

# *Discovering God's Wisdom*

## STUDIES IN FIRST CORINTHIANS

### **Lesson 20** **1 Corinthians 15:35-58**

#### ***Searching the Scriptures*** ***for hidden treasure***

***"I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure." Psalm 119:162***

The subject matter of chapter 15 is *resurrection*, both the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the believer. In last week's portion of the chapter, Paul answered the question of whether or not there actually is a resurrection. He said, *yes, as a matter of fact, there is!* This week he tackles the question of how, exactly, that resurrection will take place. This final section of Paul's letter is truly the high point of the entire letter, as he gives us all—Corinthians and modern-day believers alike—great hope for the future!

#### ***First Day: Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-41***

1. What 2 possible questions, according to Paul, might be raised with regard to the resurrection?
  - a. Although these might seem somewhat plausible questions, what is Paul's take on the one that might ask them?

To Paul there is no question as to whether or not there is a resurrection, therefore he is impatient with anyone who doesn't readily grasp the truth. According to what follows, Paul's argument is that nature itself teaches the concept.

To present the truth of resurrection, Paul uses the example of sowing. To help us understand his analogy, we might think of planting a flower.

2. When you wish to have a particular flower in your garden, do you plant the head of the flower you want to grow there? Or, does the seed you plant look like the flower you are hoping for? How does Paul explain it in verse 37?
  - a. How does the body come, according to verse 38?
  - b. How different is the flower that grows from the seed that was originally sown? (It might help to get a mental picture of this.)
  - c. Consider how this analogy explains the resurrection.

3. What are some of the different kinds of *flesh* God has created? v. 39
  - a. What 2 kinds of *bodies* are there? v. 40
  - b. What different kinds of *glory* are there? v. 40-41
  - c. Is God limited in any way when it comes to creating? How does that thought help us understand His ability to create resurrected bodies?

### *Making It Personal...*

We all have things about our natural bodies that we dislike—we're too heavy, too thin, too tall, too short, we need glasses, we can't sing, etc., etc., etc.! But one day our natural bodies will die (unless the Lord comes first!) and 1 Corinthians 15 promises that we will receive new bodies. We will be like that ugly seed that was sown so that a beautiful flower might appear in its place.

4. What are some of the things you are looking forward to as you consider what your new body will be like?
  - a. What truth are we taught in Romans 8:29?
  - b. What does 1 John 3:2 tell us? What hope does this give you?

### *Digging Deeper*

- ❖ Speaking of His own death in John 12:24, Jesus sets forth the same truth that Paul is teaching in our verses today. What does He say there? What truth is He teaching about Himself?
- ❖ How can you apply this truth to yourself:
  - In a physical way?*
  - In a spiritual way?*
- ❖ Do your best to summarize today's passage in a couple of sentences.

### *Pearl of Great Price*

**“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**  
1 Corinthians 15:57 This is your memory verse—begin memorizing it today!

**Second Day: Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-49**

Paul begins this passage with the words, “*So also is the resurrection of the dead.*” He is obviously referring back to something, so we look back at what we have just read and realize he is still talking about that seed which is sown. Like a seed that is sown and grows into a beautiful plant, so it will be with the resurrection of the dead. One thing is sown, another is raised.

1. Verses 42-44 give us the most exciting and glorious news, as they portray the contrast between what is sown and what is raised, with regard to the human body. Write down what these verses convey, and spend a few moments in your dictionary looking up the words that describe the before and after of resurrection.

	<i>The body is sown...</i>	<i>The body is raised...</i>
• <i>verse 42</i> <i>definition:</i>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
• <i>verse 43a</i> <i>definition:</i>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
• <i>verse 43b</i> <i>definition:</i>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
• <i>verse 44a</i> <i>definition:</i>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

Paul says in verse 44, “*There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*” In the following verses Paul reveals that if something is true of Adam, then *something greater* is true of Christ!

