

Prayer Points

Sally Goring and Carolyn Mitchell both had encouraging consultations on Tuesday and thank us for our prayers.

Remembering the relations of Laurence Hill who died recently. Give thanks for his involvement here at Beulah and on the service he gave to many when in business in the town. Give thanks for answered prayer for those men who have had encouraging reports following recent anxious times over health.

Please pray for churches that are seeking a new partnership. Ask God to lead them to the right person to ignite their passion for mission and provide support and fellowship.

Sermon Notes



BIBLE STUDY

May 5th 2024

Life After Death. Part 5.

**What Happens When We
Die? Part 3.**

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

There is a question that divides, and has divided, various faiths for millennia: 'Is there life after death?'

At the time of Christ even different sects within Judaism couldn't agree. The Sadducees, roughly two thousand in number and generally wealthy, didn't believe in resurrection. The Pharisees, also known as scribes and debaters of the Law of Moses, did believe in resurrection. The ordinary folk just tried to get on with their lives.

In Christian circles there are two questions that arise but are seldom asked aloud. The first is; 'Am I really forgiven?' and second; 'Is there a life after death?'

Through this series, it is hoped that you can feel free to ask challenging questions and arrive at a positive and fully-understood answer to the second, which will give you reassurance in the first.

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001

In some earlier notes on this chapter you were asked to consider why Paul may have been writing to the church in Corinth about the resurrection. Those with commentaries available may have come up with a satisfactory answer. For everyone else the widest accepted reason is down to the culture in Corinth which was, mostly, Gnostic and so rejected resurrection of the 'body' in favour of the 'inextinguishable spark of life' – a sort of miniature star type entity. Strange what people believe, don't you think?

Again in previous notes we looked at Paul's illustration of seed being planted and the plant that rises [v. 36-37] – which, in turn, explains the custom of Christian burial whereas Romans, generally cremated their dead. I never cease to be amazed at what can be learned by even a superficial study of the Bible.

Paul's training as a Pharisee would have given him a 'natural' aversion to dead bodies as they made one [Jews] ritually 'unclean', to be hidden away in 'whitewashed tombs' or cast into the ground, often within a day! [cf. Phil. 3:21].

Verses 51-54 may seem as if Paul is dancing around the Gnostic beliefs, perhaps, in order to encourage them to commit to the 'new' Christian faith. The truth is the complete opposite. He is quoting from the Torah. Specifically from Isaiah and Hosea, prophets speaking from five to six hundred years before.

What can history teach us? Many things if we seek to learn.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

The Bible is not simply a 'Good Book', nor is it a 'collection of stories', or even a 'guide to life'. It is much more than all of those, it is a history of a people written in a way that all can understand.

1. Compare 1 Peter 1:3-5 with 1 Cor. 15:50-54. What, in essence, are the differences? Whose sermon would you prefer, Peter's or Paul's? Why?

2. What indication will there be of the return of Christ? What should be done? See v. 51-52 & 1 Thes. 4:16, compare with Lk. 12:25 - 26. Is there any contradiction here? Why or why not?
3. Paul quotes, or references, Hosea 13:14 [see v. 55]. This one verse is a consolation in a chapter full of dire warning. What can we learn from that?
4. Similarly, Paul references Isaiah 25:8 [see v.54]. What makes this verse so significant to Paul's argument?
5. Read Verse 56 again. What do you understand that to mean? See also Ro. 5:12. Does that help or confuse further? Why?
6. By looking at Ro. 5:12-14 we can learn the dangers of 'cherry picking' verses. That said, there are some interesting parallels between these verses and Paul's. What stands out to you? How does it help?
7. Paul writes that 'we do not labour in vain' - does this mean, what is valuable in Jesus' name today will be kept for the future?
8. The Book of Psalms has been a consolation and solace to millions over the millennia. Read Ps. 88 and you will note some principles that Paul has drawn from. Which speak most to your own heart?
9. Jesus' death and resurrection means that death is overcome, yet still people we love die. We who remain still feel grief and pain over our loss. Is that being selfish? Why should funerals be celebrations rather than a time of mourning? [Or why not?]