

“Resurrected + Complete”

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

Graphics: road, new life, hope

Big Truth: Jesus was resurrected from the dead to give us victory over death as well. Each believer not only will be resurrected into the life to come, but is called to live a resurrected life now! Each person at PUMC is resurrected at salvation by grace through faith in Jesus and His teachings, life, death, and resurrection. We may be unlikely candidates, but God calls nonetheless. We may have doubts, but God will resurrect us by faith. We may not be resurrected yet, but everything is complete in Christ.

Focus Phrase: My resurrected life is a completed life.

1. Introduction

- A. Pretty soon, it'll be planting season! Pretty soon, we'll turn over the soil and begin the process of planting seeds for a brand new growing season.
- B. Maybe, you're a vegetable gardener like me. There is just nothing like fresh vegetables. Maybe flowers and plants are your thing. Maybe you're a crop farmer and are itching to get those corn seeds in the ground.
- C. When I was first starting to date Stacy, I was invited to come to her parent's house to spend some time with the family.
- D. What I didn't fully realize was that her parents owned a retail greenhouse. They have three houses that have been historically FILLED with plants, flowers, hanging baskets, vegetables, and other things.
- E. One of the most amazing things in the early spring is to go from the warm house, out into the cold, and then into the greenhouse, lush with plants and blooms. It instantly moves the calendar ahead about 2 months...it's warm, and moist, and the air is filled with fresh smells, as the sunshine gets magnified through the greenhouse clear roof.
- F. Every single plant in that greenhouse was started from a single seed. In the early spring, before any of the plants have begun to grow, the greenhouse looks more like a graveyard than a garden. Rows and rows and rows of flats and pots filled with dirt, labeled with the specific variety of plant, waiting. Waiting. Waiting. But nothing green.
- G. Every single one of those seeds, individually planted in every single container or square, has one thing in common. Every single one of them had to die. Every single one of those seeds - some that would become tomatoes, others peppers, others marigolds or petunias - every single seed had to DIE before it took on the life of the plant that was stored in the seed's DNA.
- H. Before it could complete its mission and purpose, it had to die and be reborn into new life...to take on the body it was meant to have.

- I. This sermon series is called Resurrected. In 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in the Greek city of Corinth to tell them that: Jesus rose from the grave - the resurrection happened - and SO WILL YOU as you put your faith in Jesus.
- J. But here's the deal: in order to be raised from the dead to take on the fullness of the complete purpose for which Jesus came to earth, He had to die and be raised to new life - to completeness.
- K. And you and I will follow that same pathway...dying and being raised to new life when Jesus returns and sets everything right again.
- L. So far in this series, we've heard Paul tell us that the resurrected life is a called life. And the resurrected life is a convinced life. Because of our hope in the resurrection of Jesus, and our own resurrections, we live out our mission as called and convinced disciples.
- M. But there's one more aspect to living the resurrected life that Paul talks about in this chapter. We are called. We are convinced. AND...we are COMPLETE.
- N. In today's scripture, Paul makes the analogy that just like seeds that go down into the soil and die in order to complete the purpose for which God intended, you and I must die in order to be resurrected.
- O. And if we must die in order to be completed in our mission, then we're also invited to die every day to ourselves in order to live the resurrected life in Christ today.
- P. Let's pray and then see what Paul has to say to us as we wrap up this series.
- Q. PRAY!**
- R. Write this down in your notes: **My resurrected life is a completed life.** (repeat). Open your bible with me to 1 Corinthians 15, starting in verse 35.
- S. Speaking of the resurrection...

2. Scripture

A. READ 1 Corinthians 15:35-41

- i. As Paul began this section of his letter to the church, he used a rhetorical style of writing that had "a certain person" raise an issue - a fictional person - to allow him to respond to the fictional person without seeming to harsh to the Corinthians. Yet, it's probably the case that some in the church had asked this question at some point.
- ii. It's like saying to a group of teenagers, "Let's just say a certain teenager was walking down the street..." Every teenager would relate to that, and most of us could also relate. But what follows could be pretty pointed or correc-

tive, and we wouldn't be talking to a specific person...it's hypothetical, but very applicable. Make sense?

- iii. So, "Someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?'" Now, because this was a hypothetical question being asked by Paul, he had the freedom to answer whichever question he wanted. So, he ignored the first and answered the second by analogy.
- iv. The analogy he used is of a seed. When you sow something to grow, like a tomatoes plant, you don't take a fully complete tomato plant and shove the whole thing in the ground. You plant a small seed, which looks nothing like a tomato plant.
- v. BUT GOD give it a body...it becomes a plant in time. And not all bodies are the same...some are flowers, some are weeds, some are tall, others are short.
- vi. Then he draws the analogy to the body - the flesh. Not all flesh is alike... some is human, some animal, some fish. And what about the heavenly bodies - sun, moon, stars...they all have their own glory in their own way.
- vii. What Paul is doing is setting us up for what's to come...let's look at verse 42...

B. Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-49

- i. Like a seed of a particular plant species that goes down into the soil and dies and then is raised up in a different, more complete form, so it is with us.
- ii. This earthly body is the seed. The resurrected body is plant - complete and glorious.
- iii. Paul hits hard at the contrast between what we experience NOW and what will be our experience in the future after Jesus returns:
 - a. What's sown - what dies - is perishable - what's raised is imperishable!
 - b. What's sown in dishonor, is raised in glory!
 - c. What's sown in weakness, is raised in power!
 - d. What's sown is a physical body. What's raised is a spiritual body!
 - e. What is sown is DUST. What is raised is of HEAVEN!
 - f. Now, we bear the image of Adam. THEN, we will bear the image of Jesus!
- iv. What Paul was telling the church was that what you see now is the seed that will die. What you will become is the plant that will thrive and be complete with the purpose of God - holiness, glory, everlasting life, re-creation, wholeness, eternal!

