

Resurrection Harvest

By David Harrell

Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28
Preached on: Sunday, March 27, 2016

It is my great joy to minister the word of God to you and I believe the Spirit of God would have me help you understand better some of the implications of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and in order to do that, I would invite you to take your Bibles and turn to 1 Corinthians 15 where in a few minutes we will be examining verses 20-28. 1 Corinthians 15:20-28. Obviously, this is the day we celebrate the resurrection from the dead of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, a resurrection that guarantees the same for all who are united to him through repentant, saving faith.

Now, the topic of the resurrection is both vast and deep. A mind blowing reality in the past that really anchors our soul for the future. In our Scripture reading this morning, we read about the events of the resurrection as recorded in the Gospel of John, an account that always causes us...excitement and on several occasions, I have had the opportunity to visit the garden tomb where they believe Jesus once laid and I can tell you every time I've been there I find myself overwhelmed with emotion, overwhelmed to know what happened there in the past and the implications of all of that for the future for all who love him.

Now, after the Lord's resurrection, may I remind you that he appeared to many people who knew him prior to his death. They were therefore credible witnesses that could say, "This is indeed the self-same Jesus who was crucified and is now risen from the dead." The Gospel account revealed that Mary Magdalene was the first to discover the empty tomb in the dark. Utterly bewildered, she ran to tell Peter and John, probably went to their home, John's home there in Jerusalem. And then, as we read this morning, Peter and John run to the tomb to see for themselves. John outruns Peter. He looks in and he's amazed. Peter comes and he barges in. He's amazed. There they discovered the grave clothes for themselves, the clothes that were once tightly wound around the body of the Lord Jesus. They're just lying there undisturbed. The face clothe is over to the side. Of course, this is all certain proof that a resurrection had taken place. Jesus had somehow dematerialized and passed through the grave clothes, the multi-layers of spices, through the stone sepulchre. But they had no idea where he was so they returned to Jerusalem, probably to tell Jesus' mother what had happened. Later the Gospel accounts reveal that Jesus appeared to some of his disciples, minus Thomas who didn't believe what they were telling him. And then eight days later, Jesus appears again to the disciples with Thomas there and he sees for himself the nail pierced hands, the spear pierced side, causing him to say, "My Lord and my God."

You see the testimony of these eyewitnesses really gained them nothing, rather just the opposite, it put them really in jeopardy with the religious elite of Israel, with the Romans who had all of them together concocted this ridiculous story to explain away the

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resurrection and thus protect themselves. According to Matthew 28:11, we read how the chief priests and the elders bribed the soldiers with a large sum of money to tell the people, "His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep. And if this should come to the governor's ears," they said, "we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So they took the money and did as they were directed; and this story has been spread among the Jews to this day." That was back in Matthew's day and, I might add, that's the story to this day. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Paul also tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:6, "that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also." It's interesting, in Matthew 27 when Jesus died, we read that the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection. They went into the holy city and appeared to many. Can you imagine if that was one of your loved ones? Nothing more is said about them, evidently they received a glorified body; they quickly ascended into heaven; they were only alive long enough to give further testimony to the power of the resurrection. So the Lord made sure to give overwhelming evidence of his resurrection because it is central to our faith. It's at the very core of what we believe. In fact, Christ's resurrection is so convincing that numerous critics filled with prejudice have studied the evidence and come away believing. There are many stories that attest to that.

Now on this resurrection Sunday morning, I wish to immerse each of us into the magnificent truths of the implications of Christ's resurrection on we who believe, and we see some of that here in 1 Corinthians 15, beginning in verse 20. Let me read the text.

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has 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 has 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 put all things in subjection to Him. 28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

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Here the inspired apostle reveals to us some astounding truths pertaining to what we can call a resurrection harvest and therefore I've entitled my discourse to you this morning, "Resurrection Harvest." Here we see three phases of the resurrection that really should animate our hearts to unending praise. He speaks of, first of all, the resurrection of Christ, the first fruits. Secondly, the resurrection of those who belong to Christ. And then finally, the restoration of all things in the kingdom of God. And what a wonderful topic we have before us that we can dwell upon given all of the chaos, all of the corruption, all of the violence that we see in the world around us today.

