

Handout: 1 Corinthians Lesson 6

The flesh is the hinge of salvation.

Tertullian

In Chapter 14:26-32, Paul gives practical instructions for keeping order in the assembly of worship:

1. Worship in the assembly should progress in an orderly fashion.
2. Not more than two or three should speak in tongues and not at once but in turns.
3. There should be someone present who can interpret the words of the speaker/speakers.
4. If there is no one to interpret, there should be no public expression of tongues.
5. Only two or three prophets should speak, one at a time, and the others should discern the application of the prophetic message for the assembly.

In Chapter 15, St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that the resurrection of Jesus is the core doctrine of Christian faith (verses 1-3, 12). It is the supreme argument in favor of the divine nature of Jesus the Messiah and His God-ordained mission (proclaimed by Jesus Himself in, for example, Mt 16:21-28; 17:25-27; 20:17-19). Paul tells them that he received this basic message from Jesus Christ, and he faithfully passed on the same message to them:

1. Jesus died for our sins “in accordance with the Scriptures.”
2. Jesus was buried and laid in a grave as proof of His physical death.
3. Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day “in accordance with the Scriptures” and appeared to many people as proof of the historical fact of His resurrection.

Paul states that Christ could not have died for sinners if he had been a sinner himself. That Jesus died for our sins “according to the Scriptures” is a testimony to Jesus’ sinlessness. He did not die the death of sin but of the body, and we became brothers and sisters through the work of Christ in His earthly life, death, and resurrection.

In 15:5-8, Paul lists those to whom the resurrected Christ appeared:

1. Jesus appeared to St. Peter (Paul calls him “Cephas,” the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic name Jesus gave him, “Kepha,” in Greek “Petros,” in English “Peter”).
2. Jesus appeared to the other eleven Apostles (Paul still gives them the title “the Twelve” since by the time he has written this letter, there are again twelve with the election of Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot in Acts 1:21-26).
3. Jesus appeared to five hundred other disciples some of whom are still alive.
4. Jesus appeared to St. James, who became Bishop of Jerusalem (not James Zebedee or James son of Alphaeus because these are listed as Apostles).
5. Jesus appeared to “all the other apostles” (probably refers other disciples to include the Emmaus disciples and the woman disciples).
6. Finally, Jesus appeared to St. Paul (see the three accounts of Paul’s conversion experience in Acts 9:1-19; 22:3-16 and 26:2-18).

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In 15:14-19, Paul gives an indirect argument supporting Christ's resurrection by pointing out what a bad situation we would be in if Jesus had not risen from the dead:

1. The Apostles would be false witnesses and their preaching invalid (verses 14-15).
2. Our faith would be in vain since we would still be lost in sin (verse 17).
3. Therefore, our hope of eternal life would be in vain (verses 18-19).

In 15:35-58, Paul answers two questions concerning the resurrection:

1. How will the resurrection take place? Verses 35-49
2. What will be the condition of the resurrected body? Verses 50-58

In 15:42-43, Paul makes four contrasts concerning the resurrection of the dead:

1. That which is sown corruptible becomes incorruptible.
 2. That which is sown dishonorable is raised glorious.
 3. That which is sown weak is raised powerful.
 4. That which is sown natural is raised spiritual.
- The first contrast is between the human body that is subject to corruption in death and the resurrected body that is eternal and will never be subject to death again.
 - The second contrast is between the human body that is subject to the dishonor of sin with the resurrected body that is glorified with Christ in resurrection, never again to be subject to the ravages of sin.
 - The third contrast is to the weakness of the human condition that is subject to disease and physical imperfections but will be raised free of human limitations and endowed with new powers and capabilities.
 - In the fourth contrast, the natural body becomes a spiritual body that is no longer governed by human desires but by spiritual desires in only pleasing God.

Paul's description of the resurrection in 15:51-54 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16:

1. A shout from the Lord and a trumpet call will announce Christ's sudden return from Heaven.
2. The dead will arise first, and then those alive at Christ's coming will arise.
3. The living and the dead will all be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord, and they will receive an incorruptible body.

22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Marana tha.

Paul pronounces a curse (literally, "anathema") against any who deny they owe their love and allegiance to Christ. The Aramaic expression *Marana tha*, means "O Lord come!" and is a declaration of belief in the Resurrection and Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It was probably a declaration/plea used in early Christian liturgical worship services. If the letters are divided slightly differently, then the expression means "Our Lord has come" and becomes a declaration of faith as it is in Revelation 22:20, "*Amen, Maran atha,*" literally "Amen, our Lord has come, Jesus!" The expression is only in the Bible in two places: Revelation 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 16:22.