

1 Corinthians 15, Part 2 (Conrad Bowman) (8-26-07)

1 Corinthians 15: I want to start reading in verse 12. I know that's kind of far back, but I'm not going to stop for a little bit. Then we'll proceed and finish this chapter. I want to make sure you have the necessary background for the last half of the chapter.

Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen? If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain.

That encapsulates the first half of the chapter. Paul is saying that If the physical resurrection of Christ is not true, then everything we preach is in vain. The word "vain" or "vanity" is 'emptiness.' Just like eating wind is emptiness. If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain. So even your faith doesn't mean anything if the physical resurrection of the Lord is not true. But, if there's no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. So, you can't start by questioning the resurrection of the saints, because if they weren't raised, then Christ Himself wasn't raised. The Church of Jesus Christ is tied to the physical resurrection of Jesus. This belief cuts off those people in Corinth who were questioning the resurrection of the OT believers.

If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith is in vain. And, moreover, we are even found to be false witnesses of God because we witness against God that He raised Christ whom He did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised.

I want you to note carefully that He is saying that the error here, and the real error in our witness, if we're saying that Christ was not physically raised, is against the Father, not just bad doctrine. Paul gives preeminent place to the Father in everything he writes.

So, then also those who have fallen asleep [or died in verse 18] in Christ, have perished, completely. If we have only hope in Christ in this life, we of all men, are most to be pitied. But, now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who are asleep. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead.

So we're talking about Christ *in His humanity*.

For as in Adam, all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. But each in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, after that, those who are in Christ at His coming. Then comes the end when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

So Christ holds this world in His hand until He has abolished all rule and all power, then He delivers up the kingdom which He is establishing to the Father.

For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death, for He has put all things in subjection under His feet.

When He says, "He has put all things in subjection," it's evident that He has accepted the will of the Father "who put all things in subjection to Him."

He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

What this means is that Christ says all things are put in subjection except the Father who remains the supreme authority even within the Trinity. That was decreed in eternity past and is extended throughout all eternity to come. So, the Son never subsumes the Father; He just doesn't do it! The Father retains His supremacy throughout all things, not because He has put the Son down, but because the Son willingly obeys the will of the Father. It's not talking about power or might. It's talking about a willingness to obey the will of another.

Now, when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, in order that God the Father might be all in all. Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? Why are we also in danger every hour?

And this means baptized for them, not on their behalf, but baptized in the order of them. In other words, Paul is baptized, I come to the Lord after that, I'm baptized in the order of Paul; I'm being baptized because Paul was baptized. John comes along after me and accepts the Lord and he's baptized because I've

been baptized. You see that there's an order here that's proceeding down through time. One of us is baptized right after the other so that all Christians are unified in this ordinance. John's baptism testifies to and verifies mine. Phil's baptism testifies to and verifies Joe's. My baptism testifies to and authenticates Paul's baptism, and right on up until the first guy that was baptized as a NT believer. There is that long line of Believers that includes every one of us, and we are all here in anticipation of the resurrection.

Otherwise, what would those do who were baptized to the (order of believers who are) dead if the dead are not raised at all" – and they are – "why then are they baptized for them? Why also are we in danger every hour? I protest brethren by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If from human mothers I fought wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me if the dead are not raised? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

There's a statement that Paul makes here regarding our attitude towards death. What he's saying is that there's no reason for a believer to fear death. Death should not ever be a fear to us, because we believe in the resurrection. Our belief in the resurrection is based on the fact of the physical resurrection of Christ. Don't let anybody attack that fact because that's where our faith hits the road of life. If Christ was not resurrected, our faith is empty; but since Christ has been resurrected our faith has substance to it, because we live our life unafraid of death knowing that we will be resurrected just as the Lord Himself was resurrected. That's a marvelous, wonderful freedom to have in this life, for what it means is that your life can be treated as an expendable commodity. We're the only people on earth that can make that statement; we can say to others that our lives can be treated as expendable commodities. Therefore, we can, in fact, live our lives entirely for the benefit of others. This is amazing—that the basis upon which we live our life may be concentrated on the good of other people. This is possible because our lives are not the end of the line for us; it's not our reputation that counts and it's not the monuments we build; or the 401(k)'s that we leave behind; it's the people we have touched and who are in the line behind us.

