

## **Sixth Corinthians Talk**

### **1 Corinthians 15 p1091**

Over the last 6 weeks we have been on a journey, back and forth in time and in place. We have taken our text, in Herts today and examined first what it might have meant 2000 years ago in Greece.

That's always the essential first step in understanding and applying scripture. What did it mean then?

The next step has been to go from Corinth 2000 years ago to Herts today. A surprisingly short step given the remarkable similarities we saw between old Corinth and today's England.

We made discoveries about being a church with real purpose. The primacy of love, the importance of team functioning, generosity (you may have missed this – it was given at a poorly attended 8am service in Wormley), worship. Copies of all are available if you have missed any.

Today our journey is from the **cross** of chapter 1 to the **resurrection** of chapter 15. From one piece of foolishness to another!

Remember *'the message of the cross is foolish to those perishing but to those being saved the power of God.'* The resurrection is even more foolish and unbelievable. People don't rise from death. The only thing in its favour is that it really happened and as we saw Paul cites 500+ witnesses as well as Peter, the 12 and James.

**The resurrection validates Christ's saving work on the cross and is the guarantee of our own resurrection our own hope of eternal life.**

Once again Paul gets into this key faith issue by correcting an abuse or misunderstanding. V12 says that some were denying it, even though it was an article of their faith that Paul explained a few years before.

Actually denial of the resurrection is still a problem even in the church today. There are even clergy etc who feel that, to make the Christian message more believable let's remove the miraculous. Concentrate instead on e.g. the ethical teaching of Jesus's ministry rather than its saving power.

I once read *'The historicity of the resurrection is not theologically relevant'. !!!*

I have non Christian friends who simply cannot believe that 'Christians' think like that. Interesting isn't it that churches where there is real activity and growth are Bible believing and preaching churches and communities. Churches that preach the cross and the real resurrection.

So Paul brings them back to the core **truth** and goes on to root their own **hope** in just that, **the real resurrection**.

**Death is conquered so victory is secure!**

As we move from Paul's teaching on the resurrection to our own Christian hope I am going to let the Bible speak for itself by reading parts of 35-58. I want you, at home, to

read the whole chapter. If you have no suitable Bible I have ch 15 copied in the version we have here.

Before we read 2 thoughts.

**First** Note v 2 and v 58.

*<sup>2</sup>By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. <sup>58</sup>Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. **Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.***

**Hope** is **secured** through faith alone (sola fide Martin Luther). It comes from God's grace as a gift of faith not by doing good things. However there is a **clear expectation** of staying firm, committed to Christian discipleship. Work for God must be our response. Hilary and I were chatting yesterday in the car (on the way to Twickenham-another sort of Cathedral) of just how marvellous and exciting it is to see this parish coming to life, folk going from **faith** to **action** and clear numerical growth too.

**Secondly about this hope.** Remember 'we see through a glass darkly, then face to face'. Can I ask you to clear away from your minds memories of 'heavenly' art you might have seen, medieval, renaissance or more modern, and have instead this image. **A signpost pointing to a path.**

A **signpost** gives a direction of travel, but not a photo or picture of where you will end up. Stick to the path believing the signpost and you will reach your destination safely. Don't guess, don't think you know better. Have faith in the signpost. This is especially true if you are in the hills and mist descends. Get back to the **path**. There you are assuredly safe. Don't wander aimlessly or speculate as to a better way. **Ch 15 and elsewhere in scripture is that signpost, that path.**

Read 35-44, 50-58

**V57. read again.**

Because death could not hold its prey, Jesus Christ, neither will it be able to hold its further prey. **What a hope this is for those who are in Christ!!**

Do you have that confidence that Paul had, that all is under control in God's hands, that death is conquered, that our resurrection is assured?

As I have said before, if you want to explore any of these issues further please speak with us or ask for a booklet. Certainly take ch 15 if you do not have a readily accessible Bible version of your own.

**V57. read again.**

AMEN