

1 CORINTHIANS (PART 29) ▪ CHAPTER 15:20-28
ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET
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But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸ Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (NKJV 1 Cor. 15:20-28)

Groucho Marx is often quoted as saying that "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it, misdiagnosing it, and then misapplying the wrong remedies." Jokes, it seems, are one of the few places we can still hear the truth. And in the abstract we can certainly laugh. But in our sober moments we know that misdiagnosing problems which lead to the wrong remedies (applied or misapplied) lead to real and serious problems. This is true on every level of life. Everyone agrees that there are serious problems. But if we misdiagnose the problems, it will be impossible to find the remedy. The gospel which Paul preached makes the claim of being *the* comprehensive solution, the answer, the salvation, the ground upon which we stand (vv. 1, 2). This gospel depends upon the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. But what is the problem? What's wrong with the world?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

As I said, everyone agrees that there are serious problems. In a few instances there is actually widespread agreement on what the problems are. But in medicine and many other disciplines there is a distinction made between the presenting problem and what's really going on. I believe this is a Biblical distinction (Dt. 28:15ff.). We have lots of presenting problems (and several non-profit organizations to address each one). But why do things appear to be going the wrong way? If they can't be solved with 1.5 million non-profits, how can they be? Ask any random ten people what the real problems are and you're likely to hear ten different responses. Few, however, would be willing to say that the root problem goes back to one man: Adam. But any other answer will have you dealing with the presenting problem and not the real problem. The Scriptures begin with the account of Adam's disobedience, and our passage says in agreement with the whole of God's word

that: “By man came death” and “in Adam all die” (vv. 21, 22). Death is the result of sin, and is a condition of satanic opposition to God (Eph. 2:2). This is a condition that cannot be undone by any amount of do-goodism. As the New England Primer said to every child learning the letter “A”: “In Adam's Fall, we sinned all.” Every child in 17th century New England could have answered a question that few are able to get right today. Everyone today is pointing at someone else as the source of the problem. The Scriptures point to each one of us in Adam. The fact is outside of Christ, we are all the problem (Rom. 3:10-20).

HOW IS THE WORLD GOING TO BE PUT RIGHT?

If the Scriptures diagnose the problem correctly, it is obvious that all the things that we commonly put our hope in cannot save. If the diagnosis is correct politics cannot be our savior. Science cannot be our savior. Education cannot be our savior. Patriotism cannot be our savior. Family values cannot be our savior. God himself must work to save us, and He has appointed his Son as our anointed savior, our Messiah. Christ came as the head of a new humanity. He comes as new Adam who overcomes temptation, lives obediently, suffers innocently, and is resurrected on behalf of all His people. Just as Adam led all His descendents into death; Jesus leads all His people into resurrected life. All who are in Christ are saved because we are joined to Christ by faith. Being joined to Christ by faith in His death, we will be raised with Christ (in our time, Christ being the first fruits; v. 23). But there is more going on here than personal salvation. Jesus is the head and representative of a people, just as Adam was the head and representative of a people.

In the end, Jesus will deliver *a kingdom* to the Father (v. 24). Jesus isn't merely “saving individual souls.” Jesus has been crowned king as per the Scriptures (Dan. 2:44; Ps. 110; Ps. 8) and is currently – right now – in the process of putting all enemies under His feet. Who's in charge of this world now? Not Satan. Not the Illuminati. Not the President of the United States or any other country. Jesus is Lord. And this is the gospel (Acts 2:36). Note – and this is a simple answer to all the false views of the future out there that teach that the world is going to hell in a hand basket – that the *last* enemy to be destroyed is death (v. 26).

WHAT MUST WE DO?

If the Biblical diagnosis is correct, then the “foolishness” of the gospel of Jesus death and resurrection is the only solution (1:18, 19). If the Biblical diagnosis is correct then the most important thing that we can do is make sure that we have our citizenship papers in the right kingdom (v. 20, 21) and we are rendering complete and total obedience to the King. Who is Lord? Then obey Him in everything. Christ is Lord of your all, or he's not your Lord at all. Jesus is actively fighting His enemies, and this includes those who would pretend submission to Him (Ps. 81:15; Rev. 2:16; Mt. 7:21-27). If Jesus is Lord, we must live all of life in light of this fact. Pray according to His instructions, and live according to His instructions. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.