Evelyn Wamble: Physical life?

Conrad Bowman: Yes, I'm talking about your physical life, and anything you can accomplish in it. You know, the biggest thing we have to remember J. Paul Getty by is that enormous museum of his out on the West Coast. It's a marvelous thing.

It's gorgeous. Think about Huntington Gardens on the Huntington Estate; there's another one; it displays the Gainsborough Collection paintings of Blue Boy and Pinky and a Gutenberg Bible. Look at what Donald Trump is doing all up and down the East Coast. He owns half of it and has his name all over it; but his life is not going to be measured by that. Our life is not going to be measured by those kinds of things either. Our life is measured by how much we yield to the Spirit within. We can live it entirely for the benefit of other people who may use what we give them wisely or who may not. That's not the point. Our lives are counted in God's own order of things and we can afford to live like that because we believe in the resurrection of the dead.

Any questions on that, because that's the foundation for the rest of this chapter.

Bill O'Fiel: Conrad, I have a question about verse 29; is this talking about baptism for someone who has died, and is it like what the Mormons do for the dead.

Conrad Bowman: Some were doing that. There are two applications to that verse. One is – they were doing just like the Mormons do, they were baptized on behalf of relatives who died before. That is just like the Mormons, and the practice ties them to their church. You go back through your lineage and you baptize someone for them. That is supposed to change the standing for those that are dead. Then you go through a marriage ceremony for them; then they are supposedly married in heaven.

Paul is making two points here. He's saying to those of us who are Christians; one, we don't need to be baptized physically for those people because it's meaningless, because it is appointed unto man once to die and after that comes judgment. Two, we're baptized in the order (military rank) of our belief, just like we were talking about a few verses back, one after the other, because that's a mark of our union in Christ. My baptism and your baptism were exactly the same type of baptism, to the same end, with the same belief behind them. So that means we are joined in terms of what we believe and our relationship to the God to whom we were baptized. We were set apart to the same Person, the Son and the Father. So, there are two applications in verse 29.

Evelyn Wamble: A spiritual baptism, not a physical baptism?

Conrad Bowman: Well, it's a physical baptism that is being examined, but it signifies a spiritual baptism. Remember, all things we do on earth, and everything that we believe on earth, present a pattern of things that actually exist

in heaven. There is an altar in heaven and there is an altar at which we worship here on earth. That altar here is the heart your inner being. There is your altar, and you go to that altar and you find living within you the Holy Spirit of God and the person of Christ. So your adoration of Christ starts on the inside of you. That's a pattern of the actual altar in heaven at which the Father is on the other side and the Son is an intermediary, and He's representing you to the Father. There is an actual altar in heaven. There is an actual tabernacle in heaven, of which the tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon's temple were only shadow figures, types. Now some of you received a paper this week on your e-mail, because you're on the list to get those kinds of papers. It was the first one on Typology which addresses this very subject. It's a series that I just started writing about two weeks ago, and it's going to examine the subject of Typology. Typology, In other words, looks at where the real exists, and where the shadow forms are; those shadow forms are to lead us to the real substance down here. The greatest Type in the world today is the Church itself, Christ in Heaven and His Body, the Church that is on Earth. Christ in Heaven and the Body of Christ on earth is a Type of the Father in Heaven and the Last Adam (His Only Begotten Son) on Earth. The Church that we have here on Earth, Bridgepoint, and the Grand Company, is to be made up of people who are willing to follow that Type until we are unified in Heaven. Look at the command, "Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." Every Christian marriage is a Type of Christ's relationship to the Church. Ephesians 2:10 told us that the Church is God's 'Masterwork' His poem to all creation. Now, gentlemen, consider your wife; is she your masterwork, your poem to all who know you? That's the kind of attention she is due from you as a man of God. And so it begins to follow, as unbroken line going all the way back to Adam and Eve. So, we'll get into that study, maybe after 2nd Corinthians and Revelation and a couple of other things.

