

Introduction

Statistically, “75% of the population struggles with a fear of public speaking.”¹ That means that over 200 million people feel nervous about talking to others. That fear is called glossophobia, and many fear it more than death. There are a number of ways that experts say that this fear can be overcome, such as using breathing techniques, preparing, speaking publicly on a regular basis, and even medication. Personally, I have not been that fearful of speaking in front of others. I would much rather speak publicly than climb up on a roof. For me, the key to speaking in front of others is preparation. For me to feel prepared, I have to feel confident about the subject matter that I am speaking about. Once I have prepared, there is no anxiety or fear about sharing.

In preparing the message for our passages in 1 Corinthians 15, I did not feel confident. Our last passage was about the order of the resurrection, and there are lots of different interpretations of the passage. I never want to share something that is untrue, or false. I want and need to have a thorough understanding, and these passages are difficult in that respect. While studying, I read that John MacArthur told his congregation that there are over 400 different interpretations of it, and his own interpretation changed daily. Since I was not clear about the passage, I was not confident and I was certainly not looking forward to teaching the passage. A couple of weeks ago, after studying and reading all the commentaries, I called Jim Elliff, an excellent Bible teacher. He pulled out his notes and we had a great discussion on the passage. Jim shared with me some insights about the passage that I had not read or heard from anyone else. He gave me a great understanding of the passage. It was like he gave me the key that I needed to unlock the passage. I am grateful to have some people like Jim in my life. Instead of being fearful and not looking forward to sharing this morning, I am pretty excited to share this passage with you. I believe it is a relevant and needed passage for all of us.

This chapter is about the resurrection. We saw that the resurrection is part of the gospel. Next, we saw that the apostles witnessed the resurrection of Christ and hundreds of others saw Jesus at one time. Next, we saw the significance of the gospel. Paul tied the resurrection of Christ with the resurrection of all men. He said if Christ was not resurrected, his preaching was in vain, he was a false witness since he testified that Christ was resurrected. If Christ was not raised from the dead, our faith is in vain, and we are still in our sins. If Christ was not raised from the dead, our faith is worthless, and we are of all men most to be pitied. Next, Paul spoke about the order of the resurrection. Christ was the first fruits, and His resurrection guaranteed the resurrection of the rest of the harvest. At His coming, those who are asleep will be gathered to Him, and then those who are still alive will join Jesus, and will receive their resurrected bodies. Then comes the end, after Jesus has subjected all rule, authority, and power to Himself.

Our passage today is a continuation of Paul’s teaching on the resurrection, and it is about why we should suffer for the gospel. Paul does not phrase it that way. Instead, He uses the phrase, baptized for the dead, and the first thing we will look at is what he meant by that phrase. Second, Paul raises four questions about why someone would suffer for the gospel if there is no resurrection. Third, Paul concludes with some exhortations and applications.

Suffering for the Lost (If There Is No Resurrection, Why Suffer For The Gospel)

1. Paul’s Use of “Baptized” (1 Cor 15:29)
2. Paul’s Questions (1 Cor 15:29-32)
3. Paul’s Exhortations (1 Cor 15:33-34)

¹ <https://www.creditdonkey.com/fear-of-public-speaking-statistics.html>

(1 Cor 15:29-34) “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? {30} Why are we also in danger every hour? {31} I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. {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. {33} Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” {34} Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame.”

1. Paul’s Use of “Baptized” (1 Cor 15:29)

Paul uses the term, “baptized for the dead,” and this has brought tremendous confusion to this passage. The term, baptized, comes from the Greek word, baptizo (Strong’s G907), which means to make whelmed or to immerse. John the Baptist was baptizing near Aenon because there was much water there, and to immerse someone in water, you needed much water. When we lived on a small farm on Priest Road in Acworth, there was a spot in Clark Creek, which ran through our property, that was about chest deep. The churches in Acworth used to bring their new converts to this spot and baptize them because it was the right depth of water to baptize people.

(1 Cor 15:29) “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?”

(Jn 3:23) “John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and *people* were coming and were being baptized.”

