**Easter Sunday**

**The Hope We Have - 1 Cor 15:50-58**

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – April 4th, 2021

**Intro:**

* At this point in my life as a pastor, I think I still have done more weddings than funerals. But I imagine in time, I will do more funerals than weddings. Not everyone will have a wedding, but everyone will have a funeral. The hard facts of this certain reality drive us to want to know, "What happens after death?" Different religions draw differing conclusions – from speculation, to annihilation, to reincarnation, to damnation or new-creation. There seem to be a lot of options, but they all can't be right.
* "How can we know?" is determined by "Who can we trust?" And “Who can we trust?” is determined by the character of the person. If I am going to trust anybody, I am going to trust Jesus – who was anticipated by the ancients, who was proclaimed by the prophets, who was announced by the angels, who was born of a virgin, who was declared the beloved Son by the Father, who was baptized by the Spirit, who proclaimed the kingdom, opened blind eyes, walked on the water, fed the five thousand, raised the dead, healed the sick, delivered of demons, never gave into temptation, died in my place, rose from the dead, taken up in glory and proclaimed to the nations. I am going to believe Him, I am going to trust Him, I have placed all my chips on His number, and I am "all in," because there is no one like Him. In Him, we have placed all our hope, and this hope will not be disappointed.
* Today, in our celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are going to talk about the hope we have because of who Christ is and what He has done so we can be encouraged about what is to come and be strengthened in our faith.
* Paul, in his letter to the Corinthian church in chapter 15, talks in detail about the resurrection of Christ: why it matters, and what it means for us. We are going to focus in on the last verses of this chapter, so if you have a Bible, open it up to I Cor. 15 starting in verse 50. The first thing we find in this passage is you will be changed.

**Because of the resurrection, you will be changed**

**1 Cor 15:50-53 NIV**

**I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.**

* These bodies of ours will not make it to heaven in their present form, for they have been corrupted. You cannot gain heaven by your own merit. You and I and every person on this planet has been corrupted by the power and penalty of our choices to disobey and rebel against our creator. We have been turned over to our corruption, and we cannot and will not inherit the perfect and imperishable kingdom of God. We are mortal, and the kingdom is immortal. We are imperfect, and the kingdom is perfect.
* But here is the truth: not everyone will "sleep." I like the word "sleep" for "death" because those that only sleep will wake up. And those who are going to wake up to new life will be woken by an eternal trumpet that no one will or could sleep through. At the moment that the "alarm clock" rings, that last trumpet is blown, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, you will be changed. It is that "great getting up morning" where what is sown in disgrace will be raised in glory. You may be buried by the sounding of one trumpet, but you will be raised by the sounding of another.
* The great British prime minister, Winston Churchill, arranged his own funeral service. At the conclusion of the service, a bugler high in the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral on one side played Taps, the universal signal that the day is over. There was a long pause. Then a bugler on the other side played Reveille, the military wake-up call – saying a new day had begun. Come on Winston, that a boy. I think a great inscription for a grave marker would be "waiting for the last trumpet.”
* Why? Because here is the promise: the trumpet WILL sound, the dead WILL be raised imperishable, and we WILL be changed. This is the guarantee that God Himself gives us, and He will do it. In this promise, we have been set free by being captured by this great hope.

**Because of the resurrection, death will be defeated**

**1 Cor 15:54-55 NIV**

**When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"**

* Death does have a sting to it. It hurts when someone is stung. There is pain and sorrow and sadness. The separation and the loss are heartbreaking. It is real, and we weep and groan in our grief. But that is not the end of the story: it may be Friday, but Sunday is coming. The mortal will be made immortal, and the perishable will be made imperishable, and death, even though it stings, will not have the last word.
* This passage quotes another passage as the prophet Isaiah looked forward and told us what was to come, even long before Jesus came. On the mountain of God,

**Isa 25:6-9 ESV**

**The Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food and the finest of meats, of aged wine well refined. 7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.**

**8 He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. 9 It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."**

* The "veil" will be removed; we will receive in full what we have already (Ill. of a wrapped present - salvation is like an unopened present, we already have it, but we don't have it yet. We have it presently, but not fully).
* And this is for "all peoples," "all nations," and "all the earth" – not just for the Jewish people, but to all the people. This is the gospel to the nations was proclaimed and impregnated in the OT, and this meaning and message is being fulfilled and lived out through the NT and in our times.
* And this image is re-established in the description of what is to come in the book of Rev. "**He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more**" (Rev 21:4, ESV).

**Because of the resurrection, Christ will be victorious**

**1 Cor 15:56-57 NIV**

**The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

* The law of God is like a mirror that shows the true nature of our fallen condition. And Jesus’ life and teaching are like a magnifying mirror that makes it utterly clear how truly sinful we really are (see the Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5-7).
* So the law gives sin its power. And the wages (the sting) of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). And because of this fact, we cry out:

**Rom 7:24 ESV**

**Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**

**1 Cor 15:57 NIV**

**But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

* He GIVES US the victory – this is imputed righteousness – we do not win the victory over death, Christ won the victory over death and then gave it to us! Salvation can only be received as a gift and it cannot be earned. It is by grace we have been saved through faith (see Eph. 2:8-9, Rom 5:20-21). We are victorious because Christ is victorious. He did not just point to the way, but He IS the only way to the Father (See John 14:6-7).

**Because of the resurrection, your faith will be rewarded**

**1 Cor 15:58a NIV**

**Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you.**

* Now that we know all this, stand firm in this truth. Let nothing move you. Not trial, or riches, or fame, or famine, or pain. Not philosophy or argument, nor difficulty or hardship. Stand firm. Don't let anything, or anyone move you. Let us stand on the faith we now profess, like countless Christians and the famed reformer Martin Luther when being tried for the convictions of Scripture, "Here I stand, I can do no other" **(Show Slide).**

**1 Cor 15:58b NIV**

**Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.**

* Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord. Why? Because this is what matters, this is what has the staying power; only this is what will last. Because of the results and implications of the resurrection, this is the only sensible advice to give. Stand firm, let nothing move you, give yourself fully to the work of the Lord. Your labor is the Lord, is not empty, or temporal, it is the only thing that has staying power. It is the only thing that will not be burned away by the test of eternity (see I Cor. 3:11-15).
* Words like this are what inspired "all-in Christians" like Jim Elliot, who gave his life to bring the gospel to the ends of the world, to say: **"He is no fool, who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."**
* And guys like Charles Studd (1860-1931), who used his fortune and fame to start a mission movement in China, India and Africa.

**“Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.” - Charles Studd**

* And this is what he did! He lived in places where the gospel was hard to reach: China, India, and Africa. He also wrote a famous poem called "Only One Life." The poem has a repeated phrase that my grandmother had on a plaque by her kitchen window. The poem ends this way:

**Only one life, yes only one, Now let me say, "Thy will be done";**

**And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say "twas worth it all";**

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.**

**Only One Life - by C.T. Studd**

**Conclusion**

* Because of the resurrection, you will be changed.
* Because of the resurrection, death will be defeated.
* Because of the resurrection, Christ will be victorious.
* Because of the resurrection, your faith will be rewarded.
* Rejoice in the great hope we have been given. Rejoice in the grace that has been extended. Rejoice that there is a future in the love of the Lord. Rejoice that God has given us the grace to join with him in what He is doing.
* Receive this gift today, recommit yourself fully today.
* Prayer