So, first, may I draw your attention to the topic of the resurrection of Christ, the first fruits. Now, in order for us to understand what Paul is saying, I need to take you back very briefly to verses 12 through 19. We're not going to look at them closely but just so you know, the apostle there has carefully delineated seven absurd theological consequences that would occur if believers were not also raised from the dead like Christ. If we deny the promise of a bodily resurrection, then he tells us that Christ would have not been risen. He tells us that the preaching of the Gospel would be meaningless. He tells us that faith in Christ would be worthless. He reminds us that all who witnessed the resurrection and all who preach it would be liars. Moreover, he tells us that all men would die in their sins and all former believers would have perished eternally and that Christians would be the most pitiable people on all the earth. The Christian life would basically be a charade without that; a sick ridiculous joke.

But notice verse 20, Paul says, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep," referring to the righteous dead whose spirits have gone on to be with the Lord but whose bodily remains await recomposition and resurrection. Now, let me give you a warning here: this does not teach the heresy of soul sleep that many would have us believe, that somehow the soul at death merely sleeps in a state of unconscious existence in the afterlife. The term "sleep" in the original language is often used to describe believers who have died. For example, in 1 Corinthians 4:14, Paul speaks of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and then he identifies those people in verse 16 as the dead in Christ. Your loved ones, your friends and mine who have gone on to be with the Lord, are asleep in Jesus, but their soul is very much alive in the presence of the Lord. That's why Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that, "I prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be home with the Lord." Jesus comforted the thief on the cross that believed in him and he said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in paradise."

So Christ is the first fruits of those who are asleep in Christ Jesus. Now, this also does not mean that Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead. If you look back in the Old Testament, you will see that both Elijah and Elisha raised people from the dead. In fact, a

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man was raised from the dead when he just came in contact with the bones of Elisha, remember in 2 Kings 13? Likewise in the New Testament, we see that Jesus raised the widow of Nain's son and Jairus' daughter; he raised Lazarus. Peter raised Dorcas and Paul raised Eutychus, and so forth. But unlike Jesus, all of those people died again. That's the point. Only Christ himself was the first to be raised never to die again.

Now, a little background on this concept of first fruits. In Leviticus 23:10 God commanded his covenant people Israel to do something very important before they harvested their barley crops. By the way, they harvested the barley crops at this time of the year. They were required to bring a representative sample of their harvest to the priest as an offering to the Lord, this was called the first fruits. This symbolized the consecration of the whole harvest to God and was a pledge of the whole harvest to come. So Christ's resurrection is the first fruits, in other words, the first installment of the harvest of the elect; those who are asleep are to be considered the full harvest as well as those of us who are still alive. Now this is very exciting. Think about this, please understand Christ's resurrection did not occur in isolation. It did not occur as if it had no impact on the rest of the harvest. He was the first fruit of the rest of the harvest – catch this – that already existed. You can't have a first fruit if there is no other fruit, right? It has to be part of an existing crop and, beloved, the existing crop was and is the elect of God that has existed since eternity past. So there is absolute certainty in this concept of first fruits. Christ wasn't some special seed planted all alone in some separate garden, growing up and living all alone and then being raised all alone and having no impact on anyone else. He was and is part of all of the seeds that had been chosen in eternity past that would be united to him. As Jesus says, "All that the Father gives me shall come to me and this is the will of him who sent me that all that he has given me, I lose nothing but," what? "Raise it up on the last day. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent Me draws him," John 6:44, "and I will," what? "Raise him up on the last day." So Christ is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep, and Jesus is, ultimately, the first fruits of all of the elect that God has chosen in eternity past to draw unto himself.

Now, we should also find great comfort in this idea of the dead in Christ being asleep. It's really a precious thought. I always marvel when I see my little granddaughter asleep on her grandmother's lap, pretty regularly in the morning and in the evening but, you know, if you think about it, when our loved ones die, they're asleep, if they know Christ, they're asleep in Christ. Their soul has gone on to be with the Lord but, in most cases, their body was fatigued, especially with older people; their body was perhaps diseased and disabled, we might say it was all used up, and that body is now in the grave. It might be scattered over many thousands of miles over the earth, but one day the DNA of that decomposed body that the Creator has on record is going to come back once again and be recomposed and wake up in unimaginable power and glory and be reunited with that glorified soul.