"Why are we in danger every hour?" We are in danger every hour because what we believe is under attack, every hour. It was true in Paul's day and it is no less true today; it perhaps may be truer today.

"I protest brethren by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord I die daily." That's speaking of death to self. What Paul is talking about is death to self. As God's man he has to be denying self on a daily basis. That's the heart and soul of the Christian life. You will constantly find yourself beginning to live for your own benefit rather than for the benefit of those around you. It's human nature, which means that it's the flesh. That is exactly what it is. Human nature is nothing more than the flesh; we can give it objectives, we re-label it, we call it

ambition, we call it life's goals, we call it security, you can call it anything, but it's still polishing up the flesh like a favorite hobby horse. Paul says you have to die to that daily. That's what he's talking about here – I die daily.

If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus,
what does it profit me?

If I fought with the lion in order to beat the lion and gain a reputation, and because of my reputation I'm rewarded by society, or people; if that was my motive going in, what has it profited me? So I killed a lion. And so I'm considered to be some great guy. Well, we've got great guys dying every day around here. We have the World Wrestling Federation that has just lost two of their star athletes within the last two months. They were tremendous athletes in terms of athletic ability, but it didn't profit them anything.

What does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let's eat and drink for tomorrow we die.

He borrows that from the wisdom of Solomon. If you go into Ecclesiastes, it says, thus says Koheleth (another name for Solomon) (the Kohale, i.e. the preacher), "if you have it to eat and you have it to drink, eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die." This is what Paul is talking about. Well, what Solomon the Kohale is doing is commanding common sense. What he is saying, is if God has given you provisions to eat, then eat it, with joy. If God has given you provisions to drink, drink it with joy; because you don't know what tomorrow is going to bring. So eat it and drink it today while you've got it, with the sure knowledge that tomorrow you may not have it. You may die tomorrow. Now, that's not an enticement to imprudent living. It is an enticement to practicality. What Solomon was saying, and that's what Ecclesiastes is all about, is that if God has prospered you today, enjoy your prosperity, without guilt, enjoy your abundance and use it wisely, because tomorrow you may not have that, and you may have to do what Paul did. Paul said, I've learned both how to abound and how to live without. I learned both ends of the pendulum swing. That's the same thing Solomon was saying, eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow you may die. And Paul is bringing that up again here. As Christians, it's practical to live with the knowledge before you that your life is an expendable commodity, so you can live it for others. That's practical as a believer. The world will not understand it, but it's a practical approach to life.

Now, do not be deceived. Bad company corrupts good morals.

Lady: I wish more teenagers could learn that.

Conrad Bowman: My dad use to tell us. Lay down with dogs and you'll come up with fleas. Bad company corrupts good morals, and that's always true. So, we choose our friends wisely. And we teach our children to choose their friends wisely, if we can.

Become sober-minded as you ought. Stop sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. Some have no knowledge of God. Some will say, someone will say, how are the dead raised, and with what kind of body do they come?

In other words, if you talk to somebody who differs with you, and you want to talk to them about the theology of this practicality of living in light of the resurrection, and they're going to want to say, "Well, what kind of body do you get?" You see, they're going to argue about what the nail is made out of, not the fact that you've got the nail. They want to argue about minutia, and you want to talk to them about principles. We live on the basis of a secure knowledge of the resurrection. It's going to happen and because of that fact, my life is expendable. That's true, but the world will not understand it.

Be sober-minded as you ought. Stop sinning. Some have no knowledge of God. [In other words, order your own life in your walk] I speak this to your shame, because someone is going to say to you, how are the dead raised, and with what kind of body will they come? You fool. That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

It says, foolish one, foolish man, don't you know that your sowing does not come to life until you die; "until it dies." In other words, what you sow has to go into the ground before it germinates and brings life to it, whether that's bad seed or good seed. You won't know until it grows. Isn't that the wheat and the tares? (See Notes on Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) That's the wheat and the tares all over again. So make a note on that, because when you get to the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13 this is what it's talking about. The wheat and the tares; let them grow until they get fully mature, then you will know whether it's going to have seed or not.

