

# What Does the Resurrection Imply for Us?

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[ 0 : 00 ] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 14th of May 2000. The preacher is Leroy Coote.

The sermon is entitled, What Does the Resurrection Imply for Us? And is from 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 20 to 34.

Without light, we can't see in the dark. Without finishing in positions 1 to 8 on the AFL ladder, your team cannot win the premiership.

And that's not a problem on either count for the kangaroos. Without batteries, this torch won't work, no matter how hard I flick it.

However, with batteries, childproof torch, this torch would work.

[ 1 : 18 ] Similarly, without Jesus' resurrection from the dead, we as Christians have no hope.

The passage that Sean just read to us reminds us of four things. Where our hope started. When our future hope will be realised.

Who gives us this future hope. And what our future hope means for us today. Firstly, Paul reminds us of where our hope started.

Have a look at verses 20 to 22 with me. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. The first roots of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being.

For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. Verse 20 reiterates the fact that Christ has been raised from the dead. The dead are those who have physically died, but were believers in Christ.

[ 2 : 29 ] It's a reminder of the key point of verses 1 to 19. That Christ has been raised in body from the dead. But, according to this passage, what is Christ's resurrection from the dead?

According to this verse, it's the first fruits of those who have died. Sounds like a strange concept, first fruits. So let me explain what it means.

The first fruits are the beginning of the harvest of a plant. But the term also implies that a full harvest will follow at a particular time.

Let me make that further an example. At home in Sydney, we used to have a mandarin tree. And we'd get lots of mandarins off it. The first lot we picked were the first fruits.

But also there were other mandarins, not quite ready to be picked, but waiting to be picked in the future. It was indicative of the future harvest of mandarins we would get.

[ 3 : 35 ] It was a tree that usually reaped a big harvest of mandarins. But that harvest of mandarins is nothing. Absolutely nothing compared to the harvest that's mentioned in this passage.

So now that you're clear on the concept of first fruits, how does that fit into the resurrection of Christ? Well, Christ's resurrection is the first fruits. The future harvest is that those who have physically died as believers will be raised to be with God.

This further reiterates the fact that without Christ's resurrection, we wouldn't be here worshipping the great God that we do. We definitely wouldn't have the certainty of our salvation that we do have without the resurrection of Christ.

And this is what verses 21 to 22 remind us of. They remind us of what we resurrected from. Death. Death came through Adam, the first ever human being.

Paul's point here is that in our human rebellion against God, death is inevitable. But, because of the perfect human being Jesus, death has been conquered.

[ 4 : 51 ] God has given us this gift of resurrection from the dead by raising his son from the dead. Only God can raise people from the dead.

And this fact brings about the great line of verse 22. For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. Now some people use this verse to say all humanity will be made alive in Christ once death has been conquered.

On face value, you can understand how that comes about. But, in fact, it is only those who are in Christ that will be made alive.

And it's a point that's supported by verse 23, which describes the fact that Christ is coming for those who belong to him. And not all of humanity. Adam bought death.

Christ bought life by conquering death. And thus giving us more hope than humanity could ever give. But some of this has happened, like Christ's resurrection.

[ 6 : 07 ] And the rest will happen in a specific order. Look at verse 23 again. But each in his own order. Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming, those who belong to Christ.

As stated earlier, the concept of firstfruits implies a future harvest. If the firstfruits is Christ's resurrection, then what is the future harvest? Look at the second part of verse 23.

At his coming, those who belong to Christ. His coming is a reference to the fact that Christ will return.

At that time, the rest of the harvest, which is those who are in Christ, will be taken to be with him. Jesus Christ was the first one to be raised.

The firstfruits. The harvest is when he comes back to take those who belong to him. The resurrection paved the way for Christ's return.

[ 7 : 11 ] Without it, we wouldn't have a chance to be with him at the end. It is at the end that our hope will be fulfilled. But when is that going to happen?

This leads me to my second point. When will our future hope be realised? Have a look at verses 24 to 26 with me. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority in power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy is being destroyed, namely death. At the end, which has been triggered by the resurrection, Jesus will hand over the reins of the kingdom to God the Father.

But that's only after Jesus has destroyed all rulers' authority and power that is against God. It's only then the perfect world that is depicted in heaven can come about for the people of God.

Everything and everyone that is in rebellion to God must be destroyed before he is able to take over completely. All enemies of Jesus must be put under his feet before Jesus' rule of the world can be handed over to God.

[ 8 : 36 ] This is what will happen to fulfil our hope. No enemies against God to worry about. Those people who are giving you a hard time about your faith?

