

## **Raised with Christ (pt 2): The Unfolding Reign of Christ's Resurrection**

1 Corinthians 15:20–34 | May 7, 2017 | Body Life @OBC

**Last week** we began to consider what it means to be raised with Christ.

We saw that Christ's resurrection unifies the believer to Christ.

And that Christ's resurrection is beginning to have unfolding effects in the world.

**This week** we pick up that same theme and dive deeper . . .

Our aim is to learn what it means for Christ to be reigning . . . both now in this age

And in the age to come  
When he returns.

And today we look again at 1 Corinthians 15 . . . **to see more clearly the unfolding reign of Christ's resurrection.**

So to get a sense of what Paul is saying . . . let's trace the flow of Paul's argument.

And begin to unpack what verses 20–34 have to say to us today.

## Flow of the Argument

**Verses 20** states emphatically that Christ has been raised from the dead. And **vv. 20–22** begin to explain the meaning of his resurrection for others.

**Verse 20** introduces Christ as the firstfruits of God's end-time harvest.

**Verses 21–22** go further to explain the relationship between Christ and his people.

Just as Adam led all men into sin and death; Christ has led all his people into Res. Life.

**Verses 23–24** then unfolds the order of Christ's resurrection.

Again . . . Christ is called the firstfruits of THIS resurrection.

Christ's resurrection is not like the resurrection of Lazarus.  
. . . because Lazarus was raised from the dead, only to die again.

**Christ by contrast is the firstfruits of a new harvest of life.**

Then. . . at X's coming . . . we have the resurrection of those who **belong to X**

Finally following this . . . comes the goal of history.

As **v. 24** says . . . [Christ] will deliver the kingdom to God the Father . . .  
AFTER . . . destroying every rule and every authority and power

So this verse speaks of the two-fold result of Christ's resurrection – the salvation of God's kingdom people . . . and the defeat of all his enemies.

But this still leaves open-ended the question: **What is going on now?**

If the resurrection is real . . . Why do we still see death all around us?

If Christ has the power and authority to destroy his enemies . . . what is he waiting for?

**Should we expect that Christ will use his power and authority . . . to knock down every stronghold and remove every obstacle like some prosperity preachers claim?**

And how does Christ's resurrection have impact today?

**The answer to those kinds of questions are found in vv. 25–34 . . .**

**So let's pick up where we left off last week and dive in.**

You can see . . . v. 25 begins with the word “for” . . . This indicates the order Paul has just listed in vv 23–24 is going to be explained in verse 25.

**To be more explicit.**

Verse 25–26 is one explanation of what Christ is now doing in between his resurrection and his return.

This explanation will depend upon an understanding of Psalm 110:1, which he cites with the words, “**all his enemies under his feet.**”

Verse 27 also begins with *FOR* . . . because it too gives an explanation.

Here Paul explains Christ’s reign in terms of **Psalm 8:6**.

Then **vv 27–28** guard against a misunderstanding of Paul’s words that might indicate two thrones, or two gods, or some division between the Father and the Son.

These words have also been misunderstood by some to make the Son subordinate or lesser than the Father, because it says that the Son will also be subjected to the Father.

**But that’s not what Paul is saying . . . he’s not talking about the nature of God, but how Father and Son will work to bring salvation to their kingdom people.**

So . . . there’s a lot here.

It’s tempting to gloss over the surface . . . but God presses us to go further.

Remember . . . Paul is writing to a group of young believers and he wants them to know HOW Christ’s resurrection is unfolding . . .

He quotes from the OT . . . because he expects new Christians to make sense of HOW Psalm 110 and Psalm 8 point to Christ. . . and HOW Christ will establish his kingdom . . . both now and later.

The same is true for us . . . God wants each of us to understand HOW Christ’s resurrection is working . . .

And even more . . . he wants the resurrection power of Christ to resurrect our lives.

So . . . to get at what is here . . . let’s consider 2 Time Stamps, 2 OT References, 2 Gifts.

## Two Time Stamps . . . Describing Christ's Reign

Look at verses 24–25.

In **v. 24** . . . we see that the kingdom of God is delivered to the Father **AFTER** every rule, every authority and power is destroyed. **This word 'AFTER' is the first time stamp.**

The word for destroyed has the sense of bringing to nothing or finally pass away.

It's a word used in v. 26 to speak of death as the final enemy to be defeated.

However, this destruction of evil was not instantaneous with X's resurrection.

Rather . . . Christ will deliver the kingdom to God **AFTER** he has brought to nothing all enemies – death included.

**This is what he is doing today** . . . he is saving his people from death . . . **AND** he is working to put to an end all those who oppose God's kingdom . . .

Which brings us to **v 25** and the second time stamp: **"For he [Christ] must reign UNTIL . . ."**

These enemies are most likely the ones in v. 24 – **Every rule and every authority, and power** are best interpreted as spiritual enemies who oppose Christ.