There have been some that speculated that the early church was baptizing people for the dead, but that was not the practice of the early church. Two people in the early church, Cerinth and Maricon, believed in baptizing people for the dead, but the early church branded this as heresy. The early church did not practice baptizing people for the dead. Therefore, the baptism for the dead has another meaning.

The Mormons perform baptisms for the dead, which they call vicarious baptism. They teach that the spirits of those who have died can’t enter heaven unless a Mormon is baptized for them by proxy. One of the primary reasons that they track their descendants is they get baptized for their deceased family members. One Mormon lady said that she had saved over 1,000 of her relatives, meaning that she had been baptized over a thousand times for her deceased family members. This is not what Paul is talking about.

The New Testament speaks of several types of baptisms. John the Baptist baptized for the repentance of sins. In an act of repentance, they were being baptized for their own sins. They were committing themselves to repent and change the way they were acting. The second baptism was what Jesus commanded us to do. We are to baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A classic passage about the baptism that the New Testament practiced is in Romans 6. When someone is baptized, we are baptized into the death of Jesus. We are buried with Him through baptism into death. Baptism is a picture of the death and burial of Jesus. We are lowered and immersed into the water, which represents the death and burial. Then, we are raised up out of the water in the same way that Christ was raised from the dead. Paul wrote that we are raised up so that we can walk in newness of life. Our old nature is being put to death and we are being raised up a new creation. Baptism is a picture of us uniting with Christ in His death, and also in His resurrection.

(Ro 6:3–5) “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? {4} Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. {5} For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,”

Baptism is not how anyone is saved. We are saved by grace through faith, and faith alone. Baptism is an act of obedience and Christians should be baptized as soon as possible after receiving Christ into their life. Another great passage about baptism is found in Acts 8, where Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. An angel of the Lord told Philip to get up and go south to the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza, so he got up and went. He saw an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace queen of the Ethiopians, sitting in his chariot. The eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah, and he did not understand what he was reading. Philip joined him and asked if he understood what he was reading. Then, Philip explained it and preached Jesus to him.

(Ac 8:26–31) “But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, “Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert *road*.) {27} So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, {28} and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. {29} Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.” {30} Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” {31} And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.”

Then the eunuch saw some water and said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” Philip answered, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” That is a key point. Baptism is for believers. We have to believe that Christ was raised from the dead, and we must confess Him as our Lord. If we believe, then we can get baptized. We don’t baptize children, as they do not believe yet and have not placed their faith in Christ. We baptize those who believe. This baptism is not what Paul is referring to.

(Ac 8:36–38) “As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” {37} And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” {38} And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.”

There is also a baptism of the Spirit. John the Baptist told people that he was not the Messiah, but One is coming after him who is mightier, and that he was not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. John baptized with water, but Jesus was going to baptize with the Holy Spirit.

(Mk 1:7–8) “And he was preaching, and saying, “After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. {8} “I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The first fulfillment of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was in Acts 2, at the Feast of Pentecost. Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power and baptized with

the Holy Spirit. So, apostles and other believers were gathered together and then the Holy Spirit came in like a violent, rushing wind, and filled the house where they were sitting. All the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not the baptism that Paul was speaking about.

(Ac 2:1–4) “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. {2} And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. {3} And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. {4} And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”

What was the baptism that Paul was referring to? Jesus used the term baptism to indicate the suffering that He was going to go through. In Luke 12:50, He said, “But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!” Jesus was not going to be water baptized or baptized in the Spirit. He was distressed because of the suffering on the cross that He was going to go through.

(Lk 12:50) “But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!”

In Mark 10, James and John asked Jesus if they could be seated on His left and right, and He told them that they did not know what they were asking. He asked them if they could drink the cup that He was drinking or be baptized with the baptism with which He was being baptized. They said they were, and He told them that they will be baptized with His type of baptism, but the seating arrangements were not His to give. The seating arrangements had already been prepared by the Father. Jesus was speaking about a baptism of suffering and death.

(Mk 10:35–40) “James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You.” {36} And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” {37} They said to Him, “Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on *Your* left, in Your glory.” {38} But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” {39} They said to Him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized. {40} “But to sit on My right or on *My* left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

The baptism for the dead refers to suffering for the sake of sharing the gospel with unbelievers. It is suffering for those who are dead in their sins and without Christ. Notice a few terms that Paul uses.

