

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:24-58 (PART 3 & 4 IN THE STUDY OF 15:1-58)
MARCH 21 AND 28, 2021**

I still anticipate ending the study on the last Sunday in March. These notes will be used for the next two Sunday's and will end these lessons from 1st Corinthians. Please feel free to make future study suggestions to me at tedm@martinmethodist.org or text to 817-228-6632. THANK YOU.

I'm pleased to announce that Ron will be leading the class in a study of Genesis throughout the month of April, and we'll share our plans in class on the 28th during class.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28. The last enemy that will be abolished is death

24. Then the end comes, when he will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he will have abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27. For, "He put all things in subjection under his feet." But when he says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that he is excepted who subjected all things to him. 28. When all things have been subjected to him, then the Son will also himself be subjected to him who subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all.

THIS IS WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE (WEB) WRITING: ALTHOUGH I LIKE WEB, THESE VERSES IN COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE (CEB) READ THIS WAY.. ²⁷ since he has brought everything under control under his feet. When it says that everything has been brought under his control, this clearly means everything except for the one who placed everything under his control. ²⁸ But when all things have been brought under his control, then the Son himself will also be under the control of the one who gave him control over everything so that God may be all in all. **Just makes me want to say "whew!!!" but we'll start with 24a and try our best to get through 27 and 28 when we get there.**

24a. "Then the end comes

- After the resurrection of those who are in Christ comes the end. Greek word for "end" has the sense of completion or fulfillment.
- Many New Testament scholars say it signifies the 'end' of the age, the time when God will complete his redemptive purposes for humankind.
- A purpose that will include both the judgment of the wicked and the salvation of the righteous that will take place when Christ returns for the last time"

24b. "when he will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he will have abolished all rule and all authority and power

The sequence here is that Christ will first bring to an end all earthly power and authority.

When that occurs, it will restore the Godly reign that existed prior to the introduction of sin into the world. WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT WILL LOOK LIKE?

Then, once the restoration is complete and the world is once again what God created it to be, Christ will hand over “the Kingdom to God, even the Father.” SAME QUESTION....

25. “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet

The symbolism here comes from the practice of earthly kings sitting on elevated thrones with their feet higher than the heads of their subjects.

This adds a whole new meaning to “Under Foot” doesn’t it?
What does it say about Christ’s reign?

26. “The last enemy that will be abolished is death

The destruction of death involves the resurrection of the dead, but I believe it also involves spiritual freedom.

Paul struggled with this issue in his personal life bodily and emotionally. For your insights into his feelings, please read what he had to say in Romans 7:22-24.

I’ll share his comments in class, but feel free to read in advance. You can also read Ephesians 2:1-6.

But when Christ comes again and puts God’s enemies under his feet, all the evil that now stains our daily existence will come to an end.

I hope to be able to shout, “Hallelujah!”

27. “For, ‘He put all things in subjection under his feet.’ But when he says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is evident that he is excepted who subjected all things to him

The sentence, “He put all things in subjection under his feet,” comes from Psalm 8:6. In its original context, it celebrates the fact that God has given man dominion over all things and has put the rest of creation under his feet. However, in this letter to the Corinthian church, Paul adapts that wording to say that God has put all things in subjection to Christ.

The only exception to that rule is God...the one who put everything at Christ’s feet.

28. “When all things have been subjected to him, then the Son will also himself be subjected to him who subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all

To most readers (me included) it appears that one member of the Trinity is seen as inferior to another. I’m convinced Paul is not speaking of the essential nature of either the Son or the Father. He is speaking of the work that Christ has accomplished and will accomplish.

I’m adding these words from 29-34 for open discussion and without exegesis.

²⁹ Or else what will they do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead aren’t raised at all, why then are they baptized for the dead? ³⁰ Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? ³¹ I affirm, by the boasting

in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. ³² *If I fought with animals at Ephesus for human purposes, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, then “let’s eat and drink, for tomorrow we die (from a quote in Isaiah 22:13).”* ³³ *Don’t be deceived! “Evil companionships corrupt good morals.”* ³⁴ *Wake up righteously, and don’t sin, for some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.*

What do you see in these verses?

What questions do they raise?

1 Corinthians 15:35-38. How are the dead raised?

35. But someone will say, “How are the dead raised?” and, “With what kind of body do they come? 36. You foolish one, that which you yourself sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37. That which you sow, you don’t sow the body that will be, but a bare grain, maybe of wheat, or of some other kind. 38. But God gives it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own.

35. “But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised?’ and, ‘With what kind of body do they come?’

