

W249_Resurrection_5_1_Cor._15.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the chapel of the opened book and is number five of the series on the hope of resurrection. It is our custom at this meeting to read a portion of Scripture and those of you who are listening. If you care to join us, will you read together with us? The Book of Leviticus Chapter 23, the first 22 verses Leviticus 23. The first 22 verses. You notice that this goes very carefully. This Leviticus 23 through the festive year of Israel. First of all, there is the weekly Sabbath, and then there are those feasts which come in their due order. The first is the Passover and the last series, which we haven't read in this reading is on the seventh month when we have the blowing of trumpets and the great day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the end of the year. While Israel had 12 months in the year and sometimes they had 13 because they were all of equal length. Not like ours. They are festive year lasted only seven months and that's rather suggestive. Again lining up with the the sevens that you get so much with regard to the prophetic forecast of the working out of the purpose of the ages. It begins with Passover, the shedding of blood, and it ends with a day of atonement, the shedding of blood. The two aspects of the sacrificial work of Christ, the one that led them out, which we call redemption.

[00:01:43] The one that led them in which we term atonement. A The portion of this passage with which we're immediately interested is the emphasis upon the first fruits. Will you just notice, as you have done in your reading? It says in verse 11 and you shall wave the sheaf. And this sheaf was made up of early ripened ears of barley. In this country. We don't expect to be gathering barley of any sort at Easter. But in Palestine, the barley harvest will begin to show colour. And one of the. Attendance at the temple. I don't exactly know which one would go through the barley harvest and pluck here and there an early ripened ear of corn. The barley. And that would be made into a sheaf. And that is taken on the. It says in the verse 11 on the morrow after the Sabbath. Well, the morrow after the Sabbath is the first day of the week. So that you see long before the coming of Christ. Israel were going through every year a little ceremony and the very morning that Christ was raised from the dead, the priest in the tavern in the temple was offering the sheaf of the first fruits. Or though perhaps poor men, he didn't believe it and he didn't know its significance. But there it is. Christ, the first fruits. But if you remember, we read a little bit further down that after 50 days.

[00:03:27] Another first fruits comes into the story. It says in verse 15, and ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that she brought the sheaf of the wave offering, seven Sabbaths shall be complete. And that brings us to what we call Whitsun. But this is Pentecost. And then we have a very strange statement. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tents deals. They shall be a fine flour, yes, but they shall be bacon with leaven. Now, that's extraordinary because no offering which is burnt by fire can ever contain leaven in the offerings of Israel. And yet here's one. It's not offered by fire. You notice it's brought before the Lord and it's specified that it should be two loaves and that it should be bacon with leaven. How? Why? Why? Because the first fruits of Easter or Passover is Christ. And the first fruits of Whitsun or Pentecost is the Lord's people. And although the Lord's people are the first fruits because they belong to him, they are reminded that in themselves they are not unleavened as Christ was. And so the little distinction, our first fruits is only humanly possible because he is the true first fruits and all our acceptance is in him. There must be many other reasons that we may not be able to bring out on the surface at first, but that seems to be one of the obvious ones.

[00:05:01] And then you will notice it says again in verse 20, and the priest shall wave them with the bread of the Firstfruits. The sacrifices are there, the kid of the goats, the two lambs, they can be offered as peace offerings. But the wave loaves are not offered as peace offerings. They are with it and accepted because of it. I've stopped on this reading Leviticus 23 because we shall come to it when we are dealing with the next section in one Corinthians 15 two, which I think it's time we now turned. One Corinthians 15 taking up the story where we left it off last time in connection with the problem of the resurrection. The problem I say, is stated by the Apostle, not that he had one in this sense, but he's voicing some of their own difficulties and possibly voicing the difficulties of some of us. You will remember that the first part of one Corinthians 15 from verses one to verse 11 is occupied by the evidence and the witness that could be brought to bear upon the question of did Christ was Christ raised from the dead? The the integrity of the apostles witness is called into question. The fact that the scriptures speak about being raised, the third day comes into it, and then we have a series not merely of one man who may be a fanatic, but a whole series of men who not only bore their witness but died for it in eventually that the Christ that they knew, the Christ, that they'd spoken to, the Christ, that they'd seen, the one whose hands they had examined was the very

one that they had seen after his death and burial and saw him eventually ascend and go into heaven.

