

## God's Kingdom Will Be All in All

Kamille sat among her relatives and prayed for her family members she knew needed the Lord. Her heart, despite the grief of losing her aunt Edna, was especially concerned about her first cousin, Symone.

The 25-year-old Symone never seemed hostile to the Lord. She just didn't have time for "all of that." However, once Edna got sick, Symone began asking questions.

Kamille took the opportunity to engage her cousin more. It was, however, Edna who told her niece that she was looking forward to being with the Lord and encouraged Symone to give her heart fully to Christ.

"Sister Edna loved God and was constantly looking to do His will," said Pastor Wilson. "She wanted me to be sure to preach the Gospel at her funeral, and that's what I'm going to do."

"We know where Sister Edna is," the pastor continued. "The question is, where will you be when you die? You don't have to be sick or old to die. We are all going to go the way of the grave. But those who know the Lord Jesus will never die. They will forever be alive in Christ in heaven."

"If you don't know Jesus and His pardon of your sins, dear friend, you can also be alive in Christ," said Pastor Wilson, with his arms outstretched. "Scripture says, because of His great love for us, God made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our sins—it is by grace you have been saved. Salvation is a free gift. You can become part of the kingdom of God today."

- 1.** *What does the word "salvation" mean to you?*
- 2.** *Where or to what do people turn to find salvation?*
- 3.** *Why do we need salvation through Jesus Christ to be alive spiritually?*

## Death Entered God's Kingdom

*1 Corinthians 15:20-22, KJV*

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

*1 Corinthians 15:20-22, NIV*

<sup>20</sup>But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup>For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. <sup>22</sup>For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Thus far in his first letter to Corinth, Paul had admonished his readers on several topics such as their divisiveness, their tolerance of immorality, their willingness to take one another to court, and so on. However, he also provided great encouragement, as in our lesson's passage, for what can be more encouraging to Christians than the great hope we have of eternity with our Savior? And that great hope is based on the promise of the resurrection from the dead, which began when the Lord Himself arose from the grave.

Though many people reject the truth that Jesus lives, Paul provided his readers with compelling eyewitness evidence to the truth that our Lord was raised from the dead. Our resurrected Lord was seen by all the apostles and over 500 at one time, many of whom were still alive at the time this letter was written. And finally, Paul gave himself as an eyewitness to the resurrected Lord based on his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (1 Cor. 15:1-19).

Then Paul uses what can be one of the most encouraging words in the English language: "But." If Jesus were still in the grave, we would be without hope. "But" He is no longer in the grave; rather, He has indeed risen from the dead! Therefore, those who have trusted Him for the forgiveness of sin have immeasurable hope for a glorious future.

With His resurrection, Jesus became the "firstfruits" of all who will be raised from the dead when He returns

for His own. And having assured his readers that our Lord has indeed risen, Paul went on to state how death came into this world. The reference to Adam takes us all the way back to Genesis 3, where we find the account of Adam and Eve sinning by eating the forbidden fruit. Through Adam's sin, death entered into the world.

From that point on, everyone dies. For as it is written, "people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Death is separation, and it comes in two forms—physical and spiritual. Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body, and spiritual death is the separation of the spirit from God. This is what came into the world by Adam's sin. And, as noted earlier, if death is where it ended, then there would be no hope for any of us. But it did not end there, because Jesus arose from the dead. Therefore, though everyone "falls asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20), or dies, in Adam, everyone who is in Christ will live.

4. *What is Jesus' place in the resurrection of the dead?*
5. *How did death enter this world?*
6. *How shall all be made alive?*

## Death Destroyed in God's Kingdom

*1 Corinthians 15:23-26, KJV*

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

*1 Corinthians 15:23-26, NIV*

<sup>23</sup>But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. <sup>24</sup>Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. <sup>25</sup>For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup>The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Having confirmed to his readers that Jesus is indeed raised from the dead, that death came into this world through Adam's sin, and that all who are in Christ will be made alive, Paul further elaborated on these foundational truths. The promised resurrection from the dead has a specific order. First, Christ is the firstfruits. For the promise of eternal life in Him to be fulfilled one day, it was first necessary for Jesus to be raised from the dead Himself. Our Lord conquered death when He arose from the grave on the third day. And now, death's ultimate demise is sure. This will happen after the next step of the resurrection, when He comes back for those who are His.

This will be a glorious event when all who are the Lord's at His coming will be transformed in an instant and we will be with Him forever in heaven. However, before eternity is ushered in, the Lord will destroy all His "enemies" (vs. 25), including the devil's dominion.