- v. He continues to clarify this is verse 50...let's turn back to the text to finish this journey though this chapter...

C. Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-57

- i. CAN I GET AN AMEN?!?!?
- ii. Flesh and blood CANNOT inherit the Kingdom of God.
- iii. Does that mean that we can't EXPERIENCE the taste of the Kingdom now? Of course not! The Kingdom has been breaking into the world ever since the birth of Jesus 2,000 years ago.
- iv. Yet, the completed Kingdom - the fully ushered in Kingdom - when Jesus returns to set everything right and glorious is yet to come!
- v. Some, Paul said to the Corinthians, will not see death before the return of Jesus. We know that all those Corinthian readers died before Jesus returned, because He hasn't returned yet. The same goes for the early church fathers and your great-great grandparents.
- vi. Yet, Paul said, it doesn't matter. We will not all die BUT WE WILL ALL BE CHANGED!
- vii. Changed how? Paul told us: perishable to imperishable; from dishonor, to glory; from weakness to power; from physical to spiritual; from dust to heavenly; mortal to immortal.
- viii. Death will be swallowed up in the victory Jesus had over the grave. THIS is ALL about what Jesus did for us...for the church!
- ix. And all Paul can think to do is give thanks to God...in verse 57, "But thanks be to God, who gives US the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- x. Victory! Over death and decay. Over the perishing of our bodies. Over the sin in our lives. Over the grave!
- xi. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE VICTORY BY GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST!

3. Application

- A. And if you've been given the victory, then how are you to respond?
- B. Paul makes is clear: If my body needs to die in order to inherit the Kingdom of God in the everlasting life to come after Jesus returns, then right now, while I'm waiting for the return of Jesus, I need to die to myself everyday in order to live my resurrected life today!
- C. In order to inherit the Kingdom when Jesus returns, you must have faith in Jesus. And because of your faith in Jesus, you are invited BY JESUS to die every day to yourself and your flesh and your desire to have your own way...and be resurrected into the life of a disciples of Jesus. Every day.

- D. You may have noticed that we have one final verse to read.
- E. Paul takes this entire chapter, 57 verses, that we've looked at for three weeks, and gives us this charge.
- F. Look at verse 58. Let's read this together, "Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."
- G. Because you will be resurrected into a spiritual, imperishable, and glorified body in the life to come, when Jesus returns, then start living that resurrected life NOW and bring as many people WITH you into the Kingdom as you can possibly convince.
- H. You are called. You are convinced. And someday, you will be completely complete.
- I. Jesus' invitation to you is to start living that called, convinced, and complete life TODAY.
- J. This whole chapter is what comes before the "Therefore...". Which means this whole chapter is what verse 58 is THERE FOR.

i. Be steadfast, immovable, as you die to yourself.

- a. Stand FIRM in your convictions, even when it's unpopular. AS LONG AS THOSE convictions are of God. Stand firm on the Word of God, not being swayed by the culture or the latest trend of so-called theology. The church must be a thermostat to the culture and not a thermometer OF the culture. We have nothing apart from the Word of God and the living presence of Jesus in our midst.
- b. In Joshua 1:7-8, when Joshua was preparing to take the people into the Promised Land, God said this, "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."
- c. Be steadfast in your witness. Be immovable in your faith. Do that in community with others who are steadfast and you will thrive in Christ!

ii. Always excel in the work of the Lord, as you die to yourself.

- a. Colossians 3:23-34 says this, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

- b. That inheritance is your glorified body and everlasting life! But the life your live NOW is a life of sacrifice.
- c. In order to excel in the work of the Lord, use your spiritual gifts to glorify God and build up the church - helping, teaching, leading, praying, serving, giving, prophesying, and all the other gifts.
- d. Keep going. Keep lovingly give every person in our community the opportunity to believe in and follow Jesus with you. That's our VISION.
- e. Paul promises that your labor is not in vain. As you die to yourself and live the resurrected life for Jesus, it WILL cost you...but it will NOT be in vain.

4. Conclusion

- A. Be resurrected. Be called and convinced and complete.
- B. This morning, we will witness to the baptism of a child. This child is unique. This child has her own DNA. This child has her own name and will grow into her own experiences.
- C. Yet, today, this child will go down into the waters of baptism like countless Christians before her. In going down into those waters, her parents are saying this: we will raise her to die to herself, her flesh, and her humanity - this seed will go into the ground - and then Jesus will start a process of remaking her, recreating her, and rebirthing her into the spiritual life of a follower of Jesus.
- D. And it is up to US, church, to raise her in the faith. It's up to US, together, to introduce her to Jesus. It's our job to be steadfast, immovable in our faith and to excel in the work of the Lord - the witness and love of Jesus shared in the life of this little one.
- E. In baptism, the grace that is poured out onto a child is a complete grace because Jesus went down into the grave and back up in new life. The baptized life we live now is not complete in so far as it is finished. The resurrected life we live now is complete (whole, prepared, ready) because Jesus has opened up everlasting life to EVERYONE who believes in Him and his resurrection power.
- F. As we baptize Raegan Jade today, relive YOUR baptism. Come to the water. Go down into the water, and rise again into the resurrected, called, convinced, and completed life of a sold-out, Jesus-chasing disciple for this life AND the life to come!
- G. **Let's pray...**