[00:06:58] And if this could be questioned, if this is set aside, then we'll discover, as you know full well before we read the passage, that we have no hope, no hope, whatever, and therefore, we should give earnest heed to the testimony that this chapter gives to this mighty subject. He ends up, you remember in verse 11, therefore. Whether it were I or they. So we preach that involves their integrity, the truth of their witness. We preach. And so ye believed. And that says in the first instance, you who are now addressed as saints, you who were once sinners beyond description, you believed and you have experienced a little of the power of his resurrection. Well, now he says, now we start the new subject. If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some of you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? You see, that is the beginning of this new quest. And if you glimpse at the chart, you will see that there are two of them. Verses 13 to 33. Is occupied in answering that question.

[00:08:12] The first question is rather the fact of the resurrection. How do you say this after this testimony has been given to you? Then will we come down to the story to verse 35? It's not so much is the resurrection a fact, but if it is a fact, how are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? And on this, you are extraordinary people. I should imagine that sometimes these things are flitted through your minds. In fact, I shouldn't think very much of your minds if I hadn't. And here we've got the only possible way of getting some answer to these questions. For if they're not answered for us here, they can be answered by nobody. For nobody has come back to tell us except the Christ himself, who rose from the dead and gave these men the word through the inspiration of the of the Spirit to record it for our learning. So now we've got these two questions in front of us, and we've got the answers as far as God has seen fit to give them. The fact of the resurrection, how and the manner of the resurrection, how and in what body do they come. You will see that Adam dominates the answer in both cases. Now, first of all, notice this verse 12 once again, if Christ be preached, that erosion the dead. He doesn't say, how can he? You say he didn't rise from the dead.

[00:09:39] He doesn't say that. He says if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how can you deny the resurrection of the dead? That is to say, he's already, as it were, possessed by the thought that the resurrection of Christ was never for his own

sake? Of course, you say he couldn't be. He died for us. He had no need to die on his own account. He was raised again because of our justification. He was raised because of our salvation. Of course, raised that he might live again. But. It is indeed estimated the apostles, the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of His people is all one and the same story. If one can be denied, so can the other. And you'll find he goes backwards and forwards over this. It has been put in the in the sense that if the species be conceded, how can you deny the genus. Well, that's rather using logical terms. But if you say there are such animals as terriers and hounds and boxers and spaniels, if you say that, well, you can't say at the same time that there are no such thing as a dogs. Well, you say these others that I've just named Hounds and Spaniels and terriers. They are species, but every one of them belongs to the genus dog. So he says, if if you deny this one, you deny the other. Anyone who tampers with the resurrection of Christ is robbing himself and fellow believer of the only ground of his hope.

[00:11:23] And so you'll find these interwoven it so that at last we can hear, as it were, in the background of this witness our Savior's words, because I live. You shall live also. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself. Or he died and revived that he might be the Lord of the Dead and the living. All these things are linked together, you see, with this approach to the subject. Then he goes on in verse 13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead. Then is Christ not risen? You see how how bold he is? He doesn't say, Well, if there's no resurrection of anybody else, we do know that Christ was raised from the dead. He says we don't because he was only sent to be the Redeemer, which included his resurrection. If you were going to be rescued. But if you are not rescued and the whole thing is washed out. And as he brings it will of all men most miserable because we believed it and trusted it, rejoiced in it, and now has exploded. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen? And if Christ be not risen. Ladies, our preaching vain and your faith is vain. You notice this word? Vain comes quite a number of times in this story.

