

1 Corinthians Message Series

Discussion Guide based on the morning message on January 16, 2011

Implications of the Resurrection (Part 2): 1 Corinthians 15:29-34

Big Idea: 1 Corinthians 15:29-34

Big Idea: Realize the ethical implication of the resurrection.

- I) Incentive to Share (29).
- II) Incentive to Suffer in Service (30-32).
- III) Incentive to Sanctification (33-34).

Ice Breaker: With reference to the song, *I Bless Your Name*. In front of the other Christians in this room, what can you mention that you are thankful for in order to give praise to Him? And think about the fact that the people you are with right now are Christians and so ... could there be a safer place to bless God's name than here? (Expect all to participate.)

Teaching Point 1

- Baptism of the dead? I'm not sure how Larry will treat this verse, but here is the commentary below describes where I'm at on it's meaning ... (it comes from the Bible Knowledge Commentary)
 - **15:29.** Up to 200 explanations have been given of this verse! Most of these interpretations are inane, prompted by a desire to conform this verse to an orthodox doctrine of baptism. It is clear from the context, however, that Paul distinguished his own practice and teaching from that described here. He merely held up the teaching of being **baptized for the dead** as a practice of some who denied the Resurrection.
 - How the false teachers came to this view may never be known, but just across the Saronic Gulf, north of Corinth, lay Eleusis, the center of an ancient mystery religion lauded by Homer (*Hymn to Demeter* 478-79) and widely popular (cf. Cicero, himself an initiate, in *De Legibus* 2. 14. 36). Part of the rites of initiation into this pagan religion were washings of purification in the sea without which no one could hope to experience bliss in the life hereafter (cf. Pindar *Fragment* 212; Sophocles *Fragment* 753). A vicarious participation in the mysteries was not unknown either (cf. Orphica *Fragment* 245). Given the Corinthian propensity for distortion in matters of church practice (**11:2-14:40**), it was likely that some in Corinth (possibly influenced by the Eleusinian mystery) were propounding a false view of baptism which Paul took up and used as an argument against those who denied the Resurrection. No interpretation of this text is entirely satisfactory, but this view has as its chief strength the natural reading of the Greek verse, an asset singularly lacking in other explanations. Also it is noteworthy that Paul referred to **those** (not "we") who are "baptized for the dead." The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

NOTE: There is an opportunity here to discuss for a moment the inspiration of the Bible. Why would God allow/inspire Paul to mention a practice that is not consistent with the truth and meaning of baptism as an argument for the resurrection? We believe God inspired the Bible according to a theory called Plenary Verbal Inspiration. Plenary Verbal inspiration asserts that God's inspiration extends to all of Scripture and that He guided the writers to the very words they chose, but gave them some freedom to write according to their distinct styles and personalities. Other Theories: Neo-Orthodox – holds that the Bible is only a witness to or contains the word of God, Dictation – holds that God dictated the Bible, Limited Inspiration – holds that God inspired the thoughts of the biblical writers, but not necessarily the words they chose.

Teaching Point 2

- Why do you do what you do? Paul's actions in the advancement of the Gospel cost him. His actions had undesirable consequences many times. There are several angles you can hit this. 1. First, ask your group if they are doing anything dangerous for the advancement of the Gospel. Their minds may go immediately to the physically dangerous, and that is certainly one way of looking at that question. Here are some other ways of looking at that question ... It's can feel dangerous to open up a conversation with a friend or coworker about Jesus or about Christianity in general. You never know how people will view your thoughts and how that will impact your relationship. It can feel dangerous to talk to a family member about their salvation. Especially when they have lived their life without thought to God for a long time. Your witness to them may affect your relationship going further. Some other good questions might be:

When is the last time you did something you were not comfortable doing in relation to the Gospel? When is the last time you did something that cost you something for the advancement of the Gospel? **If you cannot find where the cross has ever cost you anything, you may not be saved. At the very least, you are not acting on your salvation if there is no suffering for your service.**

- **Back to Paul ...** Paul's life in recent days (as it relates to the context of the passage) had been endangered by his attempts to preach and spread the Gospel. Explore for a moment the things Paul had experienced. Read 2 Corinthians 11:16-33 together. He stated that all his experiences were not worth it if the dead are not raised (and if the resurrection is not true). Paul's motivation for what He did came from the knowledge and belief that one day he would be resurrected from the dead to be with Jesus and the desire for as many people as possible to experience that resurrection. How concerned are we with other people's opportunity to be resurrected? In other words, how concerned are we with other people's salvation? Why are we not more motivated to tell the good news?! **The resurrection can give you motivation for dealing with people and for investing your life on this side of heaven since you are going to LIVE!**

Teaching Point 3

- "Bad company corrupts good character." How are your actions affecting how impactful your witness would be if you told your salvation story to those around you? Would they have evidence in the way you live your life that your salvation is worth obtaining? Or would they think that your beliefs are not connecting with your life? Evaluate the affect those around you are having on your spiritual condition. **What negative influences are in your life that affect your behavior? What do you need to do to knock out the bad influences?**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Are you doing anything dangerous for the advancement of the Gospel?
- When is the last time you did something you were not comfortable doing in relation to the Gospel?
- When is the last time you did something that cost you something for the advancement of the Gospel? What has the Gospel cost you?
- **Focus for a moment on your motivation for what you do. Can you do good things with the wrong motivation? What should be the bottom line motivation in your life?**
- How concerned are we with other people's salvation? Why are we not more motivated to tell the good news?!
- How are your actions affecting how impactful your witness would be if you told your salvation story to those around you? Would they have evidence in the way you live your life that your salvation is worth obtaining? Or would they think that your beliefs are not connecting with your life?
- **What are essential elements of your "story"? (What your life was like before salvation, details of your salvation experience, what you life has been like since.)**
- Evaluate the affect those around you are having on your spiritual condition.
- **What negative influences are in your life that affect your behavior? What do you need to do to knock out the bad influences?**