In passages like **Ephesians 6** . . . P speaks of how those who belong to Christ "wrestle . . . against the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers who are over this present darkness."

Indeed, spiritual warfare persists in our day . . . as demonic spirits and false antichrists try to deceive and destroy God's people.

But of course . . . they will not succeed

**As Ephesians 1:21** says . . . God **seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.**

So here . . . Paul says Christ is presently reigning at God's right hand **UNTIL** all his enemies are put under his feet – the last enemy being death.

**So three things we can say about this time stamp . . .**

1. **UNTIL Christ returns** . . . death will continue to wage war against the church.
2. **UNTIL Christ returns** . . . the church is in a spiritual dogfight with the powers of darkness
3. **Christ will return and put an end to every enemy** . . . and **UNTIL** then . . . he is exercising his authority in heaven to put all things on earth under his feet.

This is what the resurrected Christ is doing today . . . and it is explained by 2 OT Refs.

## Two Old Testament References to Christ's Reign

Now . . . it's easy to miss how "UNTIL" is actually a word that comes from **the Old Testament**.

**But it does . . .** In **Ps 110:1** . . . David writes, "The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, UNTIL I make your enemies your footstool."

This Psalm is quoted in the NT more often than any other Psalm.

. . . And it provides the language of "**God's right hand**" which occurs throughout the NT.

Acts 1 records the historical day when Christ was enthroned on God's right hand.

Acts 2 interprets Christ's ascension into heaven by Psalm 110 . . .

**Therefore . . . the language of Christ's reign on high is not something only future.**

It is also present. Christ reigns in heaven NOW . . . and on earth, he sends his Spirit and his bride calling the nations to bow down before him.

This is the background to v. 25.

According to the way in which the NT reads and applies Psalm 110 . . .

God's sovereign judgment told in Psalm 110 is not just future . . . it is present, as the Lord sits enthroned in heaven.

Today . . . as God's gospel goes forward it calls enemies to repent and believe.  
AND . . . it warns all who refuse to kiss the Son . . . will be destroyed.

Thus . . . on its own terms . . . we live in a day when Christ is reigning and expanding

As churches are planted and people are entering his kingdom by faith in the gospel . . .  
Christ's reign is coming to earth.

Now . . . to be sure . . . the church DOES NOT bring the kingdom. Only the king does.

But currently King Jesus is reigning in heaven . . . preparing for his return.

If you remember the D-Day / V-Day illustration . . . Christ has both won the victory and received his kingdom . . . AND he is waiting for the full effect of his work to be completed.

This tension fills the New Testament . . . and is on display here.

Christ is reigning . . . but he is also at war with death . . . and so Paul says . . .

**The last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

## Why does he say that??

Because his victory over the grave . . . has not yet eradicated death.

Rather . . . as we find in Scripture and in the obituary column and in our own bodies . . . there is a battle with death and the powers of darkness that is ongoing.

And this tension is what Paul must explain. And to do that . . . he turns **to Psalm 8:6**.

Verse 27 cites from this Davidic Psalm and applies it to the New Creation that Christ's resurrection brings.

As we read earlier in service . . . Psalm 8 is a creation hymn,

. . . that praises God for his majesty seen in the world he has made.

In Psalm 8. . . man is described as being **crowned with glory**.

IOW . . . David looks back to creation and sees God's command for man to have dominion over the earth.

David marvels at this fact . . . and praises God for putting all things under mankind's feet.

Yet, if we just look around . . . not everything is under the feet of mankind.

Weather systems destroy crops . . . homes . . . lives.

Animals attack . . . microbes bring disease . . . dogs bite . . . snakes kill.

Thus . . . creation still groans . . . even as creation has been put under Jesus feet.

Indeed, this is how Paul reads David.

He understands . . . "Ps 8:6 as [a] prophecy of Christ's enthronement at the right hand of God and ultimate authority over all creation." (Hays, *Echoes*, 84)

To say it differently . . . once Christ was raised from the dead as a new Adam, Paul reread Psalm 8 as being applied to Jesus.

Just as the first Adam had everything put under his feet . . . now this new Adam has everything under his feet.

Like the first Adam was supposed to do . . . Jesus is being fruitful and multiplying . . . and bringing under his rule the world given to him.

By his Spirit he is giving life to his people . . . and preparing the world for his return.

## As one NT commentator puts it:

Paul is thinking his way through a theology of creation and of humankind, . . . and . . . the resurrection of Jesus now forms the climax, helping the story to its intended goal...

Wonderfully . . . [T]he failure of humankind ('Adam') to be the creator's wise, image-bearing steward over creation **has not led the creator to [destroy creation]** . . . rather [God has sent] the Messiah as the [true] human being.