2. From each of the following verses, state what is true of Adam and the greater thing that is true of Christ:
  - *verse 45*  
*What is true of Adam?*  
*What greater thing is true of Christ?*
  - *verse 46*  
*What came first?*  
*What greater thing came afterward?*
  - *verse 47*  
*What is true of Adam?*  
*What greater thing is true of Christ?*

- *verse 48*  
*What is true of us in Adam?*  
*What greater thing is true of us in Christ?*
- *verse 49*  
*What have we borne of Adam?*  
*What greater thing will we bear of Christ?*

*Making It Personal...*

3. Look up the following verses that tell you what your heavenly body will be like:

*Jesus resurrected body:* Philippians 3:20-21

*Immortal and glorious:* 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

*Perfect:* Philippians 1:6; Revelation 21:1-5

*Clothed in righteousness:* Daniel 12:3; Matthew 13:43

*Digging Deeper*

- ❖ Do your best to summarize today's passage in a couple of sentences.

**Third Day: Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58**

1. Paul begins this section with a very strong and important statement: *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...*
  - a. What does this imply for you and I who hope to go to heaven?
  - b. How does this apply to the process of resurrection we have been discussing?
  - c. Why can't flesh and blood inherit the kingdom of God? v. 50b

The bottom line is—*we must be changed!* Paul has the privilege of delivering the amazing news of this amazing mystery!

2. What is the amazing mystery? v. 51
  - a. How will this happen? v. 52

3. Because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, what must take place for the church to be taken up to heaven? v. 53
  - a. What will be the outcome of this supernatural transformation? v. 54
  
4. Verses 56-57 explain why we can take up the chant, *O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?* (verse 55 NASB). From these verses, do your best to explain why we have victory over death.
  - a. How does this exhortation tie in and finish his thoughts on resurrection?

### *Making It Personal...*

6. Do you know someone who has died in the Lord—maybe a mother, father, husband, or child? Consider verses 42-44, along with our verses today, and the contrast of their state at death with their future state of victory. How do these thoughts bless you today?

### *Digging Deeper*

1 Thessalonians 4 gives us a very good explanation of what will take place. This passage was written to give comfort to those who had lost Christian loved ones, but goes on to give a beautiful portrayal of the rapture of the church, which precedes the Second Coming of Christ. The word rapture comes from the words *caught* up in verse 17.

- ❖ Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. What truths does this passage confirm from our 1 Corinthians 15 passage?
  
- ❖ Describe from verses 16-17 the exact circumstances of the rapture of the church.
  
- ❖ Tie this week's memory verse (1 Corinthians 15:57) with the heart of what Paul is saying in this chapter as a whole.

**Fourth Day:**

**Deeper Discoveries**

*This portion of the lesson will take a closer look at some of the words in the chapter. You will need to have your tools—or resources at hand: more than one Bible translation, a dictionary or Bible dictionary, concordance, atlas, and encyclopedia. (If you don't have all of these, simply use what you do have to enrich your learning.)*

Using the tools you have at hand, do some digging into the following terms. Start with your dictionary (or Bible dictionary), and then look up the references to add to your understanding. If you have additional resources, you may want to keep digging (making notes in the margins). After you've completed the investigative process, write a definition in your own words. Your investigation in today's lesson will lay the groundwork for tomorrow's study, so be as thorough as you can in your research.

**Steadfast (immovable)** (15:58) *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable...”*

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does the Bible have to say? 1 Corinthians 7:37a; Colossians 1:23; 2:5; 1 Peter 5:8-9

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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❖ Write your own definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Abounding** (15:58) *“...Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”*

Dictionary definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does the Bible have to say? 2 Corinthians 1:5; 3:9; 8:7; 9:8

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

❖ Write your own definition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Fifth Day:**

***Heartsearch***

*Are you walking worthy of your high calling? Are you applying the wisdom of God to your daily life? Get ready for some self-discovery! This portion of the lesson will give you the opportunity to examine your heart, express your mind, and experience your lesson, by applying what you are learning to everyday circumstances.*

**Praise and Persevere!**

***“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that you labor is not in vain in the Lord.”***

1 Corinthians 15:58

In this chapter, Paul has been dealing with the promises of future resurrection, of eternal life in God’s kingdom, and new glorified bodies fashioned by God’s own hands. Based on these promises, Paul now says, “*therefore,*” and mentions several key facts that are to be our focus as we await that awesome day of the Lord’s return.

