

Please open your Bibles up to I Corinthians 15-16.

As we near the end of the book, Paul is going to speak to the resurrection of the body. He is taking the Corinthians back to the foundation of what followers of Jesus believe. Jesus lived. Jesus died. Jesus resurrected from the dead.

Greek philosophy and culture denied any value of the _____ body. Why would anyone possibly want to return in a bodily resurrection?

Take 15 minutes....

- In what ways are we in our Christian community influenced by secular culture. We speak of the Christian identity as counter cultural. Check out Matthew 5-7. You don't need to read the Sermon on the Mount, just know that Jesus is speaking to new followers and showing them a distinction found in Him from the broader culture.
- Describe how you celebrate Easter and Christmas. What is culturally influenced and what is biblical? These are distinctive Christian holidays.

I Corinthians 15

1. Vs. 1-2, Notice that Paul is clear that the act of salvation is in the _____ tense.
2. Vs. 3-8, Paul clearly notes appearances Jesus had after the resurrection.

Vs. 3-4, it is the shaping of an early creed that we would say today.

In vs. 5 he starts to list appearances:

- Jesus appeared to _____ and the _____ (vs. 5)
- Jesus appeared to _____ at the same time, most are still living (vs. 6)
- Jesus appeared to _____, his brother, and then the apostles (vs. 7)
- Jesus appeared to _____ himself (vs. 8)

3. Vs. 12-19, the resurrection is foundational to our hope that death does not win but is ultimately crushed. Look at vs. 14.
4. Vs. 20-28, "First Fruits" is a word picture of the barley harvest in Israel. There was a process that had to be done before the barley flour could be sold. This was the "first fruits." The process is explained on the video.

Jesus becomes our first fruits in anticipation of _____ resurrection to come.

5. Vs. 44, 50-54, Paul concludes his argument telling the Corinthians there will be a day when Jesus returns. Jesus is coming back in a "flash, at the last trumpet" and we will be changed.

Vs. 54, "When the _____ has been clothed with the _____ and the _____ with _____..."

Nothing will be the same. "Death has been swallowed up in victory..."

6. Vs. 55-58, My Dad...for me the words of vs. 55 became a reality,

"Where, O' death, is your victory?
Where, O death is your sting....
But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ."

I Corinthians 16

Paul now ends this first epistle rather abruptly moving from a strong theological statement to some very practical issues. We will all be familiar with Paul's directions. Ultimately, he wants this congregation to recognize that they are part of a broader church, a movement, and not simply an isolated community.

7. Vs. 1-4, Acts 11:27-30 tell us of a devastating famine in Judea. He was asking the congregation to take a _____ offering. By this time, they were worshipping on the first day of the week, Sunday.
8. Vs. 5-9, Paul is laying out his travel plans. You can see what he did in Acts 19-20:6. As Paul travels he revisits congregations that were established. In this text he is stopping at Philippi in Macedonia (northern Greece)

9. Vs. 10-11, Timothy is likely delivering the letter. It is interesting that Paul tells them to be nice to Tim. We know from I Timothy that Tim was timid and Paul doesn't want Timothy to be misused.
10. Vs. 12, _____ doesn't want to visit. Remember he was mentioned in chapter 1 in the divisions occurring in Corinth. It seems wise that he stayed away.
11. Vs. 13-14, "Be on your _____; stand _____ in the faith; be men of _____, be strong; Do everything in _____." This is a great benediction.
12. Vs. 15-20, He closes his letter commending people who had been encouraging to him. We all need these people in our lives. People who speak courage into your life and give you strength to overcome the obstacles.

A final thought.....

What you have seen over the last few weeks is Paul's true commitment to a healthy congregation in Corinth. He could have given up and moved on but he didn't. The conflict lasted well past this letter, but he sustained a relationship with them.

Community is worth the fight. Every congregation has their own battles. Beyond, I Corinthians we see Scripture continually speaking to followers to not isolate themselves but to be present and active in community.

May you and I keep fighting the battles to be in an authentic and healthy community that willingly deals with the bad stuff and celebrate hope in Jesus.

Spend some time talking....

- Share with each other, people who have given you courage (yes, encouragement) in your own life and in your own faith.
- Community is being "with unity." Looking back through the Bible studies, where do you see Paul speak to this unity?