

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church

107 East Austin

Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A1312 – March 24, 2013 – 1 Corinthians 15:35-38
The Natural Evidence For Resurrection

This week I want to begin like I did last time with a few words about music. We want to do this because while we have music here and the music is fine, we don't often know how to articulate why the music is done here the way it is done. People occasionally ask, "Why don't we have more music that will attract younger people?" That question is aimed at the idea that preferences in music is of the utmost importance and betrays the idea that the purpose of music in the church is to attract people. That's not at all the purpose of music in the church; the purpose of music is the proper worship of God. And so the music is first analyzed under objective criteria in order to determine whether the music is corrupt or incorrupt and if it is incorrupt whether it is fitting or not for the corporate worship of God. After that is determined then we can have personal preferences. And so there is a place for personal preferences but it's not the chief thing and we want to clear the air of that issue early on so we can focus on articulating what we are doing in the musical element of worship. And if you have questions about music these weeks are the time to put those questions in the box.

Last week we talked about the two kinds of emotions, those that we call passions and those that we call affections. Passions are emotions that are stimulated by music that bypass the mind and cause a physiological response in the body. A simple way to identify if a certain piece of music is stimulating passions or affections is to ask yourself, "What am I thinking about?" If you're not thinking about anything then music is stimulating passions and not affections. Passions are not the kind of emotions we want to provoke in the corporate worship, they are of the flesh. Affections are the type of emotions we want to encourage and they are the result of particular music going through the mind. And so you are thinking. And as long as what you

are thinking is truth about God then worship is happening and that is the kind of emotion we want our music to provoke, proper affections toward God.

Now this week I want to build on this by addressing two common objections to music that are unique in many respects to conservative churches because conservative churches are reacting to the music of more progressive churches. The first objection is this, "Music isn't important, it's just an add on." I've heard that in this church. I've had people tell me they wish they could show up 15 minutes late so they could just hear the teaching. Well, that's wrong, that's anti-Biblical for the simple fact that Col 3:16 commands Christians to teach and admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. And that is what we are doing when we sing congregational hymns; we are singing to one another and we are following a command of Scripture when we do that. And if you don't do that it's a sin. And so it's not okay to just stand there and hold the hymn book open in silence, God says you are to teach and admonish one another in song and the parallel passage of Eph 5:18-19 commands the same thing. So music can't just be an add on. That's impossible. It's a necessary part of worship and obedience to God. The second objection you will hear is this, "The only thing that matters is the words." Wrong again. The words do matter but that's not all that matters, the music matters too. And when you say, "All that matters are the words," then you're betraying that you really hold to the first objection that music isn't really important. Why have accompaniment if the words are the only important part? What you're saying is that the only part of music that is instructive is the words. And that's not true. The words instruct the mind but the music instructs the emotions. And if you want to instruct the mind a lot better place to do that is in the clear Biblical teaching so why waste your time with the music if all that matters is the words. The logical conclusion is to dump the accompaniment completely and just have clear Bible teaching.

Now let me explain the three parts of worship and when I do you'll understand why music is important and why God commanded it be done in OT Israel and why God commands it be done in the NT Church. There are three parts of man's spirit; the mind, the will and the emotions. And when we come together for corporate worship all three parts of man are to be edified, built up and matured. Now let's take the mind - the way that you edify, build up and mature the mind is by sound Bible teaching. That has always been and will always be the best way to mature the mind. We need to think

correctly about God, man, nature, sin, suffering, salvation and all the other Bible doctrines. But that alone is not enough. When we look at the will, the way that you edify, build up and mature the will is by sound Bible exhortation. In other words, taking what is taught and exhorting the people to put it into practice. If I just teach and don't exhort you to practice what is taught then I'm not building up and edifying the will of man. I am simply building up and edifying the mind. But both must be built up and edified and so we teach Bible doctrine and then we exhort each one to follow it. But even then that's not a complete picture of worship because man also has emotions and the question is, how are the emotions of man edified, built up and matured? Well, that's where the music comes in. Proper music is what matures your emotions to have proper affections toward God. You can't deny the emotional part of man and you certainly can't say all emotions are wrong. When the emotions are passions, yes, they're sinful, they're bypassing the mind, but when the emotions are religious affections toward God, no, they are not sinful; they are going through the mind and teaching us how to feel about God. Now this is where the modern church is completely lost. They have not matured in the emotional arena. They feel but they do not know how to feel, they are very immature in this area. And that is why it is not just the words that matter but the music that accompanies the words, or even the music alone for that matter, they do relate to the emotional makeup of man. But I wouldn't suggest that in this culture because very few people know enough about music to listen to it through the mind. Some yes, but there was a time when people in general were more knowledgeable of music, when music in the church was more important, more understandably done, more appropriately done and it's purpose of maturing the emotions well-known. At the time of the Reformation, Martin Luther said that every pastor must of necessity be trained in music. For him a minister was not fit to minister if he wasn't trained in music. Why did he put such a high value on it? Because the pastor's job is to mature, edify and build up the entire man unto conformity to Christ and the entire man consists of mind, will and emotions. And we are in desperate need today of mature emotions. Incorrupt, proper music in a congregational setting in obedience to God's commandments is what accomplishes mature emotions. And that necessarily involves those in leadership evaluating not just the words, but also the musical composition. Is this song evoking sensual feelings? Is it evoking romantic feelings? Is it evoking ethereal feelings? What emotions is the music creating and is it proper to associate those emotions with the God of the Bible. It is not proper,