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That's amazing. Indeed, that is awesome. That Prince of Preachers, Charles Spurgeon, in 19th century London said this in his own inimitable way, quote, "The righteous are put into their graves all weary and worn." The older I get, the more I understand that concept. "But such they will not rise," he says. "They go there with the furrowed brow, the hollowed cheek, the wrinkled skin, they shall wake up in beauty and glory. The old man totters thither, leaning on his staff, the palsied comes there trembling all the way, the halt, the lame, the withered, the blind journey in doleful pilgrimage to the common dormitory but they shall not rise decrepit, deformed or diseased but strong, vigorous, active, glorious immortal. The shriveled seed so destitute of form and comeliness shall rise from the dust a beautiful flower: a green blade all fresh and young shall spring up where before there was the dried, decayed grain."

Now, we all understand this concept of seeds being planted. It's time to do that here in middle Tennessee and we know that the seed goes into the ground; it dies, so to speak, and then it begins to germinate and it sprouts forth in new life. That's exactly the imagery that we have of our resurrection body. So you must see that death is the great symbol of sowing. It's for this reason Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:42, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."

Now, beloved, the important of the resurrection of Jesus Christ surpasses all of the things that have ever happened in the world. The implications of it has more power and more potential than any other event in history. It might only be rivaled by the actual creation of the universe because, you see, within the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus Christ existed a supernatural power source of eternal life in God's everlasting kingdom and a mystery beyond our capacity to understand. We know that he dwells with all of his redeemed. In fact, he redeems us that he might inhabit us. He dwells within us. Our life has been hidden with Christ and God. Remember what Paul said? "Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me," and so forth. And Paul says in Romans 8:11, "if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who has raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Now here's the point: dormant within the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus Christ who, for example, appeared to Mary, was the seed of resurrection glory for all whom the Father had given the Son; a seed that contained the infinite power source of the universe. And if you were united to Christ in saving faith, if indeed you have been born again, then you are like a nuclear warhead ready to explode in unimaginable power and glory.

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As the old Scottish preacher, William Still, put it so well, "He is the embryo of all that one day will exist outside of hell. All that does not belong to him in his resurrection body and issues not from him will be burned up one day. Only that which is transformed by his coming power and glory will remain. The potential of that new Christ that stood before Mary at the first so that she mistook him for the gardener, is the source of all that will survive the original creation when it is burned up and reconstituted, and it is the Holy Spirit sent from him, belonging to him, and enshrining all the virtues of his victories over all evil, who dwells in your poor heart and mind." An amazing quote. What a precious, what a profound comfort that should be to all of us. It's for this reason we can echo the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:16 where he says, "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." As the writer of Hebrews says, "Indeed now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

It's astounding, isn't it? In Christ we have been given a new kind of existence. Think about this: his body was raised imperishable; it was raised perfect, no longer subject to weakness, no longer subject to death but able to live eternally. And like his, our resurrection body will be raised imperishable, Paul says, in power and glory, a spiritual body; we will be given a body like Christ's that is suited for the eternal kingdom in glory, one that is no longer subject to sickness and death or even sin and the shame that comes with that; no more frailty in temptation; and one that causes my mind to kind of short-circuit as it probably will yours, we will have a body that can exist apart from time and space. Don't ask me to explain that, but that's what we have in the word.

So the power contained in the resurrection body of Christ is infinitely powerful for within him is housed the omnipotent power of the Creator of the universe and one day we will behold his body. We will behold him. We will see him as he is and we will recognize him as a human being. His body will be like ours in terms of its overall look, but from his glorified body, dear friends, will emanate the effulgence of his majesty; from his body the resplendent light of his glory will blaze forth brighter than the noonday sun. Now, in light of this, remember Christ is the first fruits of the coming harvest, a precise sample of the coming harvest. You don't pick the first fruits and it be unlike the rest of it. It's a sample of that which is to come, which means our resurrection bodies will be in many ways like his minus the incommunicable attributes of God that are his alone.

