

More Deep Waters: Baptism for the Dead  
1 Corinthians 15:29-34

## I. More Deep Waters

### A. Last Week: The Subordination of Christ to God

1. Jesus Christ is God
2. The subordination of the kingdom
  - a. Accomplished because Christ has in fact been raised from the dead
    - (1) Only a living Christ can have everything put under his feet by God
    - (2) Only a living Christ can submit the kingdom to God once the rest of God's plan for history has been accomplished
  - b. Also demonstrates the unity of the Trinity in Person and Purpose

### B. This week: Baptism for the dead

1. No idea what Paul is talking about
  - a. Never mentioned anywhere else in Scripture as a component of Jewish or Christian religious practice
  - b. Paul never explains/counsels/condemns the practice anywhere else
  - c. No single interpretation definitively establishes the clear ambiguity of the grammar in the sentence ("on behalf of, instead of, over")
2. What we do know is that Paul uses two illustrations the Corinthians are familiar with to make a point the Corinthians need to embrace
  - a. Illustration #1: Baptism of/for the dead
    - (1) Like Haitians reading a letter talking about lutefisk
    - (2) Somewhere in the cultural reality of Corinth someone practices a form of baptism that has some sort of next life benefit for the dead
    - (3) What would be the point of such practice if there is no resurrection of the dead?
  - b. Illustration #2: Personal risk in ministry
    - (1) Reflection of earlier comment about faith for this life only
    - (2) **1 Corinthians 15:19 (ESV) If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.**
      - (a) Why are we in danger every hour?
      - (b) I die every day!
      - (c) What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus?
    - (3) **What good is it to take all these personal risks for the sake of the gospel if the gospel offers no hope beyond death?**
    - (4) We might as well "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!"
      - (a) Ecclesiastes students will recognize this theme
      - (b) What profit does a man gain from all his labor under the sun if, at the end of the day, all he gets is

dead?

3. Paul's Point:
  - a. Don't let ignorant people who don't have sound knowledge of God and His truth be the influencers in your life.
  - b. Don't be so besotted by the things, including the philosophies and practices of this world that you lose your ability to discern God's truth.
  - c. Live today preparing for eternity.
    - (1) Instead of living today like there is no tomorrow
    - (2) **Live today like its already tomorrow!**
    - (3) **Live like a person confident in the future life of the resurrection.**

## II. Live in the Certainty of Our Future Resurrection

### A. Disciple your body

1. Romans 6:1-14 (ESV) *<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*
2. Use the will to master the flesh and subject the body to holiness
  - a. No longer driven or directed by the lusts of the flesh
  - b. Press on for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus

### B. Disciple your heart

1. Philippians 3:7-11 (ESV) *<sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in*

*Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—<sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,<sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

2. Establish one goal for your heart
  - a. To know Christ and the power of his resurrection (an indestructible life)
  - b. Share in his sufferings, to become like him in his utter devotion to the Father's glory, in order to remove any hindrance to your own resurrection (sin)

### C. Disciple your mind

1. **Mark 12:18-27 (ESV)** *<sup>18</sup>And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, <sup>19</sup>“Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>20</sup>There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. <sup>21</sup>And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. <sup>22</sup>And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. <sup>23</sup>In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife.”*  
*<sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? <sup>25</sup>For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup>And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’ <sup>27</sup>He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong.”*
2. The Sadducees were wrong, Jesus said, because they knew neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.
  - a. Know God's word
  - b. Yield to the Spirit of God to experience the power of God

## III. Conclusion

### A. Gospel:

1. God sent His Son, who lived and died and was raised on the third day
2. God acted in love through Christ to bring you to Himself for life and eternity

### B. The resurrection of Christ assures the resurrection of all those who put their faith in Christ

### C. Choices

1. Follow Christ in His death: through faith and baptism
2. Follow Christ in His resurrection life:
  - a. through trust and obedience
  - b. Live today as though tomorrow has already come!