[00:12:48] It's not always the same word, but the dominant word is the word kenosis, which means empty. 80. Because we've been making Maria to do over this preaching. And if it turns out to be a failure and a fraud but an empty thing, it is so it must be, mustn't it, ever. If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain? And your faith is also vain because your faith. Cannot stand of itself. Never use the word faith and make a lucky charm of it and say, Oh, we believe. But you can't do that. You can't just believe.

You try. You can only believe somebody or something. You can believe a person. You can believe a promise, but you can't say have faith. If you do, you're making it a lucky charm and faith. Well, it's a cipher. Faith depends upon the veracity of the promiser. And Christ is the seal of the promise. And if Christ be not raised from the dead, you can believe for what you like. And it's empty. It's got nothing in it. It's the risen Christ that fills us. The fight and makes it what it is. Yeah. Is he serious? We are found false witnesses of God. He. Don't forget that I've got something to say in this. And so as Peter and James and John. Your learning is what will happen. Saying where are there a lot of fools or fanatics or where deceivers? We have maintained that the Christ we knew the Christ.

[00:14:27] We spoke to the Christ who appeared in the upper room with the door shut. The Christ that convinced Thomas. We have maintained that he that Christ was raised from the dead. Handle me and see. It is I myself, said Christ. And they had the word still written on their hearts. And now he says, We may maintain that witness. We stood against all the pressure of Pharisee and Sadducee and Roman philosopher and Roman rulers. For what? He said. That means to say that you're putting us down as cheats or frauds or fools. So there's that point. And you remember he brought before you. He was seen of Keith, then of the 12, then 500. So they've got this emphasis upon witness. Yeah, we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified that God of God that He raised up Christ whom He raised not up. If so, be that the dead rise, not back again. You see, twisting them together so that they cannot be separated. And if the dead rise, not then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins. I'm desperate, isn't it? You see, the apostle is leading us to see this, that the Cross of Christ has only a power if that crucified Christ was raised from the dead. The cross alone.

[00:16:02] Cannot save because there is no evidence of the acceptance of the offering made. But when that offering was made, he offered himself without spot to God. When that offering was made. And then the tomb was emptied and that offered Son of God lived again and ascended and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. There we have God's attestation that His work was accepted and unless that sacrifice was accepted, it will be valueless. So while we preach, while we must preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. And we've only got returned to the first chapter of this very epistle to see how the Apostle insisted upon that. We preach Christ crucified. But there are some

who misunderstand him when he said in chapter two, We determined to know nothing. Among you say Jesus Christ and him crucified. They seem to think that the only thing they got to tell people is that Jesus Christ was crucified. But that's not what the apostle meant in one Corinthians two. He said, When I came to you, I came not with Excellency, Excellency of speech or of man's wisdom, because I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. But I speak wisdom among those of a perfect. And I go on to tell you much more. Thanks so much. More comes in one Corinthians when you get to the 15th chapter that the Cross of Christ and the Resurrection of Christ make two parts of one indivisible whole work and here is the crown upon it.

[00:17:42] And if the dead rise not then is not Christ raised. If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins. Now look what he says. And they also which are fallen asleep in Christ. Our perished. Let's take these two expressions. Falling asleep. Now, we might say when we read in the Book of Job. And that he was feeding out. He asked the question if a man died. Shall rise again. And then you find it is beginning to explore the possibilities. And he comes out with the consciousness that he says. Thou will call and I will answer thee. I will awake one day. And again later on. I know that my redeemer liveth. And the psalmist says, I shall awake in thy likeness. And then the person may say yes, but that was only the men they were feeding out for something and boosting themselves up a bit. But you see, our savior and his witness is involved. He himself said over and over again, when we looking at the evidence in the earlier studies, he told his disciples that he would be taken by wicked hands and he would be crucified and he would be buried. And the third day he would rise again. So we are dependent not merely upon witnesses, however great that is. We are dependent upon this one witness who went through that awful experience.