Beloved, if I can give you a word of encouragement, the next time you see the corpse of a loved one, the corpse of a friend, look beyond the dreadful marks of decay, instead look

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at that body and see lying there a transformation in process, a transformation from the corruptible that is passing away to the incorruptible that is about to come. And it is for this reason that we never wish them back, right? We never wish them back but rather rejoice that their soul is now in the presence of our Lord and that body that lies there asleep is merely waiting its reconstituted form at the rapture of the church.

Next, Paul goes on to explain the profound implications of Christ's resurrection on all who are united to him in faith. Verse 21, "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." You have two men, two acts, and two consequences. Adam was the head of the old creation; Christ is the head of the new creation. Colossians 1:18, he is described as the firstborn from the dead, the preeminent one, the highest ranking one. Firstborn in the original language comes from a term *prototokos* and it basically refers to the ranking son who has received from the father the inheritance, whether he was born first or not. So Christ possesses the right of inheritance over all of creation because he is the Creator; it is his creation; he existed before creation and therefore he is exalted above all creation. So there are two men, two acts and two consequences. Romans 5:19, Paul says, "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous." You see, through Adam because of his sin, in some inscrutable sense all men, save Jesus, sinned in Adam. Not personally but really in the mind of God. And the sin thus committed was imputed to each one and therefore each person stands guilty, stands culpable and condemned before a holy God. Said differently, all men save the virgin born Jesus Christ actually took part in Adam's sin and thus as a result of his own sin in Adam, not the sin of anyone else, every human being stands condemned, every human being possess a fallen nature which will certainly work its way out in sin.

Now as we look at verse 22, some believe that this teaches universalism. Have you heard that term before? That basically everybody's going to go to heaven in the end. It says, after all, "for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." But, dear friends, to affirm such a heresy, one must deny all of the other passages that speak of reprobation where a reprobate is condemned to damnation. Now, to be sure, every descendant of Adam is included in the "all" of the first phrase, "in Adam all die." You see, to be in Adam is to be human. However, to be in Christ requires what? You have to be born again. There has to be a new birth. So those who belong to Christ by means of the new birth are his supernatural, spiritual descendants possessing the imputed righteousness of Christ. Because of this, we could read it, "all, that is all who have been born, who have been given new life spiritually, shall be made alive." In other words, they will be raised bodily from the dead. You see, the last Adam, the Lord Jesus, radically reverses what the first Adam initiated in world history and today we await not only our own personal

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resurrection but we await the new world to come; we await the millennial kingdom, the messianic kingdom when the Lord returns and renews the earth, renovates it back into the splendor of Eden and then at the end of the millennium, God will uncreate the heavens and the earth; he will recreate a new heaven and a new earth. Beloved, what a glorious future we have.

So Paul begins by speaking of the resurrection of Christ, the first fruits, now secondly, he speaks of the resurrection of those who belong to Christ. At the end of verse 22, again, "in Christ, all will be made alive. But," verse 23, "each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming." So Paul goes on to describe the rest of the harvest of which Christ is the first fruits. Now, notice he says, "each in his own order." The term "order" in the original language was often used in a military context to describe the arranged order of troops so here we see, once again, that God is both orderly and purposeful in all that he does.

Now, here we learn of the order of the resurrection harvest which, as we see here and compare with other passages, really occurs in three stages at Christ's coming: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at his coming. So the first stage are those who have come to saving faith in Christ since Pentecost up to the rapture of the church. Those then will be joined by living saints at the rapture, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Paul tells us that "the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." I have every reason to believe that my dear sister who the Lord took home a few years ago will see me and I will see her probably in the air on the way up. It's an amazing thought, isn't it? The second stage of the resurrection will be those who have come to faith during the tribulation period as well as the Old Testament saints. They will all be raised up together to reign with Christ during the millennium. Revelation 20:4 speaks of this. Daniel 12:2, Daniel says that, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt." And then finally, those who die during the millennium, the millennial kingdom, will probably be instantly transformed at death into their eternal bodies and spirits. Now, the only ones left then are the ungodly and that resurrection occurs at the end of the millennial kingdom at the great white throne judgment that John describes in Revelation 20 and that will be followed by an eternal hell. Their bodies will be suited for eternal torment. In Acts 24:15 we read, "there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." John describes a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment in John 5:29.