for example to have the same emotions for God as I have for my wife any more than it is proper for me to have the same emotions for my wife as I have for my dog. There are emotions that are proper for God that are distinct from my other emotions. We call that sanctified or set apart emotions and that is what we must develop and mature. The ability to evaluate music and decipher the kind of music that accomplishes that under objective criteria is therefore a necessity to training the whole man of God that we may be sanctified in every aspect of our being.

Alright, shifting gears to our verse by verse study turn in your Bible to 1 Cor 15 and we will continue our study of the resurrection. We have already learned that there were some believers at Corinth who said there was no resurrection of the dead and yet Paul argues from four lines of evidence that there is resurrection of the dead. First he argues from the Scriptural evidence in 15:1-5 pointing out that the OT predicted both the death of Christ for our sins and the resurrection of Christ on the third day. Therefore the death and resurrection did not occur in a vacuum, it was the revealed plan of God from OT times. Second he argues from the historical evidence in 15:4-11 pointing out that Christ was buried in a tomb and His body remained in the tomb for three days and nights. Then He made several appearances, six of which are mentioned here, one of which was to more than five hundred people at the same time. And this particular appearance undercuts the explanatory power of the hallucination theory because people no more have group hallucinations than they have group dreams. Hallucinations are individual phenomena not group phenomena so these people were not having hallucinations. So the mention of the burial and the appearances are the historical evidences that Christ really did die and Christ really did rise. Third he argues from the logical evidence in 15:12-28 pointing out that if there is no resurrection of the dead then Christ is not even raised and therefore our preaching is a waste of time and our faith is a waste of time and moreover we are testifying against God by saying that He raised Christ whom in fact He did not raise. Further we are still in our sins and therefore those who have died in Christ before us have perished forever and lastly Christians must be the most pitiful group of people on planet earth to have put our hope in a dead Christ. But Christ is risen from the dead, He is the first to rise from the dead, He is the first fruits and His resurrection is a necessary corollary to the original dominion mandate given to Adam in Genesis. Adam's mandate was to have dominion, to reign over the entire created order, but he failed to fulfill this mandate

when he sinned against God and turned over this whole realm to Satan, the god of this world. So God sent a second Adam, Jesus Christ, to do what Adam failed to do. The problem was that sin had now entered the world and so the second Adam would have to live a perfectly sinless life and then die for our sin. And when a sinless substitute gives up His life willingly then the condition is met that results in resurrection from the dead. And Jesus Christ met these conditions and was therefore raised. The purpose of which is to fulfill the dominion mandate and reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. Since the author of Hebrews says we do not now see all things under His feet then we should expect Him to return at the Second Advent and establish His kingdom and fulfill this mandate. After He has completed what man was originally created to do we will enter the new heaven and new earth and the Father and Son will co-reign for all eternity. All of that is the logical evidence for the resurrection. Fourth he argues from the axiological evidence for the resurrection of the dead in 15:29-34 pointing out that certain behavior naturally follows from whether you believe in the resurrection of the dead or not and therefore do not think that this doctrine is unimportant. If you affirm it then you should live a certain way, if you do not affirm it then you should live a different way. And we all ought to live consistent with what we hold to be true. But for those of us who reject the resurrection there will be negative consequences morally and ethically in our life and that will destroy our credibility and witness for the gospel. So then we ought to stop sinning and start living in light of the resurrection, dying daily to self as Paul and living to God.

Today we come to 15:35 and here Paul predicts that even if someone has followed the Scriptural evidence, the historical evidence, the logical evidence and the axiological evidence there will still be some holdouts, some who resist the argument simply because of the absurdity of the idea of resurrection and so before these people even open their mouths Paul cuts them off. Now this is a part of my job as a pastor-teacher and that is to predict and address all the opposing arguments before they even creep up in someone's mind. Some people don't understand why I go into false views and present the opponents position but I want you to observe that Paul did. So I'm only following what the apostle Paul did and so if you have a problem with it then you need to take it up with the apostle Paul who was under the inspiration of the Spirit. Paul knew and understood the opposition and he demolished it in public discourse and if I don't address it then what happens is you start to have

questions creep into your mind, doubt starts to come in and the problem with that is doubt is the opposite of faith and there's only one way to please God and that is to live by faith. So as long as you have doubt you can't live by faith and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. So that creates a lot of problems. That's why I try to address opposing points of view but I realize I don't always do that successfully because you have questions I don't think of so that's why it's important to take notes and write your questions on the cards in the back of the pew and put them in the little church in the back of the church, that way they can be addressed. My point is in verse 35 Paul addresses the opposition and it shows that I must address the opposition, we need to know that there are opposing points of view and these opposing points of view are nothing more than the human flesh generating flawed argument and the flesh must be shown to be foolish.