[00:19:19] And we are told Christ died. No more. Death hath no more dominion over him, for in that he died. He died unto sin once. But in the he lives, he lives unto God. So where there we have the place that the resurrection occupies in this scheme of things. Sleep. We were looking at the word sleep. You remember when I got I'm getting tangled up again with it. You see, in the emphasis in one Thessalonians four. I think there's a point that I would like to make now quite independent of the distinctive words that I used in Thessalonians, if you'll turn to one Thessalonians four. He says in verse 13, But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren. And you'll notice that that's a phrase the

Apostle has used quite a number of times in his epistles. And if you look at the passages, they vary very much in their character and you may wonder why they are prefaced by these words. But in this particular passage, you are approaching something which you see as vital. I would not have you to be ignorant brethren concerning them which are asleep. That ye sorrow, not even as others which have no hope. He doesn't say we are not to sorrow. That would be wrong. That would be inhuman. And even Christ himself, in that marvelous chapter of John's gospel, where he stood and said, I am the resurrection and the life.

[00:20:56] That very chapter is the one that says Jesus wept. But we sorrow not as those who have no hope. That is the point. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him? And the word there suggests to bring with him from the dead. They're not in heaven to come back with him, for they're waiting here. You'll find for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain. So there will be some living on the earth at the second coming of Christ, obviously shall not prevent. And you know, of course that now has lost its original meaning. Pre vent venire to come to come before shall not come before anticipate them which are asleep. But such is human nature that if you come before somebody else you'll try to prevent him. And so it's lost its original meaning. To not become before them, which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel and with the Trump of God. And this link with the archangel links this part of the hope with the people of Israel. For the archangel is named in the Bible. As Michael and Daniel says, Michael stands for the Children of Israel. And when Michael stands up, there's going to be a resurrection and a time of tribulation associated with that people.

[00:22:27] But we're not considering here at this moment various aspects of the Second coming. It's true of whatever coming we speak about this particular phase. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. That is the thought that those who are living shall not go before those who have died. The dead in Christ shall rise first. Well, now they're living. Then we which are alive at that time and remain, shall be caught up together with them. Together with them. Not one going before the other in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so now that word. So is. And in this manner, in this manner, and in no other manner shall we ever be with the Lord. In no other manner, says the Scripture, because you do know there is a tradition. And are teaching that when a person dies, he goes to

either a place called Paradise or some intermediate state where he has no resurrection body. He's just a spirit in the presence of the Lord. And there have been some who have said, Well, if that's the case. Where does the resurrection come in? If a person 3000 years ago, 2000 years ago died and has been for 2000 years in the presence of the Lord or it's 1900 years, if you're going to find fault with me, 1900 years in the presence of the Lord, what's the idea of raising him from the dead? Even Tindal, the man who died because he gave us the Bible, saw that truth and emphasized it.

[00:24:03] And he was a man who had given time and thought to the word. Now the last word is this. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Now you who have passed through the experience of losing the dear one and most of us have at some time or another. You have had folks write to you and you've had to say to yourself, Well, I know they mean well. But some of the things they say to you to comfort you are most certainly not what the apostle gave here. Some people look at one Thessalonians four, so that's that's poor comfort to tell me that at long last, at some time or other, we're all going to be raised from the dead. They want to be told that our dear ones are now looking over the balconies of heaven, watching us as we come to the Chapel of the Open book and watch us as we go back. What a terrible thought to think the things they are seeing up there. Down here. Oh, no. There is no such teaching in the scriptures. There are passages which we shall have to deal with in this series, like the one that says to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, and so on.