That which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be but a bare grain [perhaps of wheat, or of something else] but God gives it a body, just as He wishes, and each of the seeds a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there's one flesh of men, another of beasts, another flesh of birds, and another of fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the glory of the heavenly is one, the glory of the earthly is another."

Then he goes into a discussion of the glory of the sun, the glory of the moon, and the differences in glory within a series.

But, I want to go back right now to your spot in verse 37—

You do not sow the body which is to be.

In other words, what you put in the ground is not going to produce a "little you." That's not the way God has designed us. We're not sowing to ourselves here. **We're sowing seed that is to produce lives after the character of Christ, who died Himself and went into the ground and was resurrected by the Father as the first-fruits out from the grave.** So, the life that you live now, if you live that life in the Son, and you sow that life in the Son, it doesn't produce, nor is it designed to produce, another "you." It's designed to produce that which is after the character of Christ, because that's what the Spirit is doing within you. **He's taking the life of Christ in you – which has been sown there by the Spirit – and growing the character of Christ out of it, and you're sowing that seed in the ground of another's life, and it's the Father's choice what to bring out of that.** But His desire is to bring His Son out of it. Now the point of our life just has to change, doesn't it? You see what Paul has done with these Corinthians? He's taken these Corinthians who are so involved in life as it is there, for they've come out of idolatry, and they've come out of demonic worship, and they've come out of promiscuous behavior in their worship, and promiscuous behavior in their life and he's teaching them another great truth, that Christ the firstfruits died and was the first actually resurrected from the dead. We can expect to be resurrected out from the dead because Christ was raised out from the dead. When Jesus went into the ground, He came out of the ground a new Man, and that new Man has resulted in each one of us becoming a New Creation person in Him, and so our life becomes the seed from which the next generation springs, which God wants to raise in Christ. In order for that to happen we have to die. We're not searching for life eternal – that's not what we're searching for – we're leaving that to the Father. We live our life on an expendable basis because we know

there's a resurrection, and God will do what He will to get what He wants out of our resurrection. From that truth we're trusting God to resurrect that next generation to glorify Himself. I know that this is a little complex, so are there any questions on this? Either it was completely in the dark or . . . [Laughter].

Marilyn Comstive: Comment about Galatians 2:20. It sounds like, what I hearing is that we are to – I know I am already dead, - I can't live the Christian life; it's only Christ in me that will make that happen.

Conrad Bowman: Okay, so how does Galatians 2:20 fit into this scenario and several others? How do we do it? What's the practical application. How do we get to the practicality of living the Christian life?

Alright, lets start with Paul's instructions. Paul's instructions – I keep coming back to this, and if it's boring I apologize. Not really, not really. That would be out of character. Nobody would believe that. [Laughter]. What did he tell the Thessalonians? (1 Thessalonians 4:11)

Make it your ambition to live a quiet life, tend to your own business, work with your own hands just as I have commanded you, so you won't be in need, and might live at peace with all men.

Now, there are the marching orders for the Church. Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life. Tend to your own business, work with your own hands, just as I have commanded you, so you might not be at need, and might live at peace with all men. Now, that's the charge to the Church. It's not to raise great buildings. It's not to launch city wide campaigns, it's not to assault the downtown district and try to eliminate night clubs and all the rest. That's not the duty of the Church. The charge to the Church, from Paul, and it's true in every one of his epistles, was that same thing. Live a quiet life. Tend to your own business and work with your own hands. In other words, set yourself about to doing personally what will improve the world around you. And that included your church, it includes benevolent activities, it includes all those things. But the principle is to start right there where you are, and not try to make a splash but make a difference in somebody's life. That's the first step. That's the essential first step – start where you are!