So Paul begins in verse 35 by introducing the opposition, **But someone will say**. The Greek expression (*alla erei tis*) is the way in ancient Greek you would introduce a hypothetical objector, an opponent and it's the same exact phrase used by James in James 2:18 to introduce his opponent. So we know from these usages as well as classical Greek passages that this is how you would introduce an opponent and his objections to your view. **But someone will say, "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"** Two questions, both meant to mock the idea of resurrection, just as the Sadducees mocked resurrection by the story of the woman who successively married seven brothers who each died when they asked Jesus, "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will she be? For they all had her." And Jesus said, "You don't know the Scriptures, for in the resurrection there is no marriage." So now Paul is going to respond to these two questions that mock the resurrection. The first is a **how** question, **How are the dead raised?** The second is a **what** question, **what kind of body do they come?**

And let's understand before we look at the two questions that in verse 36 Paul says the person who asks such questions is a **fool**. What's a fool? That doesn't sound like a very nice thing to call someone. Why is Paul resorting to name calling? Well a **fool**, biblically speaking, is someone who does not take God into account. They're looking at an issue or a question and they don't figure God into the equation. And that's why when I say those people in Washington are fools I mean exactly what I'm saying, they look at lots of issues and questions but when they go to answer them they don't figure God

into the equation. And that means they are fools. Of course they can't get the right answer. They've rejected the proper starting point for getting the right answer. Every question must be considered in light of who and what God is and anyone who doesn't figure Him in is classified Scripturally as a **fool!**

So understand right away these two questions, which are really objections to the resurrection, are meant to say, Paul, you are believing an absurdity but the people saying this are really fools. And understand this is the way the opposition plays the game, they will attack you and name call you, but they have an agenda at work, they want to paint you as a silly old Bible thumper but that's just a mask, underneath that they are fools because they aren't taking God into account when they think about an issue or a question. Just as the Psalmist says, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" They aren't taking God into account.

So let's look at this fool's two questions. First, **How are the dead raised?** Now what his question means is how does a dead body get reassembled? You can't reassemble a decomposed body. Take for example a sailor that is lost at sea. His body falls into the ocean and it is eaten by fish and then the molecules of his body become part of the fish. Then some of these fish are caught by a fisherman and the fisherman eats the fish and the molecules become part of the fisherman. Then one day the fisherman dies and his body is buried in the ground and the molecules go into the grass that grows above the grave and this goes on and on says the objector. How could the first person's body ever be reassembled? This person's first problem is that they are not distinguishing resurrection from resuscitation. They think resuscitation and resurrection are the same thing. Now you might be able to conclude that from Christ's resurrection because His body remained intact, His body remained in the tomb and after only three days it was raised. So you can even see how these people might grant Christ's resurrection, by which they mean just a resuscitation. But their point is what about all these other dead people that died and were buried centuries and centuries ago? How do you reassemble them? You don't you nitwit, Jesus wasn't resuscitated, that's just breathing life back into the same mortal body. Jesus was resurrected. Several people were resuscitated, Lazarus was resuscitated, the breath came back into him on the fourth day and he walked around and lived in a mortal body for some time but he died again. I always felt sorry for Lazarus that he had to come back, but the point Christ was illustrating was

that He had power over life and death. Eutychus was resuscitated; the breath came back into him just moments after he died. Many people receive CPR and they are resuscitated. But that's not resurrection. Resurrection is the transformation of the mortal body into an immortal one. So their objection is faulty because it presupposes that resuscitation is resurrection and it's not. So this is not a question that is asked by a wise person, it is asked by a fool. But Paul is going to answer the fool's question in vv 36-38 nonetheless.

The second question of a fool, **And with what kind of body do they come?** That is, what is the nature of the resurrection body? They are assuming once again that Paul is a fool for thinking that the resurrection body will be a reassembly of our present body, that is, a resuscitation like Lazarus who died and was resuscitated or Eutychus who fell out of the window and died and was resuscitated. That's the fool's idea of resurrection, they've confused resurrection with resuscitation and so he thinks Paul is teaching an absurdity. But really he is the fool because that's not what the resurrection body is to begin with. And so Paul will explain the nature of the resurrection body in vv 39-50.

So the first question, **How are the dead raised?** is answered in vv 36-38 and the second question, **With what kind of body do they come?** is answered in vv 39-50. Starting with the first question in verse 36, Paul calls the person who raises these two questions a **fool**. And we said that means the person is not figuring God into the equation. They're trying to figure all this out independent of God