The Greek word for “But” is a strong antithetical, meaning that what follows can be expected to be an opposing viewpoint. That’s true in this case and we see it throughout Paul’s writings. More so to the Corinthians because of the questions they are posing.

Paul has been talking about resurrection, both of Christ (vv. 1-11) and of the dead (vv. 12-34). He has been presenting the “for resurrection” case. Now, we will read how he addresses those who would deny resurrection, by attempting to answer two questions...

- The first is, **“How are the dead raised?”** which has to do with the process by which the resurrection is caused. In effect, they are saying, “Paul, given that you are very pro-resurrection, why don’t you explain how it happens!”—a question that they are sure Paul can’t answer.
- The second is, **“With what kind of body do they come?”** which has to do with the product, the resurrected body, that is produced by resurrection.

36a. “You foolish one”

The Greek word for foolish one is translated without wisdom. Paul is accusing his opponents of being fools—people utterly without understanding.

IS HE MEAN OR JUST FRUSTRATED?

36b. “that which you yourself sow is not made alive unless it dies

Those of us who have farm or gardening backgrounds understand this metaphor. When they have sown a seed, they know that they can’t expect to recover the original seed once a plant has grown from the seed.

Of course, God has provided for the continuation of the process. There is no necessity for recovering the original seed. The mature plant will include many seeds that can be used for the next planting

“made alive” In its use here, it is in the passive voice, which means that the seed isn’t the one that brings about life. That is the function of God, who created all things (Genesis 1-2)—and continues to do the same today.

37. “That which you sow, you don’t sow the body that will be, but a bare grain, maybe of wheat, or of some other kind

What is sown is quite different from that which will result from the sowing. A watermelon looks quite different from the seed that produced it.

38. “But God gives it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own

This brings the discussion to its source, God, who created all things. It isn’t the one who plants nor the one who waters, but God who gives life to the plant.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44. Raised in glory

42. *So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. 43. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is also a spiritual body.*

42. “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption

Paul now relates the seed and plant to the human body. When we die, our bodies are sown (buried) to corruption. In other words, our bodies begin to decay, even as a seed planted in the ground begins to decay as it prepares to give birth to a new plant.

But that decay isn’t the end of the story, but the beginning. The body which was sown in corruption is raised in incorruption—no longer subject to decay.

43. “It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power

For the Jewish people, the dead body conveyed uncleanness. Anyone who touched a corpse became ritually unclean for seven days, and was required to go through ritual cleansing before coming to the tabernacle or temple (Numbers 19:11-13).

But the body sown in dishonor is raised in glory. I think God chooses to grace the resurrected body with a touch of his glory.

Following the same thought line, the body is sown in weakness, but raised in power.

44. “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is also a spiritual body

The natural body is a body that requires breathing oxygen to live, and is the part of human life shared with animals. A spiritual body is one that is focused on the Spirit rather than the physical sustenance of life.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49. The second man is the lord

45. *So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46. However that which is spiritual isn’t first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. 47. The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven. 48. As is the one made*

of dust, such are those who are also made of dust; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49. As we have borne the image of those made of dust, let's also bear the image of the heavenly.

45a. "So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.

In this verse, Paul contrasts the first man (Adam) with the last man (Jesus Christ). The first man (Adam) came to life when God breathed into him the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). Adam passed to all his descendants the essence of his nature, one characteristic being that we require breath to live.

45. "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit

The last man (Jesus Christ) was different in that he became the giver rather than the receiver of life.

46. "However that which is spiritual isn't first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual

We are born to natural life. As we grow and mature in the presence of God, we take on the qualities of a spiritual life.

47a. "The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven

The reference to dust alludes to Genesis 2:7.

Paul adds another contrast. Between the first man (Adam) and the second man (Jesus Christ). Adam had his origin in the dust, but Jesus Christ had his origin in heaven.

48. "As is the one made of dust, such are those who are also made of dust; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly

We bear the characteristics of our descendants. In physical terms, we are descended from Adam, and reflect his dust origins. In spiritual terms, we are descended from Jesus Christ, and reflect his heavenly origins.

49. "As we have borne the image of those made of dust, let's also bear the image of the heavenly

This acknowledges that we are like Adam, who was created from the dust of the earth. It calls us to bear the image of Christ, who was descended from heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:50. Flesh and blood

50. Now I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood can't inherit the Kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption.

50a. "Now I say this, brothers

This emphasizes the importance of that which follows.

50b. "that flesh and blood can't inherit the Kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption

We use the phrase “flesh and blood” to refer to our physical bodies. Our flesh and blood are both subject to decay, so they aren’t fit for the Kingdom of God.

