

Sunday, June 17, 2018—I Corinthians 15:33-34—The Morality of the Resurrection

Introduction/Review

- Two weeks ago, before our Right Division 101 Sunday, we considered the topic of baptism for the dead found in verses 29-32. In doing so, we concluded that baptism for the dead was the identified with death endured by Paul as a minister of the gospel.
 - “. . . would it not have been the height of folly to suffer such affliction and to risk his life every day in Ephesus at the hands of men comparable to wild beasts, if all his converts were to remain eternally dead.” (Williams, 893)
 - “Great would be the folly of the believer of such a false gospel [I Cor. 15:12-19] still greater would be the folly of its preacher, because of the deeper baptism of misery which he would have to submit [I Cor. 15:29-32].” (Williams, 839)
- We concluded our study two weeks ago by considering the following paraphrase of verse 29 offered by George Williams in *The Students Commentary of the Holy Scriptures*:
 - “If the dead rise not, what shall they do who are being daily baptized into misery on behalf of them? If the dead rise not at all, why then are they being baptized for them i.e., why expose themselves to such suffering?” (Williams 893)
- This morning we want to consider the moral impact of the resurrection by looking at verses 33 and 34.

I Corinthians 15:33

- **Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.**
- The first thing to note about verse 33 is that it begins a short paragraph that runs through the end of verse 34.
- Second, in the previous verse Paul was making an argument regarding the reality of resurrection. If the dead not rise why I am going through all this suffering i.e., I might as well join the rest of the gentiles and “eat and drink for tomorrow we die.”
- I Corinthians 15:20-23—assert that Christ rose from the dead and became the firstfruits of all that sleep in Christ.
- In other words, the lifestyle of merry making that Paul mentioned at the end of verse 32 is not becoming of a believer because Christ has in fact risen from the dead.

- In verse 33, Paul does not want the Corinthians to be deceived and miss his point, the resurrection of Christ ought to be a motivating factor for living Godly in Christ Jesus.
- *Evil Communications*—the Greek word translated “communications” occurs only one time in the Greek text supporting the King James Bible. According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the Greek word carries the following meanings:
 - “companionship, intercourse, communion”
- The question one encounters here is what exactly is meant by “communications.” Is Paul referring to communication in the sense of one’s speech? Or is Paul speaking the totality of one’s behavior i.e., what they say and what they do?
- Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) lacks an entry for the word “communications” but states the following for the work “communication:”
 - The act of imparting, conferring, or delivering, from one to another; as the communication of knowledge, opinions or facts.
 - Intercourse by words, letters or messages; interchange of thoughts or opinions, by conference or other means.
 - In 1 Corinthians 15:33, Evil communications corrupt good manners, the word may signify conversation, colloquial discourses, or customary association and familiarity.
- E.W. Bullinger in his *Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament* offers the following meaning for the Greek word found in I Cor. 15:33:
 - “a being together or in company with anyone one, intercourse.”
- Luke 24:17—this is the only other place in the New Testament that the plural form of the word “communication” occurs.
 - Notice that “communications” in this context refers to the totality of what they were communication both verbal and nonverbal. “Communications” are the totality of their behavior.
- I Corinthians 15:33—Paul doesn’t want the Corinthians to be deceived regarding the impact that “evil communications” have upon “good manners.”
- *Good Manners*—is not talking about saying please, thank you, and asking to be excused from dinner. Once again, I Cor. 15:33 is the only time that the Greek word translated “manners” *ethos* appears in the New Testament text.

- According to Noah Webster, the English word “manners” means “behavior; conduct; course of life; in a moral sense.” He then offers I Cor. 15:33 as an example of this usage.
 - Acts 13:18—what was Israel’s conduct/behavior like in the wilderness?
- I Corinthians 15:33—Paul does not want the Corinthians to be deceived regarding the impact “evil communications” have upon “good manners.” They corrupt them. They spoil them.

I Corinthians 15:34

- **Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.**
- *Awake*—this verb is in the imperative mood, which means Paul is not making a mere suggestion here. He is exhorting the Corinthians to awake to righteousness and not sin.
- Ephesians 4:17-5:8
- I Corinthians 15:34—the Corinthians who had the knowledge of God ought not have been living like those who did not. In a way, this verse is summative of all the reproof and correction that Paul has been offering to the Corinthians throughout the entirety of the book.
- Once again, George Williams sums up the point of I Cor. 15:33-34 nicely when he states:
 - “The Apostle then points out that the denial of the foundation doctrine of resurrection open the door to grave moral declension (vs. 33 and 34). Deceit, evil companionship, corruption of manners, unrighteousness, sin, ignorance of God and shame result. The Corinthians boasted of their religious knowledge, but it was not knowledge of God no His ways nor His teaching. That knowledge brings glory; carnal knowledge, shame.

If a man persuades himself that he shall die like a beast he soon will live like one (v. 33).” (Williams, 893)