- “We are in danger every hour” (1 Cor 15:30)
- “I die daily.” (1 Cor 15:31)
- “I fought with wild beasts in Ephesus.” (1 Cor 15:32)
- “For some have no knowledge of God.” (1 Cor 15:34)

Paul is talking about a baptism of suffering for the sake of reaching those who have no knowledge of God, i.e., the lost. Paul was in danger every hour for preaching the gospel. Paul gave a short list about his suffering in this passage, but in 2 Corinthians 11, he gave a more

comprehensive list of the things that he suffered for the sake of the gospel. The baptism for the dead is referring to the suffering for the gospel so that those without Christ can have hope.

(2 Co 11:23–27) “Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. {24} Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. {25} Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. {26} *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; {27} *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

2. Paul’s Questions (1 Cor 15:29-32)

a. **“Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? (1 Cor 15:29)**

This is a continuation of his argument against what some were saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. Paul asks four questions. These questions are all in regard to the dead not being raised from the dead. The first question asked is, “Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? He is not saying that there are people in the church being baptized for the souls of people that have died. Paul is saying, what will those, like himself, do who are suffering for the sake of the gospel. He and many others were laying their lives down for the kingdom of God. If there is no resurrection, it would be foolish to give his life for something that is vain. If the dead are not raised, they would not suffer in vain. Why would God call Paul and the other apostles to preach the gospel and plant churches if the dead are not raised. There would be no reason for them to do apostolic work.

(1 Co 15:29) “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?”

b. **If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? (1 Cor 15:29)**

Paul’s second question is, “If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them. We do not suffer needlessly. Sometimes we will do something that is painful because we know that it will produce positive results. Athletes train hard, and it is not always fun or painless. Athletes learn to live with the pain because they know how important exercise and training is to their success.

(1 Co 15:29) “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?”

While I may not fear public speaking, there are some things that I do not look forward to. I have never liked needles, and as a young boy, I hid in a closet in the hospital when our family was being vaccinated. Another time, at a later age, I ran away from home because I was supposed to go have a shot. When I have blood drawn, I do not watch; I look away, and that helps me. Even though I do not like needles, when my daughter, Kathleen, was going through chemotherapy for leukemia, the hospital was low on platelets. I gave platelets every week at the University of North Carolina Hospital, where Kathleen was being treated. When you give platelets, they don’t use one needle; they stick you in both arms. In your left arm they draw blood, and then it goes

through a machine that separates out the platelets, and then it returns it in your right arm. The process typically took two and a half hours. I did not like doing this, but I was willing to do this for my daughter and the other patients that desperately needed platelets.

In the New Testament, Peter and the apostles were arrested, flogged, ordered not to preach Jesus, and then released. We find that “they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” My rewards for being stuck with two needles pales in comparison to the suffering that the apostles went through for sharing the gospel. They rejoiced that they had the opportunity to suffer shame for Jesus’ name.

(Ac 5:40–42) “They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and *then* released them. {41} So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for *His* name. {42} And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.”

In Hebrews 12:2, we are exhorted to fix “our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” I did not like the needles. The apostles did not like the flogging. Jesus despised the shame, and He suffered the most painful death possible. Jesus and the apostles suffered with joy because of what that suffering would produce. Jesus suffered so that our sins could be forgiven, and we could have fellowship with God. The apostles suffered so that people could hear that their sins were paid for and they could have a relationship with God.

(Heb 12:2) “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

c. Why are we also in danger every hour? (1 Cor 15:30-31)

The third question is, “Why are we also in danger every hour?” Then, Paul affirmed that he died daily. Paul did not physically die daily, but he died to his earthly desires and flesh. Paul pushed himself and died to himself.

(1 Co 15:30–31) “Why are we also in danger every hour? {31} I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.”

One example of this is found in Acts 14. In Iconium, the Jews and rulers attempted to mistreat and stone him, so they went on to Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region, and continued to preach the gospel.

(Ac 14:5–7) “And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, {6} they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; {7} and there they continued to preach the gospel.”

