15:21-22 (ESV) — 21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

He reminds them in verse 21 that death affects everyone because they have inherited guilt and corruption from the first Adam (See Romans 5:12-20). But this is not the last word on the matter. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, came to earth succeeding where the first Adam failed. Through the life, death, and resurrection Jesus Christ has defeated death.

But how do we know that we will rise? Let's keep reading...

**1 Corinthians 15:23 (ESV) — 23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Twice, Paul mentions that Jesus Christ is the firstfruits (20,23).

What are the firstfruits? The firstfruits are a portion of the crop that ripens before the rest of the crop. The firstfruits are the first installment of the harvest. If you go up to greenbluff and find some amazing Honey Crisps in mid-September you are guaranteed to have an amazing harvest of honey crisps in mid October... The firstfruits were a foretaste of things to come.

The firstfruits were like a down payment or earnest money. They guarantee further payment in the future.

#### **Illustration:**

I met Heidi klubberud when I was a sophomore in college. I did not take me long to realize that I needed to change her last name. A year and a half later I started ring shopping. I was advised to buy a nice engagement ring since you only buy an engagement ring once. I could not afford a nice engagement ring since I was a poor college student, so I financed one...

In order to convince the bank to give me a loan for the engagement ring I had to make a down payment. Why do banks make you put money down? The downpayment is your way of guaranteeing the bank that you will pay the loan off. I worked hard to pay the loan off. It was paid off in twelve months. Don't worry it was paid off before we got married.

#### **Application:**

In a similar sense the resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's down payment to us. It is the firstfruits guaranteeing something greater in the future.

By the way, Paul is not referring to the general resurrection of all people in chapter 15. He is only speaking of the resurrection of the saints.

Other parts of the bible promise that there will be a general resurrection of the dead. Everyone who has ever lived will be raised on the day of judgement. There is no escaping this.

But that is not what Paul is talking about here. what he is promising here is that every christian will be raised to receive a glorified resurrection body when he returns.

Maybe you are thinking... the resurrection is a nice idea. I mean, I hope the resurrection happens, my body is fading, I'm in pain, my life is hard... a bodily resurrection would be nice.

But is it really going to happen? How can we be sure???

Some secularists accuse Christians of creating the doctrine of the resurrection to give them hope while eliminating despair.

Since Christ is the firstfruits our resurrection is guaranteed. This means the end of despair.

If you are a child of God, the best is yet to come.

Maybe you are currently drowning in despair...

In debt.

lonely.

Broke...

depressed...

in physical pain.

stressed about work...

unreconciled to your spouse, parents, siblings, or old friend...

It is easy to despair, to groan, and to give up hope... even the creation groans.

**Romans 8:19–23 (ESV) — 19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. **23** And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Don't despair, since Christ rose, you will rise, the best is yet to come, this is guaranteed!!!

*I understand that I will rise, but I don't want to die... this brings us to the second point.*

*First, since Christ rose, you will rise.*

## **Second, since Christ rose, death will die!**

The human race is painfully aware of the reality of death. As a result, we are willing to do anything to avoid thinking about it.

We don't even like to use the words death, dead, dying, or die.

Instead we say that Joe or Jane has  
gone to a better place,  
or has passed,  
or has deceased,  
or has expired,  
or is pushing up daises,  
or has cashed in their chips,  
or is now six feet under,  
or kicked the bucket...

Several tech billionaires in the Silicon Valley are putting forward massive amounts of money to figure out how to avoid death as long as possible.

The Pal Alto Longevity prize is a one million dollar cash prize that will be awarded to any scientist or team of scientists who can end the aging process.

### **One article says,**

“In September 2013 Google announced the creation of Calico, short for the California Life Company. Its mission is to reverse engineer the biology that controls lifespan and “devise interventions that enable people to lead longer and healthier lives”. Though much mystery surrounds the new biotech company, it seems to be looking in part to develop age-defying drugs.”  
(Theguardian.com)

### **One of the scientist working for a death defying silicon valley startup writes,**

“...the world is in a “pro-ageing trance”, happy to accept that ageing is unavoidable, when the reality is that it’s simply a “medical problem” that science can solve. Just as a vintage car can be kept in good condition indefinitely with periodic preventative maintenance, so there is no reason why, in principle, the same can’t be true of the human body, thinks de Grey. We are, after all, biological machines.”

We avoid talking about death, we are now paying to prolong death, and we talk about cheating death...

### **One article contained ten amazing stories of people who cheated death.**

here is one of them...

German native Juilian Koepcke was flying through the air when her airplane malfunctioned. She fell 2 miles from the sky — still strapped in by her seatbelt — when her plane crashed into the Amazonian mountains in 1971. Remarkably, the 17-year-old sustained only moderate injuries. She spent 10 days looking for help in the jungle, where the waters teemed with crocodiles and piranhas, until she was discovered by a group of Peruvian lumberjacks.

According to the story, Juilian cheated death.

But... no matter how much we avoid talking about death, pay to avoid death, or attempt to cheat death, we will all die.

### **But there is a day coming when death itself will die.**

**1 Corinthians 15:23–26 (ESV) — 23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. **24** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every 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.

Everything Paul says in verses 23-26 builds on the resurrection of Christ mentioned in verses 20-22. In other words, the resurrection of Jesus Christ started a chain reaction that cannot be stopped.

His resurrection is like the first domino in a cosmic game of dominoes that lasts for at least 2018 years. The first domino has been pushed over. The last domino to fall is death. And nothing can stop this domino from falling.

Let’s look again at verses 23-26. In these verses Paul describes a sequence of events ignited by the resurrection in verse 22.