No need to worry about them. There will be peace for those who are persecuted in other places in the world. There will even be no death to worry about, as stated in verse 26.

Death's destruction gives full meaning to life. It allows us to have the eternal life promised in other parts of the Bible, such as Romans 6.23, which reads, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When this happens, and only when this happens, our hope will be fulfilled. That's the hope we yearn for as Christians.

A life free from death. Life eternal with Jesus our Saviour. This life we can hope for, only because of Jesus' resurrection.

[ 9 : 50 ] But thirdly, who gives us this future hope? Where does it come from? Have a look at verses 27-28 with me.

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 this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one, who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all. Now reading that sounded quite confusing.

I hope in the next few minutes I can actually unpack it for you. To start with, the hope we have come about because of God. In these two verses, Paul is summarising what is going to happen at the end, but from the perspective of the one who initiated this action, and that's God.

God is the one who will put all the rulers, authorities and powers of verse 24 under the feet of Jesus. All things except Jesus will be put in subjection under him.

[ 11 : 01 ] Jesus will defeat all enemies and bring them under the sovereign rule of God. They will all be subject to the authority of God. And all this could only happen because God raised Jesus from the dead.

However, when all things have been trampled on by Jesus and brought under the rule of God, then Jesus will come under the rule of God for the simple reason that God, and only then, God may be all in all.

And why is that? Because the punishment for sin, death, has been finally defeated. Only when death has been defeated will our resurrection to be with God the Father take place, which God ultimately started when he raised Jesus Christ our Saviour from the dead.

Friends, let me encourage you to hang on to this great hope. this great hope that we have in Jesus. Because only then will we be able to live perfect lives under him.

But that's into the future. The resurrection is in the past. What I've just described as in the future. It's a small gap. It's called the present.

[ 12 : 30 ] How does our future hope because of Jesus' resurrection apply to the present? What does that mean for us now? This brings me to my fourth and final point.

What our future hope means for us today or subtitled The Implications of Our Future Hope for the Present. And from verses 29 to 34 there are three implications.

The first one is that we don't have to work for our salvation at all let alone in any bizarre ways. If you want to look for bizarre ways have a look at verse 29.

Otherwise what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all why are people baptised on their behalf?

Quick sidelight tip when you see the word otherwise here's a little thought to think about. What otherwise other wise words can you substitute to put in in place of otherwise?

[ 13 : 43 ] Now the New International Version which is another version of the Bible does that. It doesn't use the word otherwise but uses the words Now if there is no resurrection and if we put that into verse 29 the first part of verse 29 will read this Now if there is no resurrection what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead?

Sounds a bizarre practice doesn't it? Getting yourself baptised on behalf of dead people. It wasn't puzzling to me when I looked at it it must be really puzzling to you guys but the scary part about it is even more puzzling to Paul so much so that he asked this question the second part of verse 29 If the dead are not raised at all why are people baptised on their behalf?

It's a bizarre practice that is debated by many as to its aim and to its actual occurrence but no one has yet come to a conclusion as to what it is In fact it is the only mention of this type of baptism in the New Testament So from all commentators on people who have written about this verse in 1 Corinthians I think their advice to all of us will be ask God when you get to heaven But I think at this point it's safe to conclude that it was an unusual practice that was happening exclusively in the town of Corinth It implies in Corinth that there were a few people who were physically dead and unbelievers could be saved could receive their salvation from God if other people who were believers were baptised on their behalf Now that would be like me getting me going for baptism on behalf of my non-Christian on behalf of non-Christian workmates and them receiving the salvation them receiving the gift of salvation

It's really bizarre It's really strange It would be like It's strange basically But the aim of this was to place the unbelieving dead into a category to be raised when Christ returns But there's a funny thing in baptism It's actually the person who is baptised that receives the benefits of baptism not anybody else but the actual person being baptised Friends, let me remind you of something something that's really important We're only saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ There's nothing else that Christians can be saved from Only God can raise his people from the dead to be with him when he returns

Only our sovereign God can save us Only our sovereign God will judge who he raises and not whether we and not whether we get baptised on behalf of other unbelievers So that's the first implication of that we don't have to do any of the work of salvation Jesus' death and resurrection is sufficient for us The second implication is that our lives have purpose In verse 30 we see Paul talking about the question Why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour?

