

CHAPTER 15



St. Paul turns in 1 Corinthians 15 to a problem that strikes at the heart of the gospel he preached to them (15:1): some Corinthian Christians denied that Christians will be resurrected. The problem is so serious because, as the apostle points out several times in this chapter (15:2, 16-17, 19), the Christian hope is in vain if either Christ or they will not be resurrected.

He starts with a brief summary of the gospel he preached to them: Christ died for our sins (15:3), was buried and rose again on the third day (15:4), and that he was seen by a large number of people beginning with Cephas (or St. Peter) and ending with himself (15:5-8).

Some of the Corinthian Christians believed that it is impossible for the physical body to be resurrected. St. Paul points out, however, that such a philosophical position undermines the gospel. Since you believe the gospel message that we apostles preached to you, he asks, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection (15:12)? If people cannot be resurrected, then Jesus is not risen from the dead (15:13, 15-16). And, if Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, then the Christian faith is empty (15:14).

Fortunately for us, this line of reasoning is not correct: Christ is risen (15:20)! First Christ is resurrected, then those who belong to Him are resurrected when He comes again (15:23), and then comes the end of the age when Christ abolishes all enemies of God (15:24-25), and finally destroys death itself (15:26).

Now that he's established the fact that there is a resurrection, St. Paul moves on to discuss what the resurrection will be like. God will give each person a glorious body that is unique, just as planets and stars exist and are glorious in different ways (15:40-41). As we bear the image of the first man - Adam - because we are human beings, after the resurrection we shall bear the image of the heavenly

Man - Jesus - because we shall be perfected (15:48-49).

This perfection is significant because the corrupt flesh and blood of our present bodies cannot inherit the kingdom of God (15:50). This means that we will need to be changed. This will occur at Christ's Second Coming, and notice two key facts about this event: first, it will be an instantaneous change, like the "twinkling of an eye" (15:52); and everyone who belongs to Christ - both the resurrected dead and those who are alive at that moment - will be perfected (15:51). Knowing all of this, Christians should therefore be unmovable from our avoidance of sin as well as our pursuit of a holy life through relationship with God (15:58).



TODAY'S SPECIAL: RESURRECTION LIVING

To embrace Christ is to embrace Life itself! Fr. James Meena explains, "The power and presence of the living Christ should be seen in the way we conduct our personal lives — the way we pray and worship; the way we work and use our time and talents; the way we treat others and relate to them. The risen Christ should also be viewed in our families — the way parents love and care for each other and their children; the way children honor, respect and obey their parents. Finally, the power of the Resurrection should be prevalent in our parish — the way families and individuals believe the best about one another; the way we together trust God for the direction and vision He gives to His Holy Church; the way we truly love one another and see Christ in each other."

The liberated Christian is called to "live a new life" (Romans 6:4, NKJV) and "walk in newness of life" (Ibid., RSV). This new, liberated life is, in the words of a twentieth-century Orthodox Christian, "The joy of spiritual renewal, the joy of putting on Christ, the joy of being joined to Christ as to the Source of eternal life, the joy of entire dedication and faithfulness to Christ as our Saviour, Who by His Resurrection has given us eternal life."

