

1 Cor 15:50-58 - "We Is Risen"  
Small group notes for the facilitator

Opener: What did Easter mean to you as a kid? Did you have family traditions?

This is week four of talking about resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 - it's the final week! Paul started off talking about witnesses of the resurrected Christ, then that he was the firstfruits of the resurrection to come, then the kind of body we have at resurrection (imperishable) and now this week the hope we have because of the resurrection.

Read 1 Cor 15:50-58.

**Q. Paul says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." Does he mean that we cannot inherit the Kingdom right now - that the Kingdom of God is just something to come?**

A. With what he's been saying previously which we interpret as the "now but not yet" Paul is talking specifically about the perishable body not being able to enter into eternal glory. He's not saying that the Kingdom of God is not present now because he's already said it is (1 Cor 12-14).

**Q. Does Paul suggest that there are signs for the end of the church age - that we'll know the moment Christ will return?**

A. Probably not - if anything he calls it a mystery and suggests that it'll be in the twinkling of an eye (this arguments starts in vv 23-26 and continues in 51-52). Most of the passages that we point to as signs of the "end" have quite possibly been fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem in AD70. We won't know the day or hour when Jesus returns, only the Father has ordained this, Jesus himself didn't know.

**Q. What is death? How would you define it to an alien from a planet where they lived forever?**

A. This is subjective of course but we see it as inevitable, as a finality but Paul sees it as the next step - maybe even the point of our existence (c.f. Phil 1:21).

**Q. So what is the sting of death?**

A. In earthly terms it's the pain we may feel as we die or it's mourning a loved one. But in heavenly terms it's sin (v56).

**Q. How has Christ overcome the pain of death?**

A. In earthly terms we find hope in the fact that those who have died are not lost forever (v18) and possibly we'll see them again someday. In heavenly terms Christ has defeated sin - we no longer live as people dead in their sin, we live as people alive in Christ (v57, Rom 6:11, et al).

**Q. Does this imply some kind of universalism? Resurrection for all = eternal life for all?**

A. I said on Sunday that this isn't a case of heaven and hell, it's life and death. It's choosing Jesus or not. It's an eternity with Christ as opposed to an eternity without him. An eternity with no separation from Christ is perfection; an eternity completely separated from him - what could be worse?

**Q. Why on earth would Paul need to tell them to be steadfast and immovable in their "work of the Lord?" (Who God has created them to be.) Why should we be steadfast and immovable? It's choosing life over death - why would that be something we'd find difficult to remain steadfast in?!**

1 Cor 15:50-58 - "We Is Risen"  
Small group notes for the facilitator

A. Yes, well, that's the question of all questions. Maybe it's a matter of faith, maybe it's because we put our faith in ourselves or in something else (idolatry) - maybe we just simply forget God's promises or we never really believe them in our hearts.

Final: How then should we live? How are we to do "the work of the Lord" when we consider that salvation is not works based? What is our responsibility to ourselves and others?