[00:25:12] They will have to be brought in. But for the moment here we have the stress that leads to the resurrection is the is likened to a waking out of sleep. And as far as we know, the sleep which is here involved in death is one that is timeless. No consciousness so far as everyone is concerned. It won't be a long period between if you have ever experienced, as some of you have, the hospital treatment, you are put onto the stretcher. I speak of my own experience and it be easy. The nurse said. Now I'm going to give you a tranquilizer. So I was stabbed with a little tranquilizer and I shut my eyes and thought, Now I'm going to be tranquil. And I waited a long time and I opened and I thought I'd no more tranquil than I was before. And I shut them again. But I don't know what happened to me. I was just waiting. I didn't worry. Well, then I got down to the entrance to the surgery itself. And then I don't know what happened. They did it so secretly that the. The surgeon said to me now something. And I said, Oh, yeah. And by the time I said yes, I'd open the eyes and it was three hours and a half and passed and I

was operated on, sewed up, patched up, back into bed. There was an instance that was used as an illustration similar to that like this, that in the time of the war.

[00:26:43] An aeroplane was shot down over a village in Belgium. It came down and hit the ground with a horrific bump. And the pilot heard a voice saying to him, Now sit up and try and take this. And there were three years between the bump and hearing the nurse. Now, if either died, it would have been 200 or 300 or 500 years between the bump and an angel saying Sit up for you, come to the resurrection, or he wouldn't have known. We need to worry about our dear ones. This word sleep is emphatic in the Scriptures, and as I was saying, we might say, Oh, well, that's Joe says that. But our savior said Our savior said our friend Lazarus sleeps. Oh, they said, if he sleeps, that's good. He says, Lazarus is dead. I tell you plainly, Lazarus is dead. So the word sleep is a parable form. And the plain expression is that the believer, when he dies, sleeps. Now, I've purposely said that. You may know a passage of scripture where an unbeliever is said to fall asleep. But I haven't found one. I do know this positively, that when the believer dies, he falls asleep and he doesn't fall asleep just by himself. Friends. He sleeps in Christ. He's asleep in Jesus. Is there a safer place? Is there a safer place in the whole universe of God? And when the Apostle comes to write the epistle to the Colossians, he puts it this way.

[00:28:21] Your life is hid with Christ in God. And when Christ who is our life, not merely our Savior. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you appear with him in glory. So your life is untouchable, friends. Your life is not put into the grave or whatever happens to you. Your life is hid with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life? Oh, you see, the whole thing is wrapped up in him so that we come to the next question, this question of the first fruits. That's what we're waiting for us. It says in verse 20. But now in Christ is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. We looked at that passage in Leviticus 23 and we saw that the first fruits was the picture in its ceremonial form of the resurrection of Christ. And it was followed by another first fruits, which included his people when he says here. Christ has become the first fruits of them that slept. And Romans, the apostle, writing to the Romans in the 11th chapter, he said, if the the first fruit is holy, then is also the lump. There is referring to, I think, the question of being unleavened, because he says the use of the same sort of the lump in one Corinthians when he speaks about it being unleavened.

[00:29:57] But here we have the emphasis upon the fact that Christ is the first fruits. And it said so again in verse 23, but every man in his own order, Christ, the first fruits that is Christ. And afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. This is give a little bit more attention to this extraordinary statement, shall we? That they that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If there be no resurrection, you notice that when our savior is quoted in the gospel, according to John. One of the simplest statements concerning the gospel gives a two alternatives. As a consequence of believing or rejecting that truth. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. That whosoever believeth in him should now we get the alternatives should not perish but have everlasting life. What? He said that. He didn't say shall be judged or condemned or tormented or whatnot. He says either at the end of the story you will perish or you will have everlasting life. I don't think we must credit him for telling us the truth, not disguising from us something which has got to be developed later. Perish. Of course, there are those who have written yards on this matter. And they said, well, first of all, we've come to see what is called a scientific expression, the indestructibility of matter. And you know what matter is, don't you? The never mind sort of thing.

