

The Importance of Jesus' Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15

By Bob Young

Introduction

Nothing is quite so exciting as resurrection--the dead living again, anastasis, literally "to stand up." The spring season is aptly named, a time of bounce back capacity, resiliency, renewal, rejuvenation, restoration.

Christ's resurrection story is told by all four gospels. Not many other resurrections in the gospels: son of widow of Nain, Jairus's daughter. One well-known resurrection story is unique to John's gospel. Today we think again about the resurrection of Lazarus.

Begin in John 11:1, especially note vv. 17-44. You know the story, at least in part, most have used verse 35 as a memory verse.

Listen to the story. Here is an account of physical resurrection. This is almost always the meaning of the word in the New Testament. Each Sunday we celebrate resurrection, affirm that Jesus is our leader in resurrection. He went first, he succeeded; he shows the way. In the Supper we celebrate his death and resurrection every Sunday, "until he comes."

Our title suggests at least two truths.

- Jesus is our leader. There is something nice about having a leader. Even more meaningful, it is special when the leader chooses us. Leaders are for leading. How can we know if someone is a leader? Is anyone following? Jesus is our spiritual leader.
- Jesus leads us in a specific path--resurrection living. What does this mean? How do you understand this? Today we focus not on resurrection after our death, but on resurrection living in this current world.

Consider three characteristics or truths regarding resurrection living.

When Jesus leads us in resurrection living...

1. Failure is not fatal. Jesus PARDONS. (vv. 9-10)

Literally, resulting in death, mortal, lethal. The word is related to fate. Destiny, inevitable, predetermined, controlled, decided in advance, decreed. The results of our failures are not fatal.

We all make mistakes, but mistakes are not permanent, not eternal when Jesus is leading us. Through Jesus we find power to overcome.

2. Life is not futile. Jesus PROVIDES.

Literally, pouring out easily, empty, vain, useless. We would perhaps be empty were it not for the larger, eternal perspective. Jesus gives purpose. Life is difficult, not easy. Burdensome. But as the poem, "Footprints," suggests, Jesus helps carry that burden.

3. Death is not final. Jesus PROMISES.

Promises of Jesus cannot be broken, undone, forgotten. In 1 Cor. 15, he is described as the firstfruits, the promise of what is to come.

Conclusion

Today we celebrate, but tomorrow life's rocky road may return. The roses may show their thorns. Go away today knowing one thing: not just that it is nice that Jesus was raised from the dead, but that because he was raised, "Burdens are lifted at Calvary." Sins are covered, futility, fatality, and finality are erased. As we become like him, we are "Christians." Will you mirror Jesus--experience the death of the old person, bury that old self in baptism, experience the beginning of resurrection living? It is the beginning of life with him, for him, following him.