



151st Church of Christ
Small Group Study Guide – 1 CORINTHIANS
by Richard Wolfe

AN IMPERFECT LOCAL CHURCH
A Study in 1 Corinthians
CLASS – Lesson 22

GENERAL OUTLINE

1 Corinthians 15:1-58, Another report – The resurrection

OUTLINE: Lesson 22

1 Corinthians 15:1-58, Another report – The resurrection

15:1-11, Christ is risen

15:12-19, The resurrection of Christ and logical implications

15:20-28, The resurrection of Christ and ultimate implications

15:29-34, Secondary arguments for resurrection

15:35-49, The resurrection body

15:50-58, Resurrection victory

Most of the problems addressed in 1 Corinthians dealt with behavior. Some Corinthian Christians were doing bad things and Paul wrote to correct this inappropriate behavior. However, even if he is focused on the behavior, he shows that the bad behavior grew out of a failure to understand basic truths about the body of Christ. For example, their misconduct during the Lord's Supper demonstrated that they didn't understand godly love and the proper relationships among members of the church body (i.e., doctrines of love and fellowship).

However, in chapter 15, Paul goes directly and extensively at bad doctrine. He will allude to sinful behavior that bad doctrine could produce, but this is primarily a doctrinal discussion. Faithful Christians must believe that Jesus rose from the dead and that his resurrection leads ultimately to our own. If we don't believe in the resurrection from the dead, we will fail to keep our eye on the prize (9:24-27) resulting in a life that is focused on an earthly reward instead of eternity with God.

Paul opens the discussion on common ground – Christ is risen. All Christians were considered to believe that Christ was crucified and that he rose from the dead. From that common starting point, he proceeds to show that belief in our personal resurrection is the natural outcome of belief in Christ's resurrection.

DISCUSSION

1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Christ is risen

- 1. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel that he had preached to them. How had the Corinthians responded? Paul presents their response in a past-present-future timeline.**

- 2. Paul gives a 4-point summary of the gospel with each point stated in a phrase beginning with "that." What are the four verbs that express those facts?**

- 3. Paul had received the gospel in this form, and he had delivered (or passed on) that message. What was the other crucifixion-related message that he had "received and delivered" to them according to an earlier passage in 1 Corinthians?**

- 4. How many witnesses or groups of witnesses to the resurrected Christ does Paul mention? Which of these appearances are recorded in the four Gospel accounts? What additional source of supporting testimony does Paul identify in verses 3 & 4?**

- 5. Considering his past, Paul says that "by the grace of God I am what I am." Was God's offer of grace to Paul the same as, or different from, God's offer to anyone else? What could have rendered God's grace, as offered to Paul, "vain?"**

- 6. Paul is writing to Christians, so his reference to the resurrection and witnesses to the same are not intended to convince the Corinthians or prove to anyone that the resurrection is factual. His readers already accepted that fact as true. What does Paul indicate in both verses 1 & 11 as his purpose in reviewing these events?**

- 7. Who are the “they” of verse 11? What, according to Paul, did they have in common with Paul on the subject of the resurrection of Christ (cf. Acts 2:30-33; 3:15; 10:40; 13:28-37; 17:31; 24:21)?**

1 Corinthians 15:12-19, The resurrection of Christ and logical implications

This paragraph (vv. 12-19) is developed with two hypothetical situations expressed in a series of “if...then” scenarios. The point is to show that if A is true, then B cannot be true. Conversely, if A is not true, then B must be true. In the following paragraph (vv. 20-28) the hypothetical and erroneous, “if Christ is not risen,” becomes, “since Christ is risen,” and serves as the foundation of our faith and reason for living.

- 8. Why is Paul presenting this extensive discussion of the reality of the resurrection of Christ along with the pros and cons of belief in the resurrection of Christians?**
- 9. If Paul’s preaching about the risen Christ was true, and they all believed that truth, what was the logical conclusion concerning their own resurrection?**
- 10. Every verse in 12-19, with the exception of 18, has an “if.” In vv. 13-19 the if phrase is a hypothetical statement that either “Christ is not risen,” or that “the dead do not rise.” In vv. 13-19, identify the logical conclusion that necessarily follows in each case if either of these statements is true.**
- 11. In these few verses Paul twice repeats statements word for word that are of great importance for his message. Find them.**

1 Corinthians 15:20-28, The resurrection of Christ and ultimate implications

- 12. How does this paragraph balance the pitiable outcome of the “if Christ is not risen” scenario in the preceding paragraph?**

13. What was the immediate outcome of Adam's sin? If Adam's sin spoiled God's plan for mankind, what does the resurrection of Christ do for God's plan?

14. What does Paul say in verse 23 that lets us know that the "all" who shall be made alive of v. 22 does not mean that every person who has ever lived will be made alive? Who are those who will be made alive?

15. Does Jesus reign over his kingdom today? What will Jesus do with his kingdom when the "end" comes? If Jesus reigns today, why is there still so much evil in the world (cf. Hebrews 2:8-9; 10:13)?

1 Corinthians 15:29-34, Secondary arguments for resurrection

This paragraph concludes the section of the chapter that affirms the reality of resurrection. The next section (vv. 35ff) fills in some blanks concerning what will happen at the resurrection. Here, for this preliminary conclusion, he mentions a couple practical examples of things people do, or that he has done, that are done on the conviction that there will be a resurrection. If there is no resurrection, these actions are futile. He begins with an intriguing mention of people "who are baptized for the dead."

16. Whatever is meant by being "baptized for the dead," what good purpose could this baptism have if there is no resurrection from the dead?

17. When did Paul "fight with beasts"? What is the message of this statement?

18. What role does belief in the resurrection have in maintaining good habits (ESV: morals; NIV: character)? How does this verse (v. 33) connect with verse 12?