As John observed this judgment in his vision, he saw the devil "thrown into the lake of burning sulfur" (Rev. 20:10). John also saw that "anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire" (vs. 15).

This is in line with our lesson's Scripture passage, where Paul proclaimed that death would be the last enemy of God to be destroyed. All enemies would be placed under the Lord Jesus' feet, and death, the last enemy of all, would be destroyed.

After God's people are raised from the dead, and all the Lord's enemies have been put under His feet, there will be "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1), and then eternity will be ushered in. God will wipe away all our tears, and there will be no more death.

**7.** *What will happen to all the Lord's enemies?*

**8.** *What is the last enemy to be conquered?*

**9.** *What will happen after all the Lord's enemies are conquered and judged?*

## God's Kingdom Will Be All in All

1 Corinthians 15:27-28, KJV

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

1 Corinthians 15:27-28, NIV

<sup>27</sup>For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. <sup>28</sup>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.

After Jesus returns and raises His people from the dead, all things will be put under His feet as the conquering King of kings. Every enemy, including death, will be crushed beneath Him. Then Jesus will in turn present all things to His heavenly Father. Then God's kingdom will be all in all, and nothing will ever be able to corrupt it again.

However, that future in the kingdom of God is reserved only for those who believe what Paul proclaimed at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 15, for "by this gospel you are saved" (vs. 2). Jesus died for our sins and was buried, but on the third day, He rose from the grave (vss. 3-4). In so doing, He took the punishment for our sins that we deserved.

If you are His by faith, take hope in that glorious future that is yours! If you are not His, do not wait another moment. Seek out someone even now who can help you and answer any questions you may have.

**10.** *All things will be put under the Lord Jesus' feet, with one exception. Who is that?*

**11.** *What will Jesus do after all creation is made subject to Him?*

**12.** *Why is it important to know God will be all in all?*

## Accept or Reject

Stanley loves life. He works hard and makes the right choices as the CEO of an investment company. For his annual vacations, he chooses the best five-star hotels. One day while on vacation, Stanley started a long conversation with another visitor. Interestingly, the person asked him a difficult question: “If you were to die tonight, do you know if you would go to heaven?” Stanley couldn’t answer the question.

The stranger shared some Scripture verses with Stanley about how Jesus Christ came to the earth that all people can have an abundant life now and spend eternity with God in heaven. He explained to Stanley how sin has separated humanity from God, so God in His mercy and love sent His only Son to die for our sins. The young man clarified how Jesus Christ didn’t just die, but He was resurrected from the dead. Therefore, since Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead with an immortal body, we can also be resurrected.

Stanley somewhat understood what the young man was saying because he grew up in church. But Stanley was already a good person. He didn’t think he needed a Savior. Of course he wanted eternal life, but his life on earth right now was perfect, and Stanley feared that by accepting Christ his life would have to change too much.

The young man tried to explain to Stanley that Jesus Christ would give him a new life, and it would be even more abundant than the life he was now living, but Stanley very politely told the young man he would think about accepting Jesus—but maybe do it later.

**13.** *Why do you think people prefer to eat, drink, and be happy in this life and not think about eternity?*

**14.** *Do you think being alive in Christ means forsaking enjoying this present life? Explain your answer.*

**15.** *Why is choosing or accepting Christ the most important decision you will ever make?*

## Choose Life!

We make daily choices that sometimes only have immediate benefits and consequences, but some choices have long term benefits and consequences. Today we learned from 1 Corinthians that our choice to be alive in Christ gives both immediate and eternal benefits and consequences.

► *On the last pages of this book, make a list of some immediate and eternal benefits of choosing to be alive in Christ through accepting Him as Savior and Lord and living in the power of the Holy Spirit. Then make a list of some immediate and eternal consequences of not choosing to be alive in Christ and living in the power of the Holy Spirit. Reflect on both lists and make a choice today whether you want to be alive in Christ or suffer eternal death in hell. If you have accepted Christ already, decide if you are truly living in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and if not, pray about starting that today.*

### KEY VERSE

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. —1 Corinthians 15:28, KJV

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. —1 Corinthians 15:28, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

#### Week of August 28 through September 3

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Mark 7:1-8—Follow God, Not Human Traditions.
- Tues.** 1 Samuel 1:19-23—Birth and Sacrifice.
- Wed.** Psalm 6—Be Gracious to Me, O Lord.
- Thurs.** Luke 7:24-35—Jesus, a Friend of Sinners.
- Fri.** Luke 14:7-14—Humility Before God and Others.
- Sat.** Exodus 30:17-21—Come to God in Cleanliness and Holiness.
- Sun.** Luke 11:37-44—Be Cleansed Inside and Out.