[00:31:39] Yes. That idea. Well, that's true enough. You put a piece of coal on the fire and your. You say what he's got? Oh, there's a piece of coal. Yes, it's gone. But it's been combined with oxygen and it's floating about in the air as carbon dioxide and all the other things. You haven't destroyed it. But, friends, that's not a good argument. You read in the scriptures of Rachel Mourning for her children because they are not. But if you went to say to the woman who'd lost her little baby in the massacre of the innocents. Headed although although there perished the. Material which your baby was made, the oxygen, the hydrogen, the nitrogen, the carbon. I don't know whether you'd be allowed to get on with this, but there would be no comfort to anybody and say that's never been destroyed. That's floating about, would it? You see, the identity is gone. We're not talking about the ingredients of the human body when we say they're perished. We may agree that nothing that we ever do to a thing destroys it. It only changes its character. But so far as the individual is concerned, he doesn't exist. And that, of course, you have got to face. After the eighth. It's an awful thought to think, isn't it, that a person may have lived all his life and then. God picks him up, as it were, at the end of time and looks at him.

[00:33:14] He's so defective, he's put on the universal scrapheap. Horrible thought, isn't it? There are those who go further and say that God has a reservation for all unbelievers and that they shall be eternally tormented. I have a feeling that the only person who believes that is one who has been put into the loony bin. I can honor a person who becomes a lunatic because he believes it. But I can't believe a person could have a fortnight's holiday and believe in eternal conscious suffering. I don't think you ever have time for that. I don't think Eve could pass down the street without buttonholing everybody. You're making yourself an awful nuisance. If he believed such a horrible thing that God would eternally torment. And of course, those who advocate it all, they draw their imagination that after millions of years have passed, it's only just begun. What a horrible thing. Our savior says perish. Or everlasting life and the apostles gone further because John 3:16 is envisaging an unbeliever, the unbeliever perishes. But says the apostle Paul here, Wait a minute. The believer will perish. Well, how's that? Well, if there is no resurrection, he will. We have faith that friends, if there there's no resurrection, you haven't got a life and in a tenuous form somewhere floating about in a paradise, you perished. So you see, we're shut up to resurrection. If we are to be raised, then the door is open for eternal life and all its glories.

[00:35:05] But if there be no resurrection, we haven't even got a half a life. We've got none at all. We have perished. And that is the strength of this passage. Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ. He doesn't leave it out and say they that have fallen asleep. Those are the fallen asleep in Christ are perished. And if in this life. Only we have hope in Christ. We are of all men. Most miserable. Well, of course, you've entertained such wonderful thoughts that it would be a terrific shock to realize at long last that it was all in vain. Whenever we approach a section which is so interesting and so important that I'm tempted to say, Well, I'm going to have a little time off friends and not go too far tonight. I feel there's something to be said about this passage about Adam and the end, which is coming and the question about being baptized from the dead. That if I cram all that in this evening, then I shan't be able to put it in next time. And there's quite a number who I think would value the exposition. So what do you think, friends? Do you think that we'll say, Well, good enough? We're glad to have heard what we have heard and we won't make you feel. You've got to repeat yourself when we meet.

[00:36:30] Next time, we'll come fresh to the subject and pick up where we leave off. We'll read a few of the words together that will occupy our attention. For since by man

came, death by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For, as in Adam, all die. Even so, in Christ shall all be made alive. And then comes the words in one Corinthians 15, which go to the farthest extent of any passage in Scripture. The end of the world and the end of the ages are not reached in the book of the Revelation. Not in the river. They go on beyond that. And here we have then cometh the end. And the answer to the end is the last words of verse 28 that God may be all in all. We got to deal with these in detail and some of the problems that arise out of it, as I say, next time. So for the moment, we'll be thankful that we can stop all this arguing as to whether Christ was raised from the dead or whether he is not, and say, Well, we can't go on with this any longer. Notice how he stops himself and says, But now and one of the ways in which the apostle has stopped himself before when he is teaching is but now in Christ Jesus ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.