

Sermon: The Resurrection of the Dead

When: March 31st

Where: St John UMC, Prospect, Ky

Text: 1 Corinthians 15: 12-26 (NIV)

By: Rev. Dr Alvarez

Focus:

1. Definition: The belief in the physical resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous at the end of time.
2. Explanation: The resurrection of the dead assures us of God's justice, rewards for the faithful, and eternal consequences for the disobedient.
3. Recap the previous verses in 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul discusses the importance of the resurrection and emphasizes its significance in the Christian faith.

Introduction:

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today we come together to contemplate and reflect upon the powerful and profound doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. This belief, rooted in the teachings of scripture and affirmed throughout the history of the Christian faith, is a cornerstone of our hope and a central tenet of our faith.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance^[a]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead teaches us that just as Christ was raised from the dead, so too will all those who believe in him be raised to new life in him. This belief is not just a comforting thought or a metaphorical idea, but a truth that has the power to transform our lives and our understanding of the world.

The resurrection of the dead speaks to the ultimate victory of life over death, of light over darkness, and of love over hate. It reminds us that our earthly lives are not the end of our existence, but rather a preparation for the eternal life that awaits us in the presence of God.

In **1 Corinthians 15:17**, the apostle Paul writes, "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive." This passage reminds us that through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, we are given the gift of eternal life and the hope of a future resurrection into glory.

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Point 1: The Necessity of the Resurrection (vv. 12-19)

- Observation:

- There were some in the Corinthian church who were denying the resurrection of the dead.
- This belief was causing division and hindering the spread of the Gospel.
- Paul refutes this belief by presenting the consequences if there is no resurrection.

- Interpretation:

- If there is no resurrection, then Christ has not been raised from the dead.
- If Christ has not been raised, our faith is pointless, and we are still in our sins.
- Without the resurrection, there is no hope for eternal life.

- Application:

- The resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of our faith.
- It gives us assurance of our salvation and victory over death.
- As believers, we must hold fast to the truth of the resurrection and proclaim it boldly to others.

Point 2: The Guarantee of the Resurrection (vv. 20-23)

- Observation:

- Paul affirms that Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.
- He compares Christ's resurrection to Adam's sin, stating that in Christ, all will be made alive.
- The order of resurrection is Christ, then those who belong to him at his coming.

- Interpretation:

- Christ's resurrection is a guarantee that we, too, will be raised from the dead.
- Through Adam, all humanity experiences physical death, but through Christ, all believers will experience resurrection.
- This resurrection will happen when Christ returns again.

- Application:

- Our hope of resurrection is based on the certainty of Christ's resurrection.
- We can have confidence in our future because of what Christ has already accomplished.
- We must eagerly wait for his return, knowing that it will bring our ultimate victory over death.

Point 3: The Conquering of Death (vv. 24-26)

- Observation:

- Paul explains how the resurrection conquers death and brings an end to any other opposing powers.
- He references Psalm 110:1, which speaks of Christ's rule over all things.
- The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

- Interpretation:

- The resurrection of Christ demonstrates his victory over sin and death.
- He is now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords.
- At his second coming, death will be abolished entirely.

- Application:

- As believers, we can be assured that eternal life is ours through Christ's victory over death.
- We are no longer slaves to fear, for Christ has conquered death.
- In light of this truth, we must live with boldness and courage, knowing that death has no power over us.

The resurrection of the dead also offers us hope and comfort in the face of suffering, loss, and death. It reminds us that even in our darkest moments, God has the power to bring new life out of death and to restore us to wholeness and joy.

As we reflect on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, let us remember that this belief is not just a distant theological concept, but a living reality that has the power to transform our lives and our world. Let us hold fast to this hope, knowing that through Christ, we have been granted the promise of resurrection and the assurance of eternal life.

May we live each day in the light of this truth and witness the power of the resurrection in all that we do.

Call to action:

- a. Contemplate the reality of life after death, ensuring your focus on heavenly treasures rather than worldly pursuits.
- b. Live with hope and anticipation of Christ's return, eagerly awaiting the resurrection of the saints.
- c. Share the hope of resurrection with others, boldly proclaiming the Good News of eternal life in Jesus.

Conclusion: Summary of the three main points: The necessity, guarantee, and conquering of the resurrection.

Final Application:

Let us hold fast to the truth of the resurrection and live in the hope of Christ's return. May we boldly proclaim this truth to others and live with confidence, knowing that death has been conquered. May the reality and power of the resurrection transform our lives and give us an eternal perspective.

Prayer: Lord, help us grasp the significance of the resurrection of the dead. Fill our hearts with the hope that one day we will be raised with You. Strengthen us to live with an eternal perspective and evaluate our choices and priorities accordingly.

Benediction: May the reality of the resurrection of the dead infuse your life with hope and purpose. May you walk confidently, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.