God may be all in all

1 Corinthians 15:12-34

Key Verse: 15:28 “**When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.”**

It is hard to believe how much of our daily life and our normal routine have been disrupted in such a short period of time. COVID-19 is giving a dramatic impact on our life and that of our families. We hear gloomy news on a daily basis regarding dramatic downfall of economy, rapid increasing numbers of infected people and uncertainty of future. But I would like to take some time to think about the hope that all believers should never lose in all circumstances. It is the hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. May God bless today’s passage to renew our hope in the Kingdom of God as we ponder upon the necessity of Jesus’ resurrection and its power.

**I. The Necessity of the bodily Resurrection (12-20)**

Look at verse **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?**

In this verse we know that some of the Corinthian Christians didn’t believe the resurrection of the dead. Their knowledge and faith was not clear about the resurrection of the dead being influenced either by Greek philosophy, or by the thinking of the Sadducees. They did not deny the resurrection of Christ itself as verse 11 says, **this is what we preach, and this is what you believed** but they renounced their own bodily resurrection. Their faith was more concerned with their present situation than the eternal hope in the kingdom of God. This kind of thinking affected badly to the Corinthian church community. Their minds became earthbound hence they had many problems such as sexual immorality, division and greed. So Paul is carefully proving how the resurrection of Jesus not only proves His own resurrection, but also it proves the principle of resurrection that applies to the all believers.

So here I would like to ask you questions. What do you think of our resurrection? What kind of form we would have after we die. What will happen to people who die not believing in Jesus’ resurrection? Paul answers to all these questions in this chapter 15. So let us have clear faith and knowledge on our resurrection through this study so that our hope in the Kingdom of heaven even more become clearer.

**First, if there is no resurrection, Christ has not been raised.** Look at verse 13. **“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.”** If there is no such thing as rising from the dead, then **“not even Christ”** has been raised. In fact, however, Christ was raised from the dead and there were many witnesses who saw him and preached about him. The Corinthian church was established by these witnesses. If Christ has not been raised, then there is “never” and “any” resurrection and they themselves denies the truth of the gospel.

**Second, if there is no resurrection, faith in Jesus is useless and we are liars.** Look at verse 14-15. **And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 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.**

Christian faith rests on the death and resurrection of Christ. We Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; but he died for our sins and rose from the dead on the third day and gave us a living hope in the kingdom of God. We Christians believe this and proclaim it to the whole world. So, if there is no resurrection, our preaching and faith is useless. What’s more, we are just a bunch of liars who speak false teachings.

**Third, if there is no resurrection, we are still in our sins.** Look at verse 17. **And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.**

Here Paul mentions about the relation between the resurrection and the sin. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Jesus did not rise from the dead. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then death has power over Him and defeated Him. Then his sacrifice on the cross has no effect to pay off for our sins. If then, our sins are not completely paid before God. If our sins are not completely paid before God, then we are still in our sins having no hope for the salvation.

**Forth, if there is no resurrection, Christians are to be pitied.** Look at verses 18-19. “**Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”**

If there is no resurrection, then those who participate in the remaining sufferings of Christ are the most pathetic people. Christians in the times of Roman world were under the severe persecutions. They were torn to death by the beasts; others were crucified, others set on fire once they were identified as Christians. Without resurrection of the dead, the blood of martyrs was futile and those Christians were the most pitiful because they suffered and died without purpose.

Look at verse 20. **“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”** In the previous, Paul demonstrated that Jesus rose from the dead beyond all doubt. The resurrection of Christ is not a theory or an idea. It is an historical fact. Paul proved the truth of Jesus’ resurrection and its necessity. Now he applies the principle of Jesus’ resurrection to all whom belong to Jesus. Firstfruits are the ancient Greek word aparche. This word is used for the offering of firstfruits. In the Old Testament, the offering of firstfruits were brought to God as one bunch of grain to represent the rest of the harvest. As the firstfruits were offered to God, they anticipated the blessing of the rest of the harvest. In that sense, the resurrection of Jesus represents the first fruits that offered to God and it is also our resurrection, because if we have been united together with the risen Jesus, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.

**II. God may be all in all (20-34)**

So far, we have learned that Jesus has indeed been raised from the dead. As the firstfruits offered to God, we also expect our own resurrection with grolified body. This is simple and clear principle of the resurrection. Then, what does Jesus’ resurrection mean for us and for the Kingdom of God? In the rest of verses, Paul explains the power of Jesus’ resurrection that makes us alive and restores God’s kingdom.

