

1 Corinthians 15-20-28

Consequences of the resurrection

Scripture reading: please stand to honor the reading of God's word...

1 Corinthians 15:20–28 (ESV)

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 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. 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. 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.

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

Sermon introduction:

In recent weeks many of us have worried about the future...

Some of us have wondered...

Will I have a job six months from now?

Will my retirement accounts bounce back in two years?

Will I get sick 2 weeks from now?

What will happen to my aging parents or grandparents in the next few weeks?

Maybe you have not struggled with anxiety. Instead you are just weary.

You wonder...

How in the world am I going to find the strength to survive with all my kids at home until September?

When will I see my friends again?

When can the church gather again?

As days become weeks and weeks become months, you wonder if your future will ever get better. The longer you wait the wearier you become.

What does our future hold? Will it ever get better?

This brings us to the incredibly good news of Easter and this morning's text.

Here is the main point of our text...

Since Christ rose from the dead, the best is yet to come.

Repeat...

In other words, if you are a Christian, your future is very bright!!!!

How bright??? We will examine three aspects of your future in light of the resurrection.

Since Christ rose, you will rise
Since Christ rose, death will cease
Since Christ rose, God will reign

First, since Christ rose, you will rise!

In other words, 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.

This first phrase points us back to the facts of 1 Cor. 15:1-11. There we are reminded of the historical fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead (and was seen by several eyewitnesses, plus 3 groups of people).

Paul goes on to proclaim that Christ's resurrection 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.

According to verse 21 death affects everyone because everyone has inherited guilt and corruption from the first Adam (See Romans 5:12-20). Fortunately, this is not the last word on the matter. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, came to earth succeeding where the first Adam failed. Through his 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 green bluff in mid-September and find an amazing Honey Crisp apple, you are

guaranteed to have an amazing harvest of honey crisps in mid-October...

The firstfruits were a guarantee of things to come.

Illustration:

The clothing company LL Bean has been around for over 100 years. It is headquartered in the state of Maine. It is a great source of local pride for citizens of the region.

For years and years, LL Bean was famous for two things. The high quality of their merchandise and their incredibly generous return policy. For years, they guaranteed that you could return anything you bought, regardless of the condition, for a full refund.

One man had an LL Bean shirt for over 20 years. He returned it for a full refund because one button was missing.

Another man returned a pair of boots that were 15 years old for a full refund.

Starting in the 1990s people started purchasing LL Bean merchandise at yard sales, thrift stores, and ebay and then taking it to LL Bean to “return it” for a profit.

LL Bean caught on and changed their nearly 100-year-old return policy, roughly one year ago.

At one point they guaranteed that you could return any merchandise, regardless of the condition, for a full refund. They no longer make this guarantee.

When you stop and think about it, few things in life are guaranteed. (not even death and taxes)

Good health is not guaranteed, a happy marriage is not guaranteed, good kids are not guaranteed, hardly anything is guaranteed.

Application:

But there is one thing that is guaranteed... if you are a Christian, you will rise from the dead. This is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus.

If you are a Christian, you will rise to new life when Christ returns.

This means that the end of suffering is guaranteed!

The end of loneliness...

The end of aging..

The end of anxiety

The end of aches and pains...

The end of disease...

This means that the end of coronavirus is guaranteed!

Since Christ rose, you will rise, this is guaranteed!!! There is no need to despair. If you're a Christian the best is yet to come.

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

Since Christ rose, you will rise.

Second, since Christ rose, death will cease!

People seem to be thinking about about death more than ever, these days.

As of Friday afternoon, 102K people have died worldwide from coronavirus.

In America roughly 18,000 people have died from Coronavirus.

In Washington State 450 people have died.

In Spokane County 13 people have died.

More than likely most of us will not die from Coronavirus.

But all of us will die of something.

Every year roughly 57 million people die worldwide.

Every day 152,000 people die.

Every hour 6,316 people die.

Every minute 105 people die.

Since this sermon started roughly ten minutes ago, 1050 people have died.

Death is the great enemy that no amount of money, fame, strength, exercise, healthy eating, or military might can defeat.

The last time I checked, the chances of everyone dying is still 100%.

Death is a very unpleasant topic. As a result, people don't like to talk about death. In fact, most people now days, won't even mention the word death.

Instead they say that Joe or Jane has

gone to a better place,
has passed,
has deceased,
has expired,
has cashed in her chips,
is six feet under,
is pushing up daisies,
or has kicked the bucket...

Christians don't have to be afraid to use the d word because death has been defeated. When I die, feel free to say that David is dead. Death is not the end for Christians... it is the beginning of eternal life with the triune God.

How do we know???

Since Christ rose, death will cease.

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 will last for at least 2000 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.

This means that every enemy of the king, including death, will have been destroyed (v. 25-26).

Since Christ rose, death will cease. This is guaranteed!!!

Application:

The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that someday death itself will cease.

Wow... this is incredibly good news. Over 110 billion people have lived and died on planet earth.

There is currently 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.

But Jesus destroyed death through his resurrection!

If that is the case, why do people still die?

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 come to pass, but it will not come to pass until Christ returns.

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

It is not death to die...

It is not death to die
To leave this weary road
And join the saints who dwell on high
Who've found their home with God

It is not death to close
The eyes long dimmed by tears
And wake in joy before Your throne
Delivered from our fears

It is not death to fling
Aside this earthly dust
And rise with strong and noble wing
To live among the just

It is not death to hear
The key unlock the door
That sets us free from mortal years
To praise You evermore

O Jesus, conquering the grave
Your precious blood has power to save
Those who trust in You
Will in Your mercy find
That it is not death to die

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

*Since Christ rose, you will rise.
Since Christ rose, death will cease.*

Third, since Christ rose, God will reign!

Currently, 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.

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.

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.

Currently, 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 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.

Does this mean that the father is superior to the son? Are their 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 one modern English translation, 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:

Because of the resurrection Jesus Christ is king of kings and lord of lords.

He is currently orchestrating every detail of the universe and your life...

He reigns over your job, your health, your family, your toilet paper supply, your career, your retirement accounts, and every blade of grass in your lawn.

He reigns over the Coronavirus... it has not caught him by surprise.

As king of kings and lord of lords he is moving all things towards their appointed end in world history.

He has a plan for your life, and nothing can stop that plan from unfolding exactly as he intends it to unfold.

The resurrected and reigning Christ is worthy of your trust this Easter morning.

Non-Christians...

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.

Conclusion:

Maybe you have had a hard week, month, year, decade, or life... you have lost hope...

The resurrection changes everything.

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

Since Jesus rose, Christian....

You will rise.

Death will cease.

God will reign.

Lets pray...