
Church in Campbell Weekly News

February 25, 2024 Issue 24-07

VI. The victory of resurrection

A. Incorruption over corruption

In the last section of chapter fifteen, verses 50 through 58, we have the victory of resurrection. In verse 50 Paul says, "Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption." Flesh and blood are the components of the soulish body, which is corruptible and not qualified to inherit the kingdom of God, which is incorruptible. Corruption is not able to inherit incorruption. Our corruptible body must be resurrected into an incorruptible one that we may be able to inherit the incorruptible kingdom of God in resurrection. Even today, if we live by flesh and blood and not by the spirit, we cannot practice the church life, which is today's kingdom of God. Then in the millennium, we shall not be able to inherit the kingdom of God. For this, we need to be spiritual.

In verse 50 Paul says that corruption does not inherit incorruption. The old creation is not only corrupt; it is corruption. The kingdom of God, however, is incorruption. Corruption cannot inherit this incorruption.

Verse 51 says, "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." The mystery here refers to the transfiguration, including resurrection, of our corruptible body into an incorruptible one (Phil. 3:21). This is mysterious and beyond human understanding.

The word sleep in verse 51 means die (1 Cor. 11:30; John 11:11-13; 1 Thes. 4:13-16). The word changed means transfigured from corruption, dishonor, and weakness to incorruption, glory, and power (vv. 42-43); the body of our humiliation conformed to the body of Christ's glory.

Verse 52 says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The last trumpet is the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15), a trumpet of God (1 Thes. 4:16). This means that the last trumpet here is the same as the seventh trumpet in the book of Revelation. Certainly after the seven trumpets in Revelation there will not be any more trumpets. Therefore, it is correct to say that

the seventh trumpet in Revelation is the last trumpet in verse 52.

At the last trumpet, the dead in Christ, the believers who have died, will be raised incorruptible (1 Thes. 4:16). We believers who are living at the time of the Lord's return will be changed. The dead saints will be resurrected first; then the living ones will be changed, transfigured, in rapture (1 Thes. 4:15-17). In verse 53 Paul continues, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." The phrase "this corruptible" refers to our corruptible and mortal body, which must put on incorruption and immortality either through resurrection, in the case of the saints who have died, or through transfiguration, in the case of the living ones. Then this mortal body will put on immortality. No matter how healthy and strong we may be today, our body is corruptible and mortal. But in resurrection this body will put on something which the Bible speaks of as incorruption and immortality.

B. Life over death

In verse 54 Paul goes on to say, "And when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word which is written, Death has been swallowed up in victory." The word "when" refers to the time that our corrupted and mortal body will be resurrected or transfigured from corruption and death into glory and life. Then death will be swallowed up in the victory of resurrection life. This is the consummation of the resurrection we share in God's economy through redemption and salvation in Christ. This resurrection begins with the making alive of our dead spirit and is completed with the transfiguration of our corruptible body. In between is the process of the metabolic transformation of our fallen soul by the life-giving Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18), who is the reality of resurrection.

Literally, "in victory" is "into victory." Death means defeat to man. Through Christ's salvation in the resurrection life, it will be swallowed up into victory to us, the beneficiaries of Christ's resurrection life. In this verse victory is a synonym of resurrection. Resurrection is the victory of life over death.

In verse 55 Paul asks, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” This is the apostle’s triumphant exclamation concerning the victory of resurrection life over death.

Verse 56 says, “Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.” Death is of the Devil (Heb. 2:14), and it stings us to death with sin (Rom. 5:12). In God’s redemption, Christ was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) in order to condemn sin through His death (Rom. 8:3), thus abolishing the sting of death. Then, through His resurrection, death is swallowed up by the resurrection life.

Sin brings curse and condemnation to us by the law, both in our conscience and before God (Rom. 4:15; 5:13, 20; 7:7-8). Hence, the law becomes the power of sin to kill us (Rom. 7:10-11). Since Christ’s death has fulfilled the requirements of the law upon us (1 Pet. 3:18; 2:24), the power of sin is annulled. Thus the death of Christ has condemned sin and annulled the law, and His resurrection has swallowed up death. Therefore, we must give thanks to God, who gives us such victory over sin and death through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 57).

In verse 57 Paul exclaims, “But thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This victory over sin and death by Christ’s death and resurrection should not be just an accomplished fact for our acceptance. It must become our daily experience in life by the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit, who is one with our spirit (6:17). Hence, we should live by and walk according to this mingled spirit. Thus, thanks will be continuously given to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is resurrection power that frees us from the law of sin, the power of sin. And in the future it will be resurrection that will swallow up death.

C. A motive for the work of the Lord

In verse 58 Paul concludes, “Wherefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” To question the truth of resurrection is to be shaken. To be assured and remain in the reality of resurrection is to stand fast, to be immovable.

Lack of belief in the truth of resurrection disappoints us concerning our future, thus discouraging us in the work of the Lord. Faith gives us a strong aspiration that we may abound in the work of the Lord with the expectation of pleasing the Lord in resurrection at His coming back.

Paul says that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. This is not by our natural life and natural ability, but by the Lord’s resurrection life and power. Our labor for the Lord in His resurrection life with His resurrection power will never be in vain, but will result in fulfilling God’s eternal purpose through preaching Christ to sinners, ministering life to the saints, and building up the church with the experiences of the processed Triune God as gold, silver, and precious stones (3:12), and will be rewarded by the returning Lord in the day of resurrection (3:14; Matt. 25:21, 23).

(Excerpt from Life-Studies of FIRST CORINTHIANS. #58)

Burdens for Church Prayer

- 2014 renew our consecration and new beginning.
- Establish a prayer life individually and corporately to seek God’s desire for all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.
- Building up a healthy life practices and opening our homes to raise up our next generation.
- Pray for the campus work and for the remaining fruit at West Valley College.
- Pray for our reaching out to Campbell community.

Announcements

- Life-study of First Corinthians 67, 68
- HWMR: 2023 Thanksgiving Conference. Week 2
- 2/27 (Tue.) 7:30pm Prayer meeting at Campbell meeting hall
- 3/2 (Sat). 9:30am-12:30pm Fremont hall 1
37167 Fremont Blvd. Fremont, CA 94536
2024 ICSC Respeaking. Both English and Chinese.
- 3/9 Zoom. 3/30. In-person. Location TBD.
Lessons on shepherding
- 3/15(Fri) South bay Chinese speaking Bible True Forum
- 3/29-31, 4/5-7: Alpha house blending, sign up :
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13nX7IX8K_bZ-iBLP6T5foDTDpP6mm3Hr9C4XpsYqYtc/edit#gid=0
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