

1 Corinthians 15-16



Personal Preparation Day 1 – 1 Corinthians 15:1-34

1 Corinthians 15 is another one of those famous parts of the Bible. Certain phrases will have a familiar ring to them, like “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,” or “Where O death is your sting?”. It’s a long chapter, devoted entirely to the issue of the resurrection from the dead. But when we use it to answer the questions of our day, we miss the very odd ideas of the Christians in Corinth. The trend among “liberal” Christian scholars – along with non-Christians – is to say that stories about the resurrection of Jesus are myths. Perhaps, they say, “his spirit lived on in the memory of his friends.” To Paul and the first Christians, a resurrection to that end is no resurrection at all.

Here’s the strange thing. The Corinthians agree with Paul on the resurrection of Jesus. What they don’t see is its connection with what the future holds for them! In the first section of chapter 15, Paul can happily say that he, the other apostles and the Corinthians, are all in agreement. It’s in the logical consequences of the resurrection of Jesus where the differences are found.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-34

1. What do both verse 1 and verse 11 say?

2. What are the three key parts of the gospel message that Paul “passed on to them as of first importance”?
 - v.3 –

 - v.4a –

 - v.4b –

3. What evidence does Paul cite to show that Jesus really did rise, in verses 3-8? How does Paul see how he fits into the equation (verses 9-11)?

While many may doubt the actuality of the resurrection of Christ, Paul is quite clear that there should be no doubt about the content of the gospel message that the Corinthians first heard. Take it or leave it, Paul’s message certainly said that Jesus rose from the dead. And the Corinthians said they believed it. So what follows next is a strange turn in his argument.

4. In verse 12, what are some of the Corinthian Christians saying?

5. Follow Paul’s logic in verses 13-19:

If there is no resurrection then... (verses 13 & 16)

And if Christ has not been raised then... (verses 14 & 17)

That means for us... (verses 15 & 18-19)

6. How does Paul’s re-affirmation of the resurrection of Christ (verses 20-23) change the Corinthians’ perspective?

7. If some of the Corinthians have picked up on the idea that their resurrection has happened already, and that they're already "spiritual" beings, then they've misread the time! According to verses 24-28, what is "still to come"?

8. The consequences of thinking there's no resurrection are brutally simple. How does Paul put it in verses 31-34, and what needs to change for the Corinthians?

Personal Preparation Day 2 – 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

Now some of the Corinthians think they're spiritual. But that's because they haven't understood the implications of the resurrection. The bodies they're in now aren't going to last, and while that may not be great now, there's something very special in store for Christians.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

1 From verses 35-44, what is the difference between a Christian's body now, and after the resurrection?

2. What precedent and example does Paul use for this in verses 44-49?

3. What do verses 50-55 say to those Corinthians who might think, "if you have enough faith you won't get sick"?

4. What is Paul's encouragement at the end of this chapter? (verses 56-58)

Personal Preparation Day 3 – 1 Corinthians 16

Paul has just been talking about the reality of the resurrection. There's more to life than just "this life" – as demonstrated by Jesus. And that changes our perspective on everything. Once you're convinced about the resurrection of Jesus, your priorities and plans will be very different... or should be!

Paul finished the previous section by encouraging them to "always give themselves fully to the work of the Lord". He's going to finish off his letter with some practical advice, and some recommendations about people who are giving themselves fully to this work.

Read 1 Corinthians 16

1. What is the first way in which Paul tells them to be involved, in verses 1-4? With what attitude should they do it?

2. Look through chapter 16 and list those who are involved in the work of the Lord:

Person	Role

3. How are the Corinthians to treat Timothy (verses 10-11)? How does this involve them in the work?
4. What words does Paul have about Apollos in verse 12? How does this relate to the other references to Apollos you've seen in 1 Corinthians?
5. How do verses 13-14 touch on the ideas raised in chapters 12-15?

As you finish reading through 1 Corinthians, consider those you know who are giving themselves to the work of the Lord. Pray for them, that they may continue to do this. Pray for yourself also that you might know what this looks like in your circumstances.

Coming Up... <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Playgroup Mum's movie night, 20 June- Family Service @ mpc, 22 June- Growth Groups resume 14 July	For Prayer... <ul style="list-style-type: none">- That we might look to the resurrection of Jesus and find hope to persevere.- That we might commit ourselves to the Work of the Lord.
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Group Discussion Questions

Not many Christians (although there are some) would deny the importance of Jesus' resurrection to their faith. What Christians have often failed to grasp though, are the implications of the resurrection not just for their salvation, but for how they will be spending their eternity.

1. For a few minutes, consider how the Christian faith would change if there was no resurrection?

We're just going to be looking at 1 Corinthians 15 in this study – which is probably enough to keep us occupied anyway! We're going to see that the resurrection which is going to shape our eternity, needs to have a real impact on our present.

So it's important to keep in mind where Paul ends up in this chapter. He's not spouting interesting theories and doctrine to stimulate our minds – although that does happen. He's telling the Corinthians so that they would stand firm, letting nothing move them, and always giving themselves fully to the work of the Lord – because this work will last into eternity.

Read 1 Corinthians 15

2. What is the confidence that Paul has for the resurrection? What confidence should the Corinthians have?

3. Common beliefs as to what happens after we die range from becoming ghost-like spirits, to being reincarnated, or ceasing to exist. In verses 12-19, what are the implications of these ideas?

4. But how does Paul picture the future in light of the resurrection? (verses 20-29)

5. So what are the options as Paul sees them, in verses 29-34?

6. How does Paul picture the difference between the body we have now, and the body we will have then? (verses 35-44 & 50-56)

7. How does what happens in Jesus resurrection, and what he's like afterwards, show us what we will be like? (verses 44-49)

THINK:

a. Many think that we will spend eternity as ghost-like spirits, or as angel-like creatures on clouds. What does this passage say about these types of ideas?

b. How do we answer those who say that sickness and suffering can be avoided in this life, if we just have enough faith?

c. What effects do you think the resurrection of Jesus should have in our thinking and our lives now?

(See previous page for prayer points and what's coming up)