**First, the Risen Jesus has the power to give a man new life.** Look at verses 21,22 **“For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”** Adam is one “head” of the human race, and all mankind was brought under death by Adam. The second Adam, Jesus Christ is the other head of the human race, and Jesus brings resurrection to all who are under His headship. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and made him the “firstfruits” of eternal life, a sign for the coming resurrection of believers. Whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

Look at verse 22. **“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive”.** There are two opposite consequences of death. John 5:29 says “**those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.** In this verse Jesus plainly spoke of both the resurrection of life and the resurrection of condemnation. All will be resurrected in the sense that they will receive a resurrection body and live forever. So, all are resurrected, but not all will receive the resurrection of life. Some who die in Adam will receive the resurrection of condemnation, and live forever in a resurrected body in hell. This is the second death. However, some who die in Christ will receive the resurrection of life, and live forever in the Kingdom of God. This is the eternal life. Most of us may not think about death seriously. But these days we see rising numbers of tested positive and death rates by Corona virus as we check the update of Corona on a daily basis. Death is fact that threatens our lives and it has power to condemn people’s life on earth and the life after death. But I praise God that he sent his only son Jesus and he died for our sins and rose from the dead. There is no exception that whoever believes in Christ will be made alive as Jesus proclaimed in John 11:25 **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die…”**

Verse 23 says when the resurrection of body would take place and it reads**; But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.** Jesus receives resurrection first as the firstfruits, and then we receive it afterward when he comes. Again all will be made alive in Christ not undergoing death. Our physical death is the short moment of sleeping status to wake up when we hear Jesus’ voice as he comes again. Then we will be resurrected with glorified body living forever in the new heaven and the earth.

**Second, the Risen Christ has the power to restore the kingdom of God.** Look at verse 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.**

Now Paul extends the scope of Jesus’ resurrection. The risen Jesus would come again to restore the Kingdom of God. This is Jesus’ final purpose of coming as God had in mind ever since Adam’s fall. In the course of restoring the kingdom of God, the Risen Christ will first destroy all evil and unrighteousness. For now, God has granted a measure of rule and authority and power to men, to Satan, and even to death. But all that is temporary. Jesus will take His rightful place as the blessed and he will rule as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Look at verse 25, 26 “**For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”** Paul here refers to the one-thousand-year reign of Jesus described in Revelation 20:1-6. After that time, there will be a final restoration of God’s kingdom, which Jesus will crush and finally and forever put all enemies under His feet. The expression under His feet is used in ancient time as “figure for total conquest.” A king who won the battle brought an enemy’s king before his throne. The winner stepped on enemy’s head and humiliated as the wining ceremony before his people. The last enemy death will lose its power and be destroyed under the feet of Jesus and Jesus will finally restore God’s kingdom to be 100% pure from sin, evil and death. Look at verse 28. **“When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.”** This is the fully recovered God’s kingdom. God is all in all and He will reign his Kingdom forever and ever.

As I prepare the message, I deeply realize how hopeless and perishing this world is. The whole world seemed to be influenced by the power of death. Most of time I stay at home other than I go to work. I feel boring and hopeless so do my children. And I thought about how meaningless life it is if my hope is only in this life. The micro tiny virus disrupted all human regular activities from running, moving and working. People are very much concerned with health, finance and their well-ness under this situation and they feel vulnerable. What does God teach us through this passage? We Christians must be different from the godless. Jesus has indeed risen and he will come again to restore God’s kingdom. I believe that this pandemic is one of clear signs of end time and the risen Jesus our Lord is right at the door. As end time comes near I must take stand firm in the resurrection hope to live up to the hope in the Kingdom of heaven. This too will pass away but the risen Jesus would come to put all his enemies under his feet. Hence my solemn hope is in Jesus and I must shift my hope from this world to Jesus and his kingdom. I pray that I may practically pray for the perishing who do not have this hope while staying at home with my children. When this situation goes away, I would like to witness Jesus’ resurrection that makes the perishing alive.

Lastly, let me read last two verses 33 and 34 **Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.**

Paul’s last remark is that you ought to guard yourself from the bad company and stop sinning as the ones who live with the resurrection hope.