

How Are We To Live (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Introduction

Corinth was a city where many cultures and religions mingled. The Corinthians worshipped many gods and their practice of religion was often integrated into government, civic festivals, social clubs and everyday life.

Paul had founded the church in Corinth in about 50 AD. He had lived there for about 18 months. Just as the city of Corinth was a mixed group of religions and cultures, the Church at Corinth was troubled. There were problems of sexual sin and drunkenness within the church. There was license, the belief that it doesn't matter how I live because God will forgive me. There were factions within the church (Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ). The church had opened its doors to vice and worldly pleasure. This was a distracted church. To be called a Corinthian was a derogatory label.

Paul wrote the book of Romans from the city of Corinth (3rd Journey, 57 AD, Acts 20:2-3). Read Romans 1:18-32 and you might get a picture of what Paul saw out of his window in Corinth. 1 Corinthians is a pastoral letter to a spiritually troubled church teaching them what God wants for / from His children. It is in 1 Corinthians that Paul reminds the Believers that the body they live in is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

Paul teaches that the resurrection changes everything. It is the pivotal event of history. If Christ is not raised, we are at best misguided; your faith and my faith are in vain, preaching is useless, the witness of the Apostles is false, sin remains unforgiven and believers die without hope, if Christ is not raised. Christ is raised and believers will be raised.

1. Views on death.

The Greco-Roman world believed that death ended life completely. The OT has many references to the decay of death, the depths of the grave, and Sheol as the pit of destruction.

Those who believed were a people of hope. The OT writers do not, for the most part speculate about what happens in the afterlife. They simply present the belief that faithful people will live because Yahweh lives and He will not abandon His people. Their hope was in the living God.

2. Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians.

The gospel had changed his life.

Believers are those who have received the gospel, stand on the gospel, are saved by the gospel, hold fast to the gospel.

What is the gospel?

The gospel is simply that Jesus died on the cross for our sin, was buried in a tomb, and was raised (resurrected) on the third day. This was all according to scripture. (Isa. 53:3-12)

Euangelion—used 76 times in the NT. It refers to the content of the good news / gospel or the good news proclaimed about Jesus or by Jesus. Ultimately, the gospel is Jesus himself.

Paul defended the gospel against the Judaizers who were teaching “another gospel” which is really not a gospel at all (Gal.1:7). He defends the gospel to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 15:12-19)

3. Our sin is forgiven because of the gospel, because Christ is raised.
We are set free. No longer does the burden of sin stand between us and God. We are saved by grace through faith.

This salvation is complete but it is also a work in progress. When Christ forgives you and saves you there is nothing that can ever change what He has done. And He continues to work in you.

Philippians 1:6 “6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” We are made right with God when we enter into a relationship with Christ.

4. Death is not the end, because Christ has been raised.
We too shall be raised.

Believers are a people of hope. The dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed (15:52). This perishable shall inherit the imperishable. (1 Corinthians 15:53-54)

5. It matters how we live.
The disciples were not expecting the resurrection but Jesus had taught them He would be raised. They should have known.

Paul tells of those who saw Jesus after the resurrection (15:5f). Cephas (Peter); 500 gathered; the 12, James and all of the apostles. Last of all to one untimely born, “he appeared to me also” (8). Paul said the grace of God was everything.

The resurrection is reason for celebration. It proved that Jesus is the Messiah. Death is defeated! Lives are changed! It serves as a reminder that God is always with us. He’s not dead! Joy fills hearts! Victory is accomplished!

The Resurrection teaches us that hope is real! Between the sacrifice and resurrection there is hope that carries us through! Between salvation and His return we are promised His presence! Persecution, pain and suffering are not removed.

The resurrection assures us of His presence. In fact, God desires our company! We were made to live and in our living to enjoy God forever.

God goes with you. He longs to be invited into what we do as we walk out of church and into the rest of our lives. Remember, God stays, no matter what! God stays!

And, Sin is forgiven! Death is not the end! So, what are we to do? Live our lives
with purpose because of the resurrection!