The purpose is that in his . . . resurrected human life he can be and do, for humankind and all creation, what neither humankind nor creation could do for themselves.  
(*Resurrection of the Son of God*, 334)

## And what is that? What can this new resurrected man do?

He can give his Resurrection Life to those who are living under a sentence of death.

If you come sensing God's judgment upon you because of sin . . .

If you come feeling dead on the inside . . .

If you come with news that a loved one has died . . . There is good news

Jesus Christ has conquered death . . . **He reigns over the grave**  
**. . . and he promises you his life . . . if you belong to him!**

ATST . . . In the other direction, this new Adam . . . will hand deliver to his Father . . . the ones his father gave him before the world began.

You see . . . Christ is not only giving life to those who are going to die . . .

He is also leading people out of this age of death and disease . . . to the new creation he himself is making . . .

Verses 25–27 explain how Christ has conquered death . . . and received the right to reign as the long-awaited king.

And now . . . vv 27–28 turns to the relationship between Father and Son.

. . . Where Paul leads off with a series of ping-pong pronouns . . .

That is . . . Paul speaks of the Father and the Son

. . . but if we are not careful we can easily get lost in the pronouns.

## Two Gifts of Redemption

→ So let me read these verses with names inserted to help identify the pronouns . . .

**For “God the Father has put all things in subjection under his Son’s feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that God the Father is excepted who put all things in subjection under God the Son. <sup>28</sup> When all things are subjected to God the Son, then the Son himself will also be subjected to God the Father who put all things in subjection under God the Son, that God the Father may be all in all.**

Again, it’s easy to get lost. . . as we watch the Father and the the Son trading kingdom authority.

But make no mistake ... **there is no trading** ... the Triune God never gains or loses authority.

In their shared nature as God, Father and Son share the same authority.

What is described here . . . is the description of Christ’s relationship with God **in his human nature**.

I.E. As the perfect man, Jesus in his role as New Adam . . . rules over all creation, perfectly obeying all the father has said. . .

Therefore, it is important to note that when v. 28 says, **“When all things are subjected to Son, the Son himself will also be subjected to him [the Father] . . .”**

. . . Paul is speaking of Christ **IN HIS HUMAN NATURE**,

To say it another way . . .

It is AS the Son of David . . . that God the Son brings peace to the earth . . .

In the end . . . God will be all in all . . . meaning he will dwell uninhibited with his covenant people . . . because Christ has subdued all creation . . .

That is . . . by his death and resurrection Christ has secured a people for his own possession . . . and defeated his enemies.

Verses 24–26 describe this process . . . .

Verses 27–28 clarify the relationship between Father and Son . . .

**And it’s here . . . where we find two gifts.**



**The first gift goes from the Father to the Son . . . as the Father rewards his son for his work of perfect obedience.**

Verse 27 says that when all things are put in subjection to him – to the Son

The one thing . . . the one person . . . who is not subjected to him is God the Father.

And this makes sense . . . because it is God the Father “who put all thing in subjection under him.”

This is the promise of Psalm 110:5, that God would be at the Messiah’s right hand to defeat his enemies.

Likewise, this is the fulfillment of Psalm 2 . . . that the Son of David who asks God for the nations will receive them BECAUSE he died for them.

In this way, redemptive history displays the ongoing gift of the Father to the Son.

IOW . . . What Christ accomplished on the cross is perpetually being given to the Son.

Every time a sinner is saved . . . it is a gift from the Father to the Son.

You are the gift given from the Father to the Son . . . if you are in Christ.

Think of it this way . . . every day as the light of the sun shines on the earth, the Father gives to his Son . . . more and more of his reward.

The effects of the resurrection are seen in space and time because the Father is giving them to the Son . . .

**Believer** . . . consider how precious you are to the Lord.

If Christ bought you with the price of his life and the Father has given you to his Son . . . is there anything he will not do to secure your salvation and bring you to glory?

**Unbeliever** . . . do you long to know this kind of security and love? It is offered to you . . . if you stop seeking your own ways . . . and will receive the gift of God in X.

**At the center of the salvation stands the triune God . . .**

Before the foundation of the world . . . God promised his Son a people.

In his Incarnation, Christ came to give his life to redeem them.

In his resurrection, he is now receiving these men and women as gifts from the Father, rewards for his self-sacrifice.

But that’s not all . . . at the end of the age . . . Christ will give all who the father gave him back to the Father . . . **This brings us to v. 28.**

In v. 28 . . . Paul writes, “**When all things are subjected to him [Christ], then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.**”

Again . . . the point is not that the Son submits to the Father in his divine nature . . .

But that as the perfect man . . . he will bring all things in submission to him and lead all creation to submit to God.

In this way . . . the Son gives all creation to God . . . but especially, he brings the people whom the Father has given him . . . and he hand delivers them to the Father . . . just as v. 24 says.

