

Abounding in Resurrection Certainty, Part 2

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

There in 1 Corinthians 15:20 through 28. Look at it there and follow along as I read. "But in fact," Paul says, "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming, those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

"For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For 'God has put all things in subjection under his feet.' But when it says, 'all things are put in subjection,' it is plain that he is accepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be

subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all."

We will rise from the dead. We need to let that sink in. We need to let that hope just wash over our minds and transform the way we think. Not only the way we think, but the way we act. Let's consider the second certainty here. And consider the final conquering of the greatest boogeyman ever, right, death itself. Second Certainty, God is going to reign triumphantly. God will reign triumphantly. The first point has to do about our personal participation in bodily resurrection. But Paul, he didn't stop and just there in giving us hope. He wants us to be encouraged by a hope that's outside of what happens to us personally.

Think about what happens to the glory of God. He wants us to be encouraged by what the resurrection represents, namely the full, the final triumph of God over all hostile forces in the universe. "In Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits and then at his coming those who belong to Christ." And verse 24 says, "Then comes the end." Then comes the end. It's an ordering of future events here. First, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is now past tense to us. Secondly, the resurrection of believers. We're waiting

for that patiently, and then third, then comes the end. That's the ordering of these events.

And then the rest of verses 24 to 28 are really an expansion of, an elaboration of those two little words, "the end." Quite a bit of head, ahead of us. It's going to usher in the *eschaton*, the last things quite a bit ahead of us, which is going to bring to final fulfillment all that will culminate and redound to the full glory of God. What Paul calls the end is when Christ hands over the rule, the reign of the universe to his father. But before he's ready to do that, Christ still has some work to do. First, verses 24 to 25, Christ is going to abolish every challenge to God sovereign rule. I cannot wait for that to culminate. "Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power, for he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet."

The messianic reign of Christ is a reign of conflict. It's a reign of conflict. His ministry on earth was a time of conflict ending in his death at the hands of sinners. His death on the cross, that didn't end his messianic mission though. He has more to do. He has more to accomplish in the fulfillment of all God's promises to Israel. All his promises to Abraham and

Isaac and Jacob. All his promises to David and to the redeemed of Israel in the New Covenant.

Christ is coming back. When he does, he will come, again in conflict, judgment. Judgment will fall. He's coming ruling in the power of his sovereign authority. The word, abolish, there can mean wipe out or set aside or bring to an end, and that's exactly what he's gonna do with all rule and authority and power. Those terms rule, authority, power, all often used to speak of hostile spiritual forces. Demons that are set into opposition to God. The word rule is the word *arche*. It's a command of a superior over inferior.

The word authority is *exousia*. And there's an emphasis there on legal recognition of authority and power. The word for power is the word *dynamis*, which is the ability to project authority, to exercise rule and to dominate. So if it helps, think of this versus involving the three branches of American government. You got the rule referring to the Judicial Branch, Authority, referring to the legislative branch, and power refers to the executive branch. All three of those aspects of government. Legislature, judiciary, executive aspect, all those are present in any type of human dominion, whether there's a monarchy, a democracy, totalitarian dictatorship, that kind of

organization doesn't just exist on a human level, it exists in a spiritual level as well.

"We know," Ephesians 2:2 "the prince of the power of the air is at work in the sons of disobedience." Satan and his demonic subjects are all at work to influence and govern the rule the authority of power and, and all that in the human realm as well. All of this is a giant satanic conspiracy against the Lord of Hosts. And as Paul says, when Christ returns, he puts an end to everything; all of it. He ends all the opposition, opposition of every hostile force. When he comes, he takes over, he says, I'm in charge.

According to Psalm 2:9, Christ is going to break them all with a rod of iron. He will dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. He must reign verses, verse 25, 1 Corinthians 15, "until he's put all his enemies under his feet." The word, enemy, there refers to the, the, it's a, it's a word actually related to the word for enmity or hatred. All God's enemies are marked by an inner hatred of God that is manifest in outward opposition.

Whether it's active hostility against him or passive resistance, he's put all in his enemies under his feet, an allusion to Psalm 110:1, "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your

feet.'" Every enemy from the hostile rebel to the passive resistor, every enemy, whether, immaterial or material, every enemy whether demonic or human: footstool for Christ's feet.

At once, all his enemies will be under his feet. They'll be defeated and subdued, and abolished, just like Joshua grabbed the Canaanite kings and said, men come over here, put your feet on their necks, stand on them and show them you dominate. Christ is gonna do that. No more necessity after that for him to reign. He fulfills his mission as the Messianic king. He fulfills and accomplishes his task.

I know, like you, I rejoice to see that day. I, I rejoice to see every knee bow before the power and authority of the glorified Christ. There's even a better news here though, after abolishing every rebel force, second, look at verse 26, Christ is going to abolish death itself. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, "for God has put all things in his subjection under his feet." The last of Christ's enemies is death, which Paul personifies here.