The second step is to live with the knowledge that your life is expendable and can be lived for the benefit of others. That's a tremendous relief, because

instead of building edifices ---(Now would be a good time to stop and study Ecclesiastes.) Solomon said, who knows, a man works all his life to leave what he has built to his son. He doesn't know whether his son is going to be a wise man or a fool? So he gives him a kingdom. And then right around from that he says, "but I've seen kings in the ditch and fools on horseback." You know, does that make any sense in the world's thinking? No. That's pointless, to work to leave his kingdom that he's built to his son, and he doesn't know whether his son is wise or is a fool. At the end of Ecclesiastes he says, son, take my advice. This is the advice of an old man. At the end of your days, take pleasure in the wife of your youth. In other words, the girl you married, when you were all charged up and hot to go and couldn't keep your hands off of her, that girl now is a mature companion that knows you inside and out, and companionship is worth more than the first 25 years that you've spent together, because it's a melding of spirits. She [Conrad pointing to Norma] knows what I'm thinking before the thought gets to my tongue [Laughter]. And, you know that's true. You know that's true. She can tell by the way I squirm in a chair, whether I'm comfortable, or uncomfortable, or like what I'm hearing, or don't like it, or whatever. You can't get away from it. You can't get away from the one who knows you intimately. So Solomon says – how many wives did he have – besides the women he was trying to keep happy who were not his wives? The man was a nut, but for the wisdom that could only have come from God. He asked for it, and God said, OK, I'm going to give it to you. And look what he did with it? He tried to go out and satisfy – how many hundreds of wives? You know that's crazy. But you see what I'm saying? Solomon said, take pleasure with the wife of your youth. Always enjoy the fact that you've spent this time in this life together and here you are facing the end of it, and it means something to you. That's Solomon's wisdom to his son, and he had some problems with his son. Remember; it didn't work out well. It was almost a self-fulfilling prophecy, wasn't it?

Now, the Christian life is not something you struggle at. It's something you relax into by dying to self daily! The key to it is to reckon yourself to be dead. It starts with Romans 6. We were joined to Christ where? in His death. That's Romans 6. That's where we were joined to Christ; in His death to sin. Now, if we live as having died to sin – you see, sin didn't die. What died? we died! Christ died on the cross and we were joined to Him in His death. We also died. Now, it's very important to see this, that **when we were joined to Christ, we were joined into His death; as He died to sin, we died to sin.** Now, having died to sin, it breaks the hold sin has on us. We don't really believe that, Marilyn. We really give into sin a lot of times because we think sin is so big and powerful and it's got us in a choke-hold. But, we died to sin, so Paul says,

Reckon your selves therefore to be dead unto sin.

That's Paul's advice. Now, if we find ourselves in our Christian life and in our daily walk, slipping – and it's always some slippage in there, isn't it – and we find ourselves troubled daily – this is what Paul is saying to these Corinthians, you're going to be plagued daily; then you are going to have to fall back to reckoning; reckoning yourself to be dead to it. Now what is reckoning but declaration. It's a declaration. You make a declaration. Reaffirm, if you prefer. It's the reaffirmation by the believer that you are in fact dead to sin. You have to keep telling yourself that. You can't ignore it. You have to keep telling yourself that. It's like telling your wife that you love her. If you don't do that, she will begin to say – what's the matter with him? And then after that, what's the matter with me, and then you're in trouble. You can't do that. You've got to reaffirm that. You reaffirm it to yourself. In that sense, self-talk is real. You are what you say you are. You convince yourself what you say you are. The reckoning of God is the *self-talk of the believer*. **I AM DEAD TO SIN BECAUSE CHRIST DIED TO SIN**. And it's Christ in me, the hope of glory, that's generating this life within me. It's our freedom from threat. It's our freedom from depression. It's our freedom from the pressure that the world brings to bear on us that pushes us down. The reckoning that counts is what this is; **the declaration that you are what you declared yourself to be; a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ**. It's grabbing the theoretical and bringing it home to my life. And, you can do it because you are allowed to do it. **That's the privilege of being a believer**.

Now, I'm not through with this thing, again.

Phil Richman: Time's up.

Conrad Bowman: I've got to stop right here. Let's close with a word of prayer, please. "Father, there is so much in the Word. There's just so much here. And we are so, so, incapable of delivering what you intended for us to have. Fill the gaps in, Lord. Just fill the gaps in, and make it real to each one of us today. Guard us in our life this week, so the Lord might be glorified – and the Lord might be glorified and magnified in our life. And we thank you in Christ's name, because He paid for it. Amen."