Then, the Jews from Antioch and Iconium pursued Paul and won over the crowds. In Lystra, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. Paul was not dead,

and later got up and re-entered the city. Then, they went to Derbe and after preaching the gospel to that city, they went back to Lystra, Iconium, and to Antioch. They went right back to the places where the people had tried to stone him to death. Paul may not have died physically every day, but he was putting his life on the line every day.

(Ac 14:19–22) “But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. {20} But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. {21} After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, {22} strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

Paul’s attitude is summed up by Galatians 2:20, where Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God...”

(Ga 2:20) “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

d. If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? (1 Cor 15:32)

The fourth question is, “If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me?” His response to that question is that if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. In other words, if the dead are not raised, live your life here on earth to the fullest. Don’t deprive yourself of any pleasures or comforts.

(1 Co 15:32) “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.”

Let’s take a closer look at Paul’s question, and in particular at fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus. Wild beasts is a compound of *therion* (Strong’s G2342, a wild beast) and *machomai* (Strong’s G3164: to fight I war or battle, to contend physically). Paul was involved in spiritual warfare. When Jesus went into the wilderness, He was being tempted by Satan, and He was with the wild beasts. I believe these were demonic beings. These were powerful demonic forces that He was dealing with.

(Mk 1:12–13) “Immediately the Spirit impelled Him *to go* out into the wilderness. {13} And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.”

In Revelation 13, a beast came up out of the sea and on his head were blasphemous names. The whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast. Then, another beast came out of the earth, and exercised all the authority of the first beast, and made the earth and those who dwell on it to worship the first beast. These are demonic forces. I believe that Paul was engaged in spiritual warfare with powerful demonic forces. He is asking, what profit is there for him to fight with these strong demonic forces if there is no resurrection of the dead.

(Re 13:1–4) “And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. **Then** I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names. {2} And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like *those* of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. {3} *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast; {4} they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”

(Re 13:11–15) “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. {12} He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. {13} He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. {14} And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. {15} And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

If there is no resurrection of the dead, we should just eat and drink, and live for today, for tomorrow we die. Our lives here on earth are temporal, but we will live forever. We are storing up treasures in heaven.

3. **Paul’s Exhortations** (1 Cor 15:33-34)

There is a resurrection of the dead. Christ was raised from the dead, and He is the first fruits. His resurrection was witnessed by the apostles and hundreds of others. Because He was raised from the dead, we will also be raised from the dead. The resurrection of the dead is a key element of the gospel and our faith. There is an order to the resurrection, and we will be given resurrection bodies when Christ appears. Paul is laying his life down for that hope in the resurrection of the dead. If the dead were not going to be raised from the dead, there would be no reason or profit in the sacrifices that Paul and others were making to see the lost saved. There would be no reason to suffer if there was not a resurrection of the dead. But there is a resurrection of the dead. Therefore, Paul gives three exhortations to the Corinthians.

His first exhortation is, “Do not be deceived.” The Greek word is *planao* (Strong’s G4105), and the root word is *plane* (Strong’s G4106), which means to roam or to stray. There were some who were trying to deceive the Corinthians and lead them astray. They said there was no resurrection of the dead, so live it up. Eat and drink and have fun. They were living as if there were no future ramifications of their lives and actions. The lie of the world is that we go for the gusto and live it up. Paul is saying that we need to live with purpose and with an eye on eternal things. There are lost souls, who have no knowledge of God, and that need to hear the gospel message.

(1 Co 15:33) “Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”

Then, Paul tells them that bad company corrupts good morals. These people who were deceiving them were bad company. He exhorted the Corinthians, “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’ Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no

knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.” There were Christians in Corinth who were living for today, as if there was not a resurrection of the dead.

Solomon wrote Proverbs to give us wisdom and discernment. He wanted us to keep away from those that speak perverse things and walk in darkness. He wanted us to walk in the way of good men and to keep to the paths of the righteous. He said that those who walk with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. I believe that Paul loved the book of Proverbs and this exhortation to not be deceived by those that leave the paths of uprightness and walk in the ways of darkness comes out of what Solomon wrote. Paul wanted the Corinthians to walk with wise men, and not with bad company, who would lead them astray.