This is the glorious mutuality between Father and Son.

In the work of redemption . . . Father, Son, and Spirit work inseparably.

Between them there is no competition or confusion . . .

God will be all in all = meaning all creation will enjoy the peace and the presence of God.

This is not a statement of pantheism where God merges with creation . . .

This is the language of covenant, where no barrier remains between God and his people.

As it was promised for millennia . . . **God will be our God; we will be his people.**

The Father will receive the world that he gave his Son . . .

The Son will gladly give his people to the Father.

Friends . . . this is a glorious reality . . . and one we must ponder regularly . . .

For as we behold this truth . . . we become more like God . . . freed from this world.

This is the way of Christ . . .

As we await his return and the establishment of his new creation . . .  
. . . God works in us . . . changing us . . . altering our desires . . . preparing us for  
the world that he is making.

Indeed . . . this is always the goal of eschatology – to motivate holiness and  
amplify longing for Christ.

And not surprisingly . . . verses 29–34 list three ways that the resurrection spurs us  
on to love and good deeds.

**Let’s close with these verses and three applications from X’s resurrection.**

## #1 –Christ’s resurrection teaches us to follow his commands w/o addition / subtraction.

### Now how do we get that application?

**Look at verse 29–30.** . . . these verses are two of the oddest in the NT . . . READ

There must be a dozen ways to read this verse. If you must know what they are . . . you can read the resource blog on **Tues.** . . . and you’ll find an article outlining them.

For now . . . I will say this . . . I believe the best way to read this odd expression is in alignment with every other passage on baptism in the NT.

I don’t believe he’s addressing a wrong view of baptism in Corinth, for certainly he would have taken more time to correct it.

Rather, he is maintaining his argument about resurrection to say that if the dead are not raised . . . why do people participate in baptism . . . **why are new believers baptized on behalf of THEIR OWN dead bodies?**

It’s an odd expression . . . but one that can be understood in typical fashion.

### And what is that understanding?

**In baptism** . . . the person expresses confidence in Christ’s death and resurrection . . .

**In baptism** . . . they are identifying themselves with X and confessing they have no other hope than by dying and rising with Christ.

The mode of baptism is therefore important . . . as it represents dying and rising with X.

**Thus** . . . the resurrection informs and empowers the way we practice baptism and Lord’s Supper . . . AND IT SHOULD . . . inform everything we do in church.

We do not look for new ways of doing church when biblical practices don’t seem to be popular or immediately effective.

We believe that the risen Lord is building his church . . . and thus we NEVER need to come up with novelties or stray from his truth . . . or his practices.

Rather . . . because Christ is alive . . . we need to pray for his power and give attention to his gospel and the instructions we find in Scripture.

So the first application from the resurrection . . . is to trust his word and his way . . . and not to add to or subtract from Christ’s Word.

## #2 – Christ’s resurrection empowers us to take risks for Christ.

In v. 31–32 . . . Paul speaks of his own sufferings . . . **READ**

Whether these beasts in Ephesus are actual animals or more likely beastly enemies of Christ . . . Paul never avoided risks.

Rather . . . because Christ was raised . . . he knew his life was secure in him.

And thus he willingly endangered himself in order to see others come to life in Christ.

He gladly died to self and suffered physical trauma in order to serve others.  
And so should we . . .

**The resurrection is not just for Easter celebrations . . . it frees us to live with power and security . . . to stop worrying about ourselves and to live for Christ.**

**. . . IT EMPOWERS US TO TAKE RISKS FOR CHRIST.**

## #3 – Christ’s resurrection teaches us to live holy and upright lives.

In v. 32 . . . Paul reminds us that IF the resurrection is a fable, we should live to please ourselves—EAT. DRINK. PLAY. PARTY. DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY.

But if the resurrection is real . . . we must live with an eye to the day when we meet X.

Paul says in vv. 33–34 . . . **DO NOT BE DECEIVED . . . READ**

To the Corinthians . . . this is clearly a warning. They were not living with an eye to the judgment seat of Christ . . . and he says this is shameful.

Today . . . Maybe there are some here . . . living for THEM-selves . . . with little concern for the day when they will give an account.

Ask yourself:

What do these verses say to you?

Are you ready to give an account for the way you have lived?

Are you living in light of eternity and the judgment seat of Christ?

Or are you only living for this week, this year, the next weekend, the next job, the next vacation?

OH how the resurrection teaches us . . . to number our days and live holy lives.

**And thankfully** . . . it also empowers us to live such lives.

**This is our gospel hope** . . . not only that X has been raised . . . but that he raises us w/ him.

Church . . . Don’t leave here today without reckoning what X’s resurrection means for you . . .  
And how his resurrection has changed you . . . or can change you . . .