Why does death remain as the last enemy? Why does it have to stick around? Why do we have to suffer under death? Because, beloved, death remains as the wages of sin and as long as sinners remain, as long as hostile forces remain opposed to

God's will, death must remain. Christ actually uses death like a tool for the judgment of the wicked. And when the judgment is finished. He's gonna put that tool away. He's gonna destroy death itself.

The saints will have risen from the dead. Death no longer will have any victims. Death will be forever abolished. Beginning in verse 27 is a reference to what we read earlier from Psalm 8 in verse 6. That beautiful reflection on man's place in God's creation. And in that Psalm, David, as you heard, rejoices in the fact that God has crowned mankind with glory and honor. He's "given him dominion over the work of his hands," God, "has put all things under his feet."

And Paul uses that text here in 1 Corinthians 15:27 as a reminder that all things are not yet under man's feet. So when we see loved ones die in Christ and not yet raised from the dead, we get it. It's all part of the plan. We don't need to worry. Death remains because it subdues, has a stranglehold on the entire human race, and it's a continual reminder of Adam's failure to fulfill God's original purpose. It's a reminder of our sin. It's a reminder of our need for salvation.

The author of Hebrews, who also quotes from Psalm 8:6. And then he writes this in verses 8 to 9 in Hebrews 2, "Now in

putting everything in subjection to mankind, God has left nothing outside his control. But at present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. We do see him, Jesus, who is for a little while, made lower than the angels, and he's crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."

But then this a little later, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." God put everything under the feet of mankind. But mankind failed in Adam. Only Christ could fulfill all God's intention for mankind. The devil, his weapon of death, is a vanquished foe. It remains as a tool, but Christ, once he completes his work, once he subdues all enemies, he'll subdue and abolish death itself and forever. That's God's plan.

So first, Christ is going to end every opposition to God's rule. Second, God is going to abolish death itself and then finally, when every foe is vanquished, when death itself is vanquished, when it's no longer needful, Christ is going to hand the authority that he received from God back to God. Look at the



verses, verse 27 middle of the verse to verse 28. When it says, "all things are put in subjection," it's plain that God has accepted who put all things in subjection under Christ. "When all things are subjected to him, then the," son of him," son himself will also be subjected to God, who put all things in subjection under Christ, that God may be all in all." In other words. The God who originally put all things in subjection under Christ, he clearly retains his place of authority over Christ. He sits above the messianic rule of Christ on Earth and God is all in all.

Once Christ has vanquished his enemies, when he was abolished, all Rule, authority, and power when he's abolished all death, he will be reigning without opposition. And when that task on Earth is finished, it's accomplished be nothing left to do but to hand back to his father the rule and authority he was given to restore the universe to its proper order. Sin, the Devil, death, run amok in the world right now but God for his glory, for the good of his people, God sent his Christ with authority to sort everything out and sort he has done.

He has conquered death in the very beginning with his death on the cross and rising from the dead. And he is now working in his people. He will one day vanquish all rule, all authority. He

will vanquish the devil. He will destroy death itself. It's the death of death and the death of Christ, as John Owens' title to a famous work. His work was finished at the cross. The cleanup is going on right now, taking in place in earnest between the second coming and the final judgments. Once Christ is finished cleaning up, he'll hand that authority he's been given back to his father verse 28, "so that God," and that's a purpose clause there, "so that God will be all in all." Our great God and savior in all his Trinitarian glory will be all that he is in all his fullness, without impediment without resistance no rival to his glory.

Listen, if you're in Christ. You're gonna rise from the dead, personally, that's a personal reflection on the reality of resurrection. But if you're in Christ also, you will rejoice. You'll be there to rejoice at the end of the age when God is all in all. When his triumph over all things, through the power that raised Christ from the dead, when his triumph is manifest. Does that encourage you? I know that we still deal in the here and now. We're in a world of sorrow and sin and death and a blasphemous culture. But doesn't it give you strength to know that you will rise from the dead when Christ returns, that you know the story of the end of the ages? God wins.

Upon those two certainties, you will rise bodily, God will reign triumphantly. Paul sets this exhortation at the end of this magnificent chapter. Our final point for this morning, you can go to back to 1 Corinthians 15:58. It's a therefore, therefore abound in resurrection certainty, but it does become for us a third certainty in the text. "Therefore, my beloved brothers be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Just a quick overview of that verse. First, be steadfast. The word *hedraios*, which is stand firm. It's firmly established. Paul uses a related word *hedraioma* in 1 Timothy 3:15, where it's translated as foundation, as buttress. The idea is to remain fixed, steadfast, established, anchored deeply into a rock solid foundation. What foundation? Look at the, therefore, and go back to those verses in the chapter you will rise from the dead? God triumphs, resurrection certainty.

Next word be immovable. That's the word, *ametaketos*, which the last part of that word is the root word in the word kinetic refers to something that's always in motion, motion, kinetic. So *meta*, with, *kinetos*, which is, motion; with motion. But then there's a, an alpha privative on the front of the word.

