

Prayer Points

Please pray for the following people in our Beulah Family:

- Sally Goring for right decision to be made for ongoing treatment with telephone appointment.
- Carolyn Mitchell for a successful outcome from her hospital appointment.
- Barry Thick who has had several falls this week as a result of ongoing health challenges. Pray for daily strength for Brenda in her caring role.

Praise God for BMS worker Ben Francis, who is bringing revitalisation to many churches in India and around the world through disciple-making movements. Pray for the training of 10,000 church planters who will plant 10,000 house churches.

Sermon Notes



BIBLE STUDY

April 28th 2024

Life After Death. Part 4. What Happens When We Die? Part 2. 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

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

But! ‘Some will ask . . .’ Back in the day [1972], Johnny Nash sang a song titled, ‘There are more questions than answers’ and as Ecclesiastes tells us, ‘there is nothing new under the sun’. In other words, there are always questions without apparent answers, like ‘Why wasps?’. I am not a horticulturist, but even I understand Paul’s illustration of the way the ‘corruptible becomes incorruptible’ [I’m not sure how it works with potatoes, but Paul wasn’t a gardener either].

Taking the mental step from a mortal body to a spiritual/heavenly body is not quite so easy. The illustration of sunlight, moonlight and starlight I found unhelpful, as they are all our own perceptions. I haven’t, as far as I know, met with a heavenly body and, possibly, wouldn’t recognise one, although I and many others are looking forward to a ‘new’ body that isn’t stooped with age or wracked with pain. Perhaps that is what Paul means in verses 43 & 44.

Whenever I read of ‘the first Adam’ my mind immediately goes to Gen. 2:17 where ‘God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life’. That isn’t ‘an invasion of personal space’, it is the closeness, the intimacy of a kiss from a lover.

That being the case, ‘where death is your sting?’ because when our mortal body dies and we return to the soil from which we are made; ‘earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust’ we know that our God, who loves us and has prepared a place for us, will provide for us a new and even more amazing heavenly body.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

The way Paul explains things can be a bit convoluted, even in a modern translation. I find it helps, sometimes, to make notes as I read to aid my understanding.

1. Mistakes are usually made due to poor communication or understanding. Verse 35 asks ‘How are the dead raised?’ How would you answer that to a new/non-Christian?

2. What do think was happening in Corinth that precipitated the question about resurrection? [Corinth was a major city and trading centre/crossroads] What outside influences may the church at Corinth have been facing?
3. Paul, having trained as a Pharisee, would be good with words and the art of debate and yet, sometimes [v. 38 - 41 e.g.] he comes across as ‘clunky’ compared with 1 Cor. 13:1ff. Why not try to paraphrase for yourself?
4. Verse 38 tells us that, in effect, ‘God has chosen our body for us’. How does that make you feel? Are you someone who likes to choose things for themselves? What is perfect? Why?
5. Paul talks about earthly bodies and heavenly bodies and then mentions the sun, moon and stars [v. 40 - 41]. What, if any, is the risk of confusion here? [Clue: think Gnosticism]
6. The Old Testament has few references to ‘life after death’, but many to Sheol. What is meant by ‘Sheol’? Why is that not ‘life after death’?
7. Jesus rising from the grave was a lot easier for people to believe than that they themselves could be raised from the dead. Euripides wrote, "*Yet mortals, burdened with countless ills, still love life. They long for each coming day, glad to bear the thing they know, rather than face death the unknown.*" Why was/is that a problem?