

How Can We Know?

1 Corinthians 15:20-28 (CTW: 1 Cor. 15:51-59)

Last week, we saw in our passage a doubt that had arisen in the church concerning the resurrection and eternity. Because of this doubt, Paul reminded them of the truth, that Jesus is risen from the dead, which brings us hope of the promise that we too, shall be raised from the dead. And yet, this remains a difficult teaching to accept. Primarily because this is something that is not tangible. So how can we know? There are 3 signs Paul gives us for our assurance in the resurrection, for eternal life.

1. Firstfruits – 20, 23-24
 - a. Lev 23 – Feast of Harvest, or Firstfruits – Priest at the harvest feast would take the sheaf of firstfruits and wave it before the Lord to signify to both God and the people that the harvest has come from God and therefore belongs to God.
 - b. Jesus being raised from the dead is God assuring us that we, too, shall be raised in a future harvest.
 - c. Death is only a sleep for us. At the resurrection, our bodies shall be transformed into the glorified state God has prepared for us.
 - d. This brings us to the order of the resurrection – We know that Christ is first, then with His return, those who are asleep in Him, and then those living in Him, finally with the world.
2. Adam – 21-22
 - a. Paul contrasts Adam with Jesus, calling the Lord the Second Adam in vs. 45.
 - b. Sin and death entered the world through 1st Adam's disobedience.
 - c. Life and resurrection come from 2nd Adam's obedience to God, being our sin sacrifice.
3. His Sovereignty – 24-28
 - a. So often we wonder about bad people prospering, the good suffering. We see that governments, in face of disaster, will turn a buck from their own people. We wonder why.
 - b. Yet, Paul's picture is that he has ultimate authority. We see this in our Sunday School lesson from Revelation. Paul emphasizes this in Romans 13. He will hold all authorities accountable. There will be a day of reckoning. This shall happen in the last days when death has been defeated.
 - c. Yet consider the verse 57. We have this victory. Present tense. So what does this mean for us?

The victory is this: We will overcome death because Christ has. And because Christ has, he reigns and as such, he will come back for us, and with judgment for those who have rejected him. We don't know when, so let us be found waiting, eagerly doing the work, the mission God has for us. Do you know?