**1 Corinthians 15:23 (ESV) – 23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Christ will rise first as the firstfruits... when he returns to earth he will raise the saints from the grave

**1 Corinthians 15:24–26 (ESV) – 24** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every 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.

When Christ returns, he will raise the saints, then the end will come. At the end he will return the kingdom of God to God the father.

Let me repeat the sequence again,

Christ rose as the first fruits (22-23)

Then Christ will return. (23a)

Then the saints will be raised. (23b)

Then comes the end of the age. (24a)

At the end of the age King Jesus will present the kingdom to his father.

The kingdom that Christ will present to his father is a perfected kingdom. In other words, every enemy of the king, including death, has been destroyed (v. 25-26).

The process of destroying death was inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ and it will be consummated at the return of Christ.

*Since Christ rose, death will die.*

### **Application:**

#### **Many Christians have a narrow view of the resurrection.**

We argue that the resurrection proves that Jesus is God, which it does.

We argue that the resurrection proves that we will be raised, which it does.

We argue that the resurrection proves that the bible must be trusted, which it does.

We argue that the resurrection proves that we will be justified, which it does.

We usually stop here... forgetting the cosmic significance of the resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that someday death will cease. This is a huge deal.... Over 110 billion people have lived and died on planet earth.

There is no cure for death.

Many of us know the pain of losing a loved one...

All humanity has known for thousands of years is death. Death is the great enemy that no one can overcome with money, health, power, or influence.

But Jesus has destroyed death through his resurrection!

**One scholar writes,**

“Christ’s resurrection demands our resurrection; otherwise death will not be defeated, and God cannot be ‘all in all.’ Thus, Paul’s concern is ultimately theological; he is not just concerned with the death of individuals, but with the defeat of death itself as the final enemy of God.”

### **That is great Dave, but people still die! Why?**

Because like the kingdom of God, Christ victory over death is an already not yet reality.

We see this in verses 22-23 of chapter 15.

**1 Corinthians 15:22-23 (ESV) — 22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Christ’s resurrection sets in motion a process that is guaranteed to be consummated, but its consummation is in the future.

In the meantime, it is not death to die. Why? Because death ushers Christians into the very presence of God where we await the resurrection of our bodies.

When we receive our resurrection bodies we will reign with God forever. This brings us to our last point...

*First, since Christ rose, you will rise.*

*Second, since Christ rose, death will die.*

### **Third, since Christ rose, God will reign!**

#### **In this age, God the son reigns over all things!**

**1 Corinthians 15:25-27 (ESV) — 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 “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.

What is Paul saying?

Jesus Christ, the son of God, rules and reigns over all things. Remember, that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. According to Genesis 1-2 and Psalm 8 (quoted in 15:27) mankind was created by God to rule over creation. That has not worked out well.

God sent his one and only son to earth as the God man. Jesus is fully God and fully man. One of the reasons Jesus came to earth was to rule over creation as the perfect man, as the one true representative of the human race.

The man Christ Jesus earned the right to rule over all things by conquering sin and death through his death and resurrection. In this sense, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the public coronation of king Jesus. At the resurrection God the Father gave his son the throne of the universe. Now as the resurrected Christ, the man Christ Jesus rules over the cosmos.

You can read more about the connection between Christ’s resurrection and coronation in Dr. Bruce Ware’s excellent book *The Man Christ Jesus*.

Here is the point, because of his resurrection, the man Christ Jesus, the son of God, currently reigns over all things. He will reign from his first coming to his second coming. But then his reign will end. This takes us to verses 27-28.

*In this age, God the son reigns over all things!*

**In the age to come, God the Father will reign over all things!**

**1 Corinthians 15:27-28 (ESV) — 27** For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. **28** When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

Currently, Christ rules over all things with one exception. He does not rule over his father (v. 27). Paul writes, “It is plain that he (the father) is excepted who put all things in subjection under him (Jesus Christ).”

No one rules over the father. When the resurrected Christ returns, and all things come to an end the son will give the kingdom back to his father according to verse 24.

**1 Corinthians 15:24 (ESV) — 24** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

At this point God the father will be “all in all” meaning his rule will be complete.

Meaning no one will ever challenge his authority and dominion.

Meaning that no one and nothing will ever threaten him.

Meaning that his absolute rule will be acknowledged by every atom in the universe.

The father will rule and reign over all, even his son.

Does this mean that the father is superior to the son? Are there two gods? A greater god and a lesser God? No and no... this has nothing to do with ontology, being, or Godness. The father, son, and spirit are equal in value, essence, and deity but different in function.

I like how Eugene Peterson translates verse 28.

**1 Corinthians 15:28 (The Message) — 28** When everything and everyone is finally under God’s rule, the Son will step down, taking his place with everyone else, showing that God’s rule is absolutely comprehensive—a perfect ending!

Here is the point!

Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ currently rules the universe, someday Jesus will hand his kingdom back to his father and the father will reign forever.

Then God’s perfect reign will never cease.

**Application:**

Are you currently submitting every square inch of your life to king Jesus?

Is there an area of your life that you have not given over to him?

You can willingly bow to king Jesus now in the present evil age or be forced to bow to king Jesus when he returns. The later will not be pretty. Either way, every knee will bow. The choice is yours.

God will reign!!! This is really good news.

Because God the father will reign for all eternity-

There will be nothing evil in the new creation.

No death

No disease

No cancer

No racism and poverty

No sexual dysfunction

No child abuse

No pollution

No relational problems

No heart disease

No loneliness...

None of these things will be allowed into the new creation since God the father will reign supreme!

**Conclusion:**

Because of the resurrection the best is yet come...

You will rise.

Death will die.

God will reign.

Lets pray...