

O Death, Where Is Your Victory? 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Introduction

One of the most unique features of Christian religion is the doctrine of resurrection. If the death of Christ on the cross was the culmination of Christ's victory over devil and sin, His resurrection from the grave sealed that victory and assured our resurrection from dead.

His resurrection thus proved the following:

1. He is God indeed—His divinity is proved and hence He is eternal.
 - The application of this is that our faith and salvation does not depend on a man, but it depends on God.
2. He is the Triumphant King—the waving by the palm leaves on Palm Sunday signified that truth about Christ.
 - The application of this is that we have a victorious God who is able to lead us all the way.
3. He is the First Fruits of all those who have died. The “first fruits” in Israel always anticipated a harvest.
 - The application of this is that in Him our resurrection is guaranteed
4. Christians have the most definite and the powerful message of hope and eternity.
 - The application of this is that we know, with all certainty, where we are going!

In fact, this is the theme of 1 Cor 15, the classic chapter on Christian resurrection. This long chapter Paul concludes with a “victory song” that declares victory over death.

Spiritual Transformation Guarantees Physical Transformation (vv 50-53)

Paul now reveals a great mystery that the spiritual transformation brought unto us by the redemptive work of the Lord would lead us unto a great physical transformation.

- We are not for annihilation or soul-sleep, but the dead shall be raised, and the living be changed (1 Thess 4:17).
- This change will be from corruption to incorruption; from mortality to immortality.
- In other words, the resurrected ones will be in the glorified body, like Christ was on earth after His resurrection.
- This transformation will be from natural bodies into spiritual bodies.
- Paul says in Philippians 3:20-21, “For our citizenship is in heaven; from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall transform our lowly body, that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”
- It will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It will not be a supernatural metamorphosis, but it will be an instantaneous recreation from one form to the other, from the earthly to the heavenly.
- This will happen at the last trumpet, means the trumpet that would be sounded at the end of the Church Age. Read 1 Thess 4:16-17.

Spiritual Victory Guarantees Physical Victory (vv 54-57)

Paul, quoting from Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14, acclaims, “death is swallowed up in victory.” Christ’s resurrection broke the power of death. Death is no longer master over every believer because the grave could not hold up the Creator of the universe.

- Christ took hold of the sting of death. “Sting” means wound, and the animal kingdom uses it to wound and destroy the enemy. Like a bee leaves its stinger in its victim, Christ bore the whole of death’s sting that we live evermore.
- This is the VICTORY that Christ brought on the Cross.
- Christ on the Cross bruised the head of Satan and destroyed his power once and for all. Hebrews 2:14-15, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”
- In verse 56, the sting of death is sin means the harm in death is caused by sin and death itself is caused by sin (Rom 5:12). And the power of sin is the law as the law of God reveals God’s standard and when the standard is broken, it reveals man’s sin.
- In verse 57, Paul says, “but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ.” This is the whole point of the Holy Week!
- Revelation 20:14, “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” Revelation 21:4, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Conclusion

How should we respond to this wonderful truth of Christ’s resurrection?

- 1 Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”
- His blessed redemptive work for our sin calls us to be away from sin.
- Titus 2:11-14, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”