

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Collect Prayer - 7th Sunday after Trinity

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

Are there questions or comments from the last session? For those of you following online you may email Fr. Bart at fryanssc@frontiernet.net

1 Corinthians 15

¹Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, ²by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

I. The Kerygma - The Creed - A response to questions concerning death

A. Paul uses this to remind the Corinthians of what it means to, "Jesus is Lord"

B. The introduction to the formula begins with the statement "I delivered to youthe statement shows the formula is older than this teaching

C. Paul notes his comparison with the other apostles in reference to the fact that his testimony is no less authentic as the earliest witnesses to the Resurrection

D. the proof to the effectiveness of Paul ministry and the credal formula is in the faith of the Corinthians

¹²Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; ¹⁴if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.

I. Paul is preaching the effectiveness of the Cross and arguing both negatively and positively

A. Linking the death of Jesus to the death of every human being

B. Faith is in the raising of Christ from the dead

C. If Christ was not raised the faith is misplaced

²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷“For God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection under him,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things under him. ²⁸When

all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one.

I. The effectiveness of Christ Death and Resurrection - Part of the Ordering

A. That Christ was raised - Paul's Preaching is effective and the faith of the Corinthians is effective

The proof is the witnesses to Christ Resurrection

B. The effectiveness is that we do not die, but fall asleep

C. The issue of first fruits

1. There is an ordering of how the dead are raised - God's Plan

2. First Fruits also implies that there will be a later harvest - first fruits then the rest of the harvest

3. Adam - Christ in juxtaposition - Adam is the proto type human for the first age - Christ is the prototype for the new age - Christ completes the first and bring Adam to the fullness he was created to enjoy.

4. Finally, there is an end to the harvest - the Parousia (The coming of Christ at the end time) - this ushers in the final state of being when God is in all and all is in the Kingdom of God.

²⁹Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? ³⁰Why am I in peril every hour? ³¹I protest, brethren, by my pride in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! ³²What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ³³Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." ³⁴Come to your right mind, and sin no more. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

I. What does Paul mean by Baptism of the Dead?

A. Likely a practice that took place at Corinth in the highly syncretistic society

B. Is he talking about Baptism of the Dying or recently dead infants?

C. Or is he talking about those who are dead intellectually, or in their practice

You do not have to be a priest for very long before someone asks you to Baptize their child, who is not a member of the church or even a practicing Christian. What do you do?

II. Second Issue of the passage - What happened at Ephesus?

A. He could be referring to wrestling with those who did not accept the truth of the Gospel

B. We also read in Roman's 16:3-4 ³*Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks;*

There could have been real danger perhaps a riot.

C. We have moved in this chapter from considering the future events of our life (death and resurrection) as in the abstract - what will take place eventually. To a reminder of the effectiveness and lack thereof, without proper disposition, of Baptism - To the considering the real dangers that are faced in life for all human being - believers and nonbelievers - And now we move again to the practical

³⁵*But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"* ³⁶*You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.* ³⁷*And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.* ³⁸*But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.* ³⁹*For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.* ⁴⁰*There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.* ⁴¹*There is*

one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴²So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.

I. The first question is how the dead are raised - Now we consider - What type of Body do they have?

II. The Explanations

A. Body and Soul - Paul answers the Greek question. Are we to have only a Soul, or is there something more? Body and Soul is the answer - this is still an issue for Christian's today - funeral comment "I know his soul is in heaven" or worse with Children "I know that now he is an angel"

B. What kind of Body - the Jewish question - The Diaspora had caused many Jews to question afterlife beliefs. If we would all be gathered in the New Jerusalem, how would we get there - would we be naked when raised?

The Answers: Agricultural, Zoological and Astrological analogies

1. Seeds - grow into plants
2. God gives different bodies to different animals - each to fit their need
3. Different heavenly bodies - Different types of bodies - Sun, Moon and Stars - different types of glory

If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

I. The Spiritual - or Holy Spirit filled body is introduced - Paul is completing the analogy between Adam and Jesus - the first and the culmination of man -

NOTE I did not say last man

II. Paul appeals to Scripture

A. Adam - the first man - (*protos anthropos*) note Greek words *Anthropos* not *Aner male*

B. Paul speaks of the first and the second, but he does not name Jesus because the second man is not the last man, but the culmination of *anthropos* is the heavenly being

C. Scripture tells us: There is a beginning and an end

D. The first man was given life - the last man gives life

The Genesis imagery continues as Paul reaffirms his point. Man as he is, is of the dust man as he could be is Holy Spirit Filled

⁵⁰I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

⁵¹Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O death, where is thy victory?

O death, where is thy sting?”

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

I. Paul begins this section by trying to get our attention - listen up - Brothers and Sisters -

II. This is Paul's "Homily" he is translating the imagery and thoughts of Jewish Apocalyptic literature and translating into ideas and concepts that the Hellenistic audience can understand

III. Death is the result of sin and the law - not just Jewish Law but any law- we can not be perfect, but because Jesus was perfect we obtain our victory over death through Him.

IV. The Doxology is the spontaneous joy Paul feels as he puts to paper the faith he embraces.

1 Corinthians 16

¹*Now concerning the contribution for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. ²On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come. ³And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.*

I. Paul mentions this collection in every letter - a collect for the poor in Jerusalem

II. This collection is not just an offering made for the poor, but a symbolic understanding of the communion of the church

III. Each is expected to contribute to the benefit of the total community - reference our stewardship today

⁵I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, ⁶and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may speed me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷For I do not want to see you now just in passing; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

I. Paul's travel Plans- typical of letters of the time but there is more

A. Focus is on where Paul wishes to be - with whom he wishes to share fellowship not just visit (Remember absence and presence)

B. His reason for traveling is preaching the Gospel

C. The travel plans help us date the letter - Paul clearly wrote from an Asian Metropolis - staying until Pentecost indicates early Spring - with knowledge of his other travels the letter is dated - Probably Spring of 53 A.D.

¹⁰When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ¹¹So let no one despise him. Speed him on his way in peace, that he may return to me; for I am expecting him with the brethren.

¹²As for our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brethren, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.

I. A letter of Recommendation - the unity of the Corinthian Church will benefit by accepting Paul's emissaries.

A. Timothy - there was an issue of conflict - it is later healed

B. Apollos

1. Apollos was known to the Corinthians - conflict over Baptism
2. No information as to why he did not want to come
3. We do not know if Apollos was with Paul when he wrote this letter

¹³Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. ¹⁴Let all that you do be done in love.

I. Paul's personal good bye

¹⁵Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; ¹⁶I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. ¹⁷I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; ¹⁸for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men.

I. Not much is known about these men, but the names are Roman

II. They could have been members of the Roman Colonist in Corinth

¹⁹The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. ²⁰All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

²¹I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

I. This is the formal address to those who will read the letter

II. The formalized greeting identifies the Christian Kiss of Peace

III. Paul identifies himself as the writer

²²If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!²³The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

This is the solemn farewell - much like the end of a liturgy