

1 Corinthians 15:1-28

The Last Enemy

The Gospel – a matter of death and life (vv1-11)

- The Corinthians (and us) receive what Paul received – a message about the death of Jesus (for our sins – v3) and his resurrection (v4)
- A reversal takes place (life follows death) and we gain perspective on our own mortality

2 things to note about death:

1. It is an Enemy (v26)

- we acknowledge that death is an enemy (validates our experience - fear, dread, sorrow, hatred, etc. of death)
- the fear of death subjects us to a form of slavery (Hebrews 2:15)
- for those at peace with God, the power of death (its mysterious nature being a chief weapon) is diminished

2. It is the last to be destroyed (v26)

- v23 – Jesus has been raised from the dead, and we will be as well
- the one with the power of death is destroyed (Hebrews 2:14)
- 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 “then shall come to pass the saying ‘death is swallowed up in victory’ ...”
- this knowledge should give us a renewed outlook on how we live (v10, cf 1 Cor 15:48)

Questions for Reflection

1. How does fear of death control people (Hebrews 2:15)? How do you deal with your mortality?
2. Does the Christian message about the forgiveness of sins help us face death? If so, how? Or, why not?
3. Sun Tzu famously wrote “It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know your enemies but do know yourself, you will win one and lose one; if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle.” How does the Bible help us to know ourselves and gain an understanding of our “enemy” death?
4. It is not easy for everyone to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. What helps you believe in the resurrection of Jesus? What questions do you still have? What

perspective can Paul's words "then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive" (v6) offer (reflect on some of the implications)?

5. How can knowing that death is not our end, and that there is eternal life, direct us in how to make the most of our days on earth? In what ways are you tempted to give up on caring about our world? What motivation is there for hard work? What changes should you make as you see the details of your life embedded in a much bigger picture?
6. Reflect on these words by Richard Sibbes: "If we desire to end our days in joy and comfort, let us lay the foundation of a comfortable death now betimes. To die well is not a thing of that light moment as some imagine: it is no easy matter. But to die well is a matter of every day. Let us daily do some good that may help us at the time of our death. Every day by repentance pull out the sting of some sin, that so when death comes, we may have nothing to do but to die. To die well is the action of the whole life."