



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany (C) – 1 Corinthians 15: 12-20

Focus: The Resurrection of the Dead

word of life

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.”

(1 Corinthians 15:20 NRSV)

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

The Apostle Paul continues his reflection on the topic of resurrection, moving from the Risen Christ described in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 to the resurrection of the dead described in verses 12-20.

It is unclear as to what Paul perceives the issue to be in Corinth other than some people are doubting the resurrection of the dead. Perhaps some of the faithful believers in Corinth have died and were not immediately raised from death like Christ. Perhaps some wondered if their physical bodies would be the same or different after resurrection.

One can almost hear the murmurings. Maybe the resurrection of the dead is not true. When it comes to the significant topic of the resurrection of the dead, it is natural to be curious. It is a deeply personal topic for each of us.

1. *What questions do you have about the resurrection of the dead?*
2. *What questions have you heard expressed by others?*

For Paul, the link between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of followers of Christ is essential, unbroken, and strong. There is no resurrection of the dead without the resurrection of Christ. Because Christ died, was buried, and rose again, we too might have hope of the same final outcome.

His conclusion is worth noting, “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.” (1 Corinthians 15:20 NRSV)

3. *What does it mean to describe Christ as “the first fruits of those who have died”?*
4. *What would be the implications if Christ were the “only fruit of those who have died”?*

In this passage, Paul attempts to use logic to prove that the resurrection of the dead is possible. Take a moment to read 1 Corinthians 15:13-19 aloud. Note the number of times the word “if” is used to set up a logical progression.

5. *Summarize Paul’s argument for the resurrection of the dead.*
6. *What part of this argument do you find compelling or not? Explain your answer.*
7. *Can logic prove resurrection?*

Faith is not about a winning argument which coaxes someone into believing. Instead, the Risen Christ moved in the world and was seen by many, unleashing the Holy Spirit to transform lives. That life-giving transformation continues today. As we wait for the day of the resurrection of the dead, we witness how resurrection is already at work—on this side of the grave. Because of the Risen Christ, we experience the forgiveness of our sins and the hope of life beyond the grave. We eagerly look forward to the resurrection of the dead—in all of its glory.

8. *Describe how you envision the final resurrection of the dead.*
9. *How does the promise of the resurrection of the dead shape your life... today and tomorrow?*

Word among

Braylon had never planted anything in his young life. But when he attended a Community Hunger Walk, he became both confused and fascinated as he watched a local gardener carefully prepare the soil and plant seeds in a series of small paper cups.

What was she doing? What could possibly come from a small, dark seed? It was beyond his grasp and imagination. But his expression changed to sheer joy when he realized he would be taking home one of the sample cups. Over the course of the next week, Braylon would wake up and dash to the window sill to see if his seed in that black soil had changed. Each day he became discouraged. Nothing seemed to be happening.

The gardener happened to be friends of Braylon's grandmother. They chuckled about his impatience. The gardener offered to drop off additional containers with green beans already sprouting. When Braylon saw the gardener and the bigger pots of soil with green sprouts, Braylon's expression returned to that of sheer joy. He was witnessing a spellbinding miracle of life.

How is it possible for a flower, fruit, or vegetable to come from the burial of a small seed? The words of Paul ring out, "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died." (1 Corinthians 15:20 NRSV) From the death of Jesus, came a new fruit, the first of a new creation.

1. *Is this image of a seed transformed to a fruit helpful to you? Explain your answer.*
2. *When you think of your resurrection from the dead, what fruit, vegetable, or flower comes to mind?*

As Christians who believe in the resurrection of the dead, we can be open to discuss death and resurrection. Each one of us will pass through death. But death does not have the final word.

3. *What makes it difficult for us to talk about death and our burial?*

faith practice in daily life

Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper

In life, each of us makes lots of decisions. We decide how to make money and then, how to spend our money. We make choices about friends, partners, and family. We make plans, change plans, have plans changed for us, and make new plans.

It seems like a natural sequence to make plans for the end of our life. For we cannot avoid it, our life on this earth will one day end. This is more than a conversation with a lawyer and an attempt to get our affairs in order. It includes embracing the life which is to come after our time on earth. Though we do not know when and how the resurrection of the body will occur, we can trust our connection with Christ as the first fruit of that new creation.

4. *What is the word of God for you to hear concerning the resurrection of the body?*
5. *What about the resurrection do you want more information or discussion?*

Prayer

Creator of love, set us free. Prepare us for the resurrection of the body. In Christ we pray, Amen

last word

Take time this week to ponder the resurrection of your body

Daily Faith Practices

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