And our corruptible bodies are also not fit for the Kingdom of God. We must first allow Christ to transform our lives.

51a. “Behold I tell you a mystery”

I think we need to be careful with this word, “mystery,” because we use it today in ways that mean something quite different than what Paul meant. We often use mystery to mean something beyond our understanding.

Paul was surely aware of the Greek mystery religions, which emphasized secret teachings and rituals, his understanding is derived from his Jewish roots, where God revealed his mysteries to accomplish his purposes (Daniel 2:18-19, 27, 30, 47; 4:9).

51b. “We will not all sleep

Paul uses sleep here as a euphemism for physical death—a common usage in both Old and New Testaments (Psalm 13:3; 76:5; Jeremiah 51:57; Daniel 12:2; John 11:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:10). In this verse, then, he is saying that we believers will not all die a physical death before Christ comes.

51c. “but we will all be changed” (Greek: *allasso*—changed or transformed)

Paul has just said, “flesh and blood can’t inherit the Kingdom of God” (15:50). That sounds like bad news for those of us who are flesh and blood. Are we doomed? Paul reassures us that we will be changed somehow, which will fit us for the Kingdom of God.

52a. “in a moment”

The Greek word for moment means “without division” or “indivisible.” We get our word atom, the indivisible building block of all creation, from this Greek word. When used with regard to time, as it is here, it means a point of time so small that it is indivisible—an instant.

52b. “in the twinkling of an eye

The emphasis is quickness. This portion of the verse might be better translated, “in the blink of an eye.”

52c. “at the last trumpet

In the New Testament, trumpets were used to signal eschatological events—events having to do with the last times—Christ’s Second Coming. Jesus said, “The Son of Man will send out his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other”(Matthew 24:31).

In this verse, “the last trumpet” refers to the trumpet blast announcing the end of time.

52b. “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed

When the last trumpet announces the end of time, “the dead will be raised incorruptible”—no longer subject to the ravages of time and decay. Then “we will be changed”—for specifics, see the next verse.

53. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality”

These are the changes announced in the previous verse. Elsewhere, Paul says that God is incorruptible (Romans 1:23), meaning that he is not subject to the various forms of wear and tear, illness, and death to which humans are subject. The same will become true of believers at the end of time.

54. “But when this corruptible will have put on incorruption, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’

Paul alludes to Isaiah 25:8, which says, “Yahweh has swallowed up death forever!” Paul says that victory will triumph over death so that death will never have the opportunity to prevail again.

1 Corinthians 15:55. Death, where is your victory?

55. *Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?”*

55a. “Death, where is your sting?

Paul alludes to Hosea 13:14, which says, “Death, where are your plagues? Sheol, where is your destruction?”

55b. “Hades, where is your victory?”

In Jewish thought, Hades or Sheol is the abode of the dead, a place of torment where one would feel abandoned by God (Acts 2:27). It is associated with death, but Jesus holds the key to its door (Revelation 1:18).

1 Corinthians 15:56-58. God gives us the victory!

56. *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the Lord’s work, because you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

56a. “The sting of death is sin

Our sins are by their nature sins against God, but they are also sins against our neighbors or fellow-believers.

We tend to think of death as the enemy—the ultimate sting. However, it is not death that imparts the sting, but sin.

56b. “and the power of sin is the law

This seems counter-intuitive. God gave Moses the law, so the law must be good. However, God gave the law as a teacher might give instructions. This is given until such time as God's will could be more completely revealed in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:24). It served a purpose, but one that was incomplete.

There were a number of problems with the law. It couldn't cover every circumstance, which left interpretation in the hands of fallible human authorities.

57. "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"

With Jesus' death and resurrection, the emphasis shifted from law to grace—the free gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

The word "gives" is present tense, suggesting that the victory is ongoing—something we enjoy now. This is closely related to Jesus' understanding of the kingdom of God, which "is at hand" or "has come near" (Mark 1:15)

58a. "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable"

Paul concludes this chapter with an exhortation.

- Greek word for "steadfast" suggests a kind of secure, settled life that is not easily distracted from the journey on which it has embarked.
- Greek for "immovable" suggests something that is strongly rooted to its location or, in this case, faith, so that it cannot easily be moved.

58b. "always abounding in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord"

This suggests purposeful living that seeks to share the faith that has changed the believer's life.

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The Lord bless us and keep us;
The Lord make his face to shine on us
The Lord be gracious to us
and give us peace.

Numbers 6:24-26