[ 17 : 40 ] This verse is a reflection on the dangers Paul has put himself in for the sake of the gospel Paul is subject to death on a daily basis because of his belief of the resurrection and we see countless times in Acts where he's in danger where his life's in danger and being thrown in prison

as well And it's a boast he makes this bit in danger not as a gladiator but in Jesus Christ as stated at the end of verse 31 And that's his reason for living the way he does because he is in Jesus Christ And I hope I really hope and pray that it's the same reason for us In effect if there's no future resurrection of the dead we're wasting our time we're wasting our lives living as Christians We're living for nothing really But I can assure you that's not the case

But I can assure you that our lifestyles need to be anchored in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise of hope which God will enact at his appointed time in the future In Australia personal danger because of our faith is something we rarely face But in countries such as Indonesia Sudan and many many many others we could we could name this verse would ring true to them because of the severe persecution they face I'm sure we can think of many examples of persecution Here in Australia at worst we face verbal persecution such as the church is full of hypocrites the church is not relevant for me Or my latest favourite that's nice for you dear but it's not for me etc etc etc But none of this really presents the type of personal danger Paul is referring to even though personally we may be hurt by it

And further on in verse 32 Paul further expresses the futility of life without the resurrection when he says If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus what would I have gained by it?

If the dead are not raised let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die The wild animals in verse 32 are generally seen as opponents that Paul is arguing with in Ephesus His gain in arguing with his opponents would have only been for personal satisfaction like I outsmarted you sunshine but not satisfaction based on the hope he has due to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise of resurrection in the future to be with the Father And in that verse we have the ultimate statement of life without a right belief in the resurrection and that's the second part of verse 32 which reads If the dead are not raised let us eat drink for tomorrow we die Life for Paul and hopefully for us is not worth living without the resurrection of Jesus What do you have to hope for otherwise?

Maybe a new house a new car a good job a better job a retirement package These pale into insignificance compared to the hope we have in Jesus Our hope because of the resurrection makes life worth living for and ultimately gives us purpose Our third implication of our future hope for the present is the wrong belief in the resurrection leads to sin and can lead you to falling away from right belief As a result of Paul's desire to live a life that expresses the hope he has because of the resurrection of Jesus he says this in verse 33 Do not be deceived Bad company ruins good morals [ 22 : 09 ] This means be careful of those who keep odd beliefs otherwise you could be swayed by them It also means to keep company with those who will affirm the correct facts about the resurrection On a more dangerous note it also means that wrong belief can also ruin a right attitude to Christian living It can affect the passion we have for the gospel of Jesus Christ simply because our hope is not in the right place It can happen slowly and get to the point that our beliefs get watered down Now I'm not saying we shouldn't hang around with non-believers but what I'm saying is that we need to keep our eyes firmly placed on the hope that Christ has ready for us But also let me encourage you to hang around people who have a right and passionate belief about the resurrection as well And it is this point of straying from right resurrection belief that is emphasised in verse 34 which reads

Come to a sober and right mind and sin no more for some people have no knowledge of God I say this to your shame Paul wants us to have a right belief in the resurrection The belief which is right has been spelt out in the preceding verses For Paul having a wrong belief about the resurrection is like being drunk It's slurred It blows your mind out Not that I've been drunk It does all sorts of weird and wacky things It makes you sick In terms of the resurrection it leads to improper belief It distorts our view of the gospel It can even lead to spiritual death So let me encourage you to get sober and get onto a right belief about the resurrection Paul gets even more severe about wrong belief about the resurrection

In fact he calls it sin rebellion against God He gets even stronger by saying that if you don't believe in the resurrection of the dead then you really have no knowledge of God Members of the Corinthian church have strayed so far that their belief in the resurrection makes them like people who have no knowledge of God and Paul says this to shame them back into a right belief about the resurrection It's also shameful but they are believing a view of the resurrection that is contrary to what Paul had taught them earlier And the implication for us as back in Corinth is this that if we don't believe in the resurrection the Bible teaches us then not only are we as bad as the Corinthians

but also we don't have a belief in this correct belief in the central event of our salvation the central event that gives us life and the result of this wrong belief it could result as drifting away from God and giving us a distorted view on the hope that Jesus has promised us none of us here want to have a distorted view about the resurrection do we?

We've heard enough about it A torch without power is like the Christian without hope Our hope as Christians started when God raised Jesus from the dead This hope will be realised when Christ returns to take his people to be with him That will happen once all enemies of God have been conquered including death It's a future given to us by God Our future hope applies in the present in that we all must live our lives in the knowledge and right belief that Jesus did rise from the dead as the first fruits of our own resurrection from the dead We also live in the knowledge and right belief that he's going to come back and take us his people to be with him That's a right belief about the hope that the resurrection provides for us

And our response Let's not stop celebrating The way we celebrate that is through right obedience to God Let's continue to celebrate the events of Easter Sunday because that's what our lives need to be A continual celebration of the resurrection knowing that Christ will return in the future Amen  
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