We are to be first of all *steadfast* in our adherence to the Christian faith, not allowing anyone or anything to rob us of our confidence in God alone. This word in the original Greek means *settled* or *steady*, and used in this instance it refers to the mind and purpose of the believer. The word closely connected to it, *immovable*, speaks of being *secure*, *firm*, *safe*, and *unmoved*. The New Testament tells us that we are to hold fast the profession of our faith, not allowing ourselves to be moved away from the hope of the gospel.

1. Look up the following and, in a word or two, note to what you are to *hold fast*.
  - Hebrews 3:6
  - Hebrews 4:14
  - Revelation 2:25; 3:11
  
2. Titus 1:9 says you are to hold fast the faithful word as you have been taught. If you adhere to this, what will you be able to do?
  - a. Are you able to do this now? Can you briefly cite a recent example?
  
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 clues us in to a *key* that will help us to remain steadfast and immovable. What does it say?
  - a. Are you in the habit of doing this in your daily walk with Christ?

b. If so, how does this keep you *immovable*?

Hebrews 3:14 (AMP) reads: “*For we have become fellows with Christ the Messiah and share in all He has for us, if only we hold our first newborn confidence and original assured expectation, in virtue of which we are believers, firm and unshaken to the end.*” Do you remember when you first came to know Christ as your personal Savior, when you experienced that newborn unshakable confidence and expectation this verse speaks about? You are a partaker *with* Christ of all He has for you, if you hold this same hope to the end.

Paul says that, in addition to being steadfast and immovable, we are to *always abound in the work of the Lord*. Since our time on earth is short, our lives are to account for eternal purposes: others must be brought into the kingdom, believers are to be taught to mature in Christ, therefore every job done for the Lord is important. The Lord does not forget the labor performed on His behalf; there is the promise of eternal reward.

4. Pause a moment and take personal inventory. See if you need to make any changes. If so, ask God to help you in these areas.

- Are you diligent in the performance of your responsibilities before the Lord?
- Are you satisfied with just a “little” bit of service for Jesus or have you given yourself wholly to serve Him wherever He has put you?
- Are you confident that the work you are doing is *of* the Lord and *for* Him?

*“Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God.”*

1 Thessalonians 4:1

***Heartsearch:*** Briefly look back over your *entire lesson* before filling in the following.

❖ *Examine your heart*

What has God put His finger on through your study and brought to light in a new way? (What did you learn about yourself?)

❖ *Express your mind*

What change has this week’s study brought about in your thought process? What difference will this make in how you view your current circumstances?



❖ *Experience your lesson*

What nugget of wisdom from your lesson do you plan to apply to your life?

**Sixth Day:**

***Laying Up Treasure***

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.  
For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:19-21*

The highest calling of the believer, and the most important way to lay up treasure in heaven, is through intercessory prayer. You will want to give thoughtful consideration to what you record on this page, as it will be the basis for your prayer during group time. The format for this day of your lesson is based upon the ACTS method of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. In addition to these four, there is space provided for you to keep track of answered prayers, people and things you want to pray for in the coming week, and also a place to write out this week’s Scripture verse from memory.

Using the lesson as your focal point, write out your prayer for each of the following:

***I praise God for*** (an aspect of His marvelous character) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***I confess to God that I*** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***I thank God for*** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***I am asking God*** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***Praise for answered prayer:*** \_\_\_\_\_  
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***People/things I want to pray for this coming week:*** \_\_\_\_\_  
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*Pearl of Great Price:* \_\_\_\_\_

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***Notes***

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