(Pr 2:12–20) “To deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things; {13} From those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; {14} Who delight in doing evil And rejoice in the perversity of evil; {15} Whose paths are crooked, And who are devious in their ways... {20} So you will walk in the way of good men And keep to the paths of the righteous.”

(Pr 13:20) “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

Earlier in 1 Corinthians, Paul told the Corinthians not to associate with immoral people in the church. They were to reach out to the immoral people of the world with the gospel. But in the church, we are not to associate with an immoral “so-called brother.” Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, but He was not being influenced by them. He was trying to save the lost. Paul wanted them to stay clear of those in the church that were bringing this erroneous doctrine, and encouraging a licentious lifestyle.

(1 Co 5:9–11) “I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; {10} I *did* not at all *mean* with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. {11} But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.”

(Mt 9:10–12) “Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining *at the table* in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. {11} When the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” {12} But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, “*It is* not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.”

Paul’s second exhortation to them was to become sober-minded. The word for sober-minded is *eknepho* (Strong’s G1594). It means to sober up from a drunken spell, or to awake from a stupor. Some of the Corinthians were acting like they were in a drunken stupor and not aware of what was going on. He wanted them to think clearly and to be alert.

(1 Co 15:34) “Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.”

Paul’s third and final exhortation was to stop sinning. They were not to be deceived, but were to be sober-minded, so that they would stop sinning. The Corinthians were not living and conducting their lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. He wanted them to strive

together for the faith of the gospel. Paul ties their conduct to the lost, saying, “for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.” Paul wanted them to suffer for the sake of the dead, those who had no knowledge of God. The church in Philippi had some strife and disunity, and Paul encouraged them to conduct their lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

(Php 1:27) “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”

Conclusion and Applications

Being baptized for the dead means to suffer for the sake of reaching the lost with the gospel. Paul and others were suffering for the sake of the gospel. They would not be doing that if there was not a resurrection of the dead. But because there is a resurrection of the dead, Paul was willing to lay his life down to bring others into the kingdom of God. God wants all of us to strive together for the faith of the gospel. Paul wanted the Corinthians to correct their doctrine, so that their lifestyles would reflect good doctrine. He wanted them to live with purpose, restraint, and purity. He wanted them to be willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel.

What are you willing to do for the sake of the gospel? Are you willing to share the gospel with others? We are living in a culture that is becoming more hostile towards Christianity. Are we willing to take a stand for Christ? Are we willing to conduct our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel so that we do not bring any offense to the lost? Are we sober-minded and alert? Are there compromises in our lives that hinder the gospel from being preached? Are we being the salt of the earth, or are we being influenced by those around us? God wants us to be thermostats, not thermometers. We are his representatives here on earth, and He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. We must live holy lives, and be willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel.

Closing Prayer

Father, help us to be sober-minded and alert. Help us to put away all sin and compromise. Help us to be bold witnesses. Help us to be courageous witnesses. Give us a willingness to suffer for the sake of winning others to Christ. Help us to live our lives with purpose, knowing that there are people all around us who have no knowledge of God and need to hear the gospel. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Suffering for the Lost (1 Cor 15:29-34)**Introduction (1 Cor 15:29-34)**

1. **Paul's Use of Baptism** (1 Cor 15:29, Jn 3:23, Ro 6:3–5, Ac 8:26–31, Ac 8:36–38, Mk 1:7–8, Ac 2:1-4, Lk 12:50, Mk 10:35–40, 2 Co 11:23–27)

2. **Paul's Questions** (1 Cor 15:29-32)
 - a. “Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? (1 Cor 15:29)

 - b. If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? (1 Cor 15:29, Ac 5:40–42, Heb 12:2)

 - c. Why are we also in danger every hour? (1 Cor 15:30-31, Ac 14:5–7, Ac 14:19–22, Gal 2:20)

 - d. If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? (1 Cor 15:32, Mk 1:12–13, Re 13:1–4, 13:11–15)

3. **Paul's Exhortations** (1 Cor 15:33-34, Pr 2:12–20, 13:20, 1 Cor 5:9-11, Mt 9:10–12, Php 1:27)

Conclusion and Applications