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So the saints alive today, those of us, we are awaiting that resurrection that will occur at the rapture of the church when the groom comes to take away his bridal church. The astute German theologian, Erich Sauer, described it this way, quote, "The present age is Easter time. It begins with resurrection of the Redeemer and ends with the resurrection of the redeemed. Between lies the spiritual resurrection of those called into life through Christ so we live between two Easters and in the power of the first Easter, we go to meet the last Easter," referring to heaven. Oh, child of God, don't miss this: today we not only celebrate the miracle of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, but also the implications of his resurrection on all who are united to him through saving faith. It's for this reason Paul would write in Romans 8:23, "we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves." Why? He says we are "waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved," so our redemption includes more than just the redemption of our soul and spirit but actually of our bodies and this will occur when Jesus comes and takes us away.

It's astounding, isn't it, to think that the seed of our DNA will one day blossom forth in the eternal perfection of divine holiness and Christ is the first fruits of that harvest. Likewise, we're going to be given a body, a glorified body like his. His was, shall we say, the prototype. In 1 Corinthians 15:49, Paul says, "Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly." John says in 1 John 3:2, "when He appears, we shall be like Him." Paul stated that Jesus will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, an amazing thought. Folks, this makes all the suffering that we experience in this life absolutely pale into insignificance, right? I think perhaps the best way to think about the glory that we possess because of Christ being in us, is to think of and forgive, this is probably a silly analogy but it's the best one I can think of, think of Superman. There he is, Clark Kent, the newspaper nerd, but oh there is great power within. And I look around at all of you fellow nerds, those of you that love Christ, and lying within you is the power of the Creator that dwells within you because of the resurrection of Christ. It's for this reason Paul said in verse 19 of this passage, "if for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied."

I want to share with you something else that's very exciting. As believers, we are united with Christ in every aspect with respect to his work of redemption: we have died with him; we have been buried with him; we have been resurrected with him. Again, Paul says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." He says, "You have died. Your life is hidden with Christ," and so forth. So while we await our resurrected bodies, our true essence as glorified saints is concealed to the world. Back to the Superman analogy, I look at you, you look at me, you don't see much super but there is something incredibly super because of what Christ has done. Our life is hidden with Christ in God.

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And Peter says in 1 Peter 1:3, "we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, in his resurrection, he earned for all of us a new life just like his, and what I want you to understand, dear friend, this is so important: this resurrection power of Christ is a spiritual power that is at work right now in you. Don't think of it as just that which is going to happen at the rapture of the church or when your body rises forth from the grave, that power is within you right now. Paul prayed for the Ephesians that they would know what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, Ephesians 1:19. Then he goes on to say according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places. Beloved, right now dormant within you, I really shouldn't use the word "dormant," I mean, it is there, we need to tap into it, is this resurrection power that can give you power in conquering indwelling sin, in serving Christ, power that can help you live out a life that brings glory to him. It's an amazing thought. The power to experience the soul satisfying joy of the presence of the living God deep within your soul.

Well, finally Paul speaks of the restoration of all things in the kingdom of God and, folks, this is where history is headed. The Creator is in charge, not man, so don't panic every time you turn on the news. It is frightening. There are a lot of crazy things going on, but God is absolutely in charge. Just by way of review, one day, it's probably very soon, the Lord is going to come and snatch away his bridal church. He's going to pour out his wrath upon the nations of the world. He is going to do his final 70th week judgment of Israel. He is going to redeem many during the time of the tribulation because only believers will enter the kingdom. He is going to come and he is going to renovate the earth. He is going to establish his kingdom. He is going to reign for 1,000 years. Then he's going to uncreate the heavens and the earth and recreated a new heaven and earth. That's where history is going so we rejoice in those great truths.