It's a prefix that makes that whole thought negative, not in motion. Not with a bunch of motion, not moving around all the time. Related verb *metakineo* refers to something that's in swift motion, constantly changing. Paul says, here, don't be like that. Don't be constantly changing, don't be in constant flux and change, be immovable.

Final word here be abounding. From a steadfast immovable foundation, we stand on a platform from which we can and must abound in the work of the Lord. The word abounding is the word *perisseuo*. It's a, it's a really energetic word in it indicates a richness, a super abundance and continuous progress in that richness and super abundance. And the continuous idea is found in the, in the first modifier too, always abounding. But the abounding here is not without direction. It's not aimless, abounding, it's not whimsical abounding, it's not dissipated energy, it's not abounding according to your own thinking according to, like, well, God gave me a ministry and I kinda have to do my own thing going. It's not that. It's abounding in a specific direction. It's abounding in a very particular way. We must abound in what? The work of the Lord. The work of the Lord.

Since we're interested in the Lord's work, then we need to look to the Lord and his word to find out how the, do the Lord's work in the Lord's way. We need to line up our life goals with the Lord's goals, so that we can attain those goals by doing his work in his way. And that is why, beloved, it is so important for us to stay anchored so deeply in God's word, so we're steadfast, immovable, never questioning what the Lord wants us to do at any given time.

There's no abounding growth in someone who's not deeply anchored into Christian doctrine. There's no abounding growth for people who are light in truth and superficial in thinking. There's no abounding growth for those who wander from thing to thing, who flit and flutter like a hummingbird, always finding the best nectar. We have to remain steadfast, immovable, abounding in the work the Lord prescribes and to do the work in the manner he circumscribes.

What is the Lord's work? Not a big mystery. We find that in our Lord's Great Commission we could point to a lot of passages, but Matthew 28, "Go therefore make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." One command: make disciples. That's the specific



direction. Several modifying participles, go, baptizing, teaching. That's a particular way we are to fulfill the Lord's specific command.

The church is not an organization that is to provide avenues for social welfare. It's not a social justice organization. Church is not just a, a community group where lonely people can come and make friends and do things together. Church is not a youth organization catering to those who are either youth by chronology or youth by maturity. Church is not an entertainment center providing religiously themed content to distract our itching ears. Church isn't a counseling center providing therapy to salve the religiously discomfited. The church is, in the words of the apostle Paul, the household of God. Which is the Church of the Living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

The way the church supports and defends the truth, the way it protects the truth is by constantly preaching the truth and teaching the truth. We hold onto it and we guard it by giving it away. We go out, we make disciples and when we find a true disciples regenerated by the Holy Spirit, confessing that faith once for all delivered to the saints, we recognize the sovereign work of God by baptizing that person into the Trinitarian faith.



Interesting, the baptism candidates here begin with this rudimentary knowledge of the very profoundness of all mysteries, that of the Holy Trinity and the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Assumes some instruction here, profound doctrinal element in this endeavor, called the work of the Lord, isn't there? Which is why making disciples begins with baptizing them into the church with Trinitarian theology, and it continues with teaching these disciples for the rest of their lives.

We don't just teach facts, we teach behavior. We prescribe what the Lord prescribes, and we expect disciples to hear the voice of the Chief Shepherd and to follow the Chief Shepherd where he commands them to go, to live as he commands them to live and to do what he commands them to do. We do that together beloved, for the rest of our lives in this local church. That's the joy of abounding in the work of the Lord, which springs forth from resurrection certainty.

And that's how the res, exhortation of verse 58 becomes a third certainty. Because when we do the Lord's work in the Lord's way, our work in the Lord is not in vain. That's a certainty. It's not *kenos*, meaningless, empty; rather it's filled with meaning, it's filled with eternal significance because all our work in the Lord, in contrast to everything else

we do, all our work in the Lord will last forever. When we do that in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, which is growing more evil by the day, we shine like lights in the world.

Those two resurrection certainties that you will rise bodily and God will reign triumphantly. Those certainties mean you have every reason to eagerly obey Paul's exhortation here to abound in the work of the Lord. When you obey that exhortation, you find a third certainty comes into fruition, becomes visible to you, becomes the hope that you rest in. Your work for the Lord and in the Lord remains forever. I hope that's an encouragement to you all this morning. Let's bow together for word of prayer.

Our God, thank you for raising Christ from the dead. We see in the resurrection of Jesus Christ the inevitability of your declared will. We're thankful for that that your decree has come to pass in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We also see in the resurrection of Christ your immutable power, unchanging, forever unchanging. And we know that that same power is at work for our good, for those of us who are in Christ. We have firm confidence that we too, like Christ, will rise from the dead. That's your promise.



You fulfilled your promise to Christ and now you will fulfill your promise to each one of us who trust in Christ. We pray that that would be a great joy and encouragement for us and a hope for us, as we never lose heart, never growing weary and doing what is good. For in due season we will reap if we faint not. Let us work hard until the coming of Christ or until we're taken to be with him. For your glory, Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.