

The Future Shape of the Present

1 Corinthians 15:29-34; Coast Community Church; Earl Miles; 3-10-24

Actions reflect beliefs or they should!

“The disbelief of a future state destroys all virtue and piety. If there will be a resurrection and a future life, we should live and act as those who believe it.” – Matthew Henry

The Future and Baptism (29): *Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?*

What is Paul talking about here?

- Baptism for dead believers (in their place since they died before having the opportunity to be baptized)
- Baptism because of dead believers (inspired by martyrs to follow Christ or the desire to be with the dead)
- Baptism for dying believers (those who are about to die because of sickness or the reality that all believers are dying in that their bodies are decaying)

What does baptism say or picture?

- “I believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again for sinners just like me.”
- “I am a new person beginning a new life because I have been united to Christ in His death and burial and resurrection.”
- “I will one day be raised from the dead in a glorified body just like Christ’s.”

The Future and Danger (30): *Why are we also in danger every hour?*

What kind of ‘danger’ is Paul talking about?

- Any kind of risk of negative consequences for being a Christian.
- Especially the danger of death for being a Christian.

‘If our resurrection and ultimate felicity [happiness] are in this world, why do we of our own accord abandon it and voluntarily encounter death?’ ... ‘to no purpose would we stand in peril every hour, if we did not look for a better life, after death has been passed through.’ – John Calvin

The Future and Daily Death (31): *I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.*

What does it mean to ‘die daily’?

- To be prepared to die physically as each day arrives.
- To die to the hope of receiving the acceptance and favor and honor and blessings of this world.
- To die to do the will of God and not our own will.

How could Paul rejoice or boast in such a divided and troubled church?

- They might not be what they should be, but they aren't what they were.
- Some have further to go than others on their journey to outward acceptability.
- Direction is what is important, not perfection.

The Future and Wild Beasts (32): *If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.*

What experience is Paul talking about here?

- One of two kinds of punishment: being thrown to wild beasts in the arena or going into armed combat with wild beasts in the arena. (2 Timothy 4:17?)
- Metaphor for some serious conflict and fierce opposition. (Acts 19:23-34?)

Where does this quote come from?

'This is a saying of the Epicureans who reckon man's highest good as consisting in present enjoyment.' – John Calvin

The Future and the Company You Keep (33): *Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."*

What is 'bad company'?

- Those who overtly contradict your faith.
- Those who covertly undermine your faith.

What are 'good morals'?

- Right thinking
- Right actions

The Future and Waking Up (34): *Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*

What does it mean to 'sober-minded'?

- To be alert and awake to the truth/reality.
- To live in light of the truth.

"It is a shame in Christians not to have the knowledge of God. Those who profess this religion reproach themselves, by remaining without the knowledge of God; for it must be owing to their own sloth. It must be ignorance of God that leads men into the disbelief of a resurrection and future life. Those who know God know that He is not unfaithful nor unkind to forget their labor and patience, their faithful services and cheerful sufferings, or let their labor be in vain. Those who own a God and observe how unequal the distributions of the present life are and how frequently the best men fare worst, can hardly doubt an after state where everything will be set to rights." – Matthew Henry