For this reason Paul says in verse 24, "then," or it could be translated, "after this comes the end." In the original language, the term "end," telos, doesn't always mean ultimate finality or just the end of things in completion but in terms of that which is finally fulfilled. Then the culmination, you might say, and specifically it has to do with those things that I've just mentioned to you. And after Christ has reigned for 1,000 years, then comes the end when he hands over the kingdom to the God and Father when he has abolished all rule and all authority and power. Folks, this is why Jesus has asked us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," right? "On earth as it is in heaven." I hope you're looking forward to that day. No more Satan and his minions. No more sin. No more wicked rulers. No more greedy, lying, neo-Marxist politicians trying to force all of

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their stuff down our throat. No more ISIS. No more Islam. No more America. No more anything but God and his glory and his kingdom.

Verse 25, "For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet." Amazing symbolism here. The ancient kings that conquered another territory would take the existing king and place him under his foot and literally put his foot on his neck as a way of symbolizing complete domination and that's what Jesus is going to do with all of his enemies. He is going to abolish all rule and all authority and power. If you want to read the specifics of this, read Revelation 5 through 20. He is going to take back from the usurper that which is rightfully his.

Verse 25, "He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death." Isn't it great to know that at the cross Christ abolished death? It's an amazing thought. He broke the power of Satan, him who had the power of death, Hebrews tells us. And his resurrection from the dead, once again, is the first fruits of the resurrection harvest.

Verse 27, "But He has 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 put all things in subjection to Him." Let me explain this very briefly. Though co-equal to the Father, the Son was voluntarily subordinate to him in the mediatorial kingdom, but when the Son's work is fully accomplished, his kingdom will merge with his Father's kingdom as it is all one. They are all one, that's Paul's point.

Verse 28, "When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all." In other words, in perfect Trinitarian harmony, Christ will continue to reign in his kingdom. What did the angel promise Mary in Luke 1? "You are going to have a son and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will have no end." That's the point.

Folks, in closing may I describe to you this whole amazing plan of redemption in perhaps a little different way summarizing many passages of Scripture? In eternity past, the Father ordained a plan to demonstrate his infinite love for his Son whereby he chose for his Son a bride made up of undeserved sinners that he would save and transform by his grace. He chose them by name and he put them in the book of life. These names made up the Son's bride, an elect group of redeemed humanity pledged to his Son by the Father as a love gift, sealed by the very power of the Holy Spirit. And over the course of history, he has and he continues to draw this bride unto himself, this great company of sinners through the convicting, regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. He brings them to himself

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Resurrection Harvest

By David Harrell

Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28
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so that they will glorify him. And central to this whole predetermined plan of inter-Trinitarian love and glory was the Son's death. He had to become the perfect substitute in order for this bride to be reconciled to a holy God. These are the ones that Jesus called "all whom the Father has given me." And after the Son returns to the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, after he dethrones Satan and rules over his earthly kingdom for 1,000 years, the Son will then give back to the Father that which was given to him as a reciprocal expression of his love.

Oh, dear Christian, this is what it means when Christ hands over the kingdom to the God and Father. How we need to be humbled and exhilarated by these incredible truths, all of us who are a part of this resurrection harvest. And for those of you who have never come to faith in Christ, I plead with you to humble yourself today because unless you do, you will also experience a resurrection but your resurrected body will be suited for the eternal torments of solitary confinement in hell. So repent and believe in Christ before it is too late.

And dear Christian, I want to leave you with this simple challenge: learn to live a resurrected life. Learn to live a resurrected life. Tap into the power that's already there. Live out the glory and never stop telling the life changing story of the Gospel. Celebrate our risen Christ, the first fruits, of which you are part of the coming harvest. And by his grace, may we all bear the same kind of fruit on the vine of our life as Christ did that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Let's pray together.

Father, we give you praise for these unfathomable truths. Indeed, we are overwhelmed by the unsearchable riches of Christ, all of the things that you have given to us. And I pray for each one who is within the sound of my voice this day, that you will use your word to pierce even the most recalcitrant heart, that you will penetrate through all of the stubbornness and unbelief, all of the ridiculous excuses, all of the hypocrisy and, Lord, cause them to see their sin and the Savior afresh and repent and believe. And for those of us who know you, Lord, may we celebrate you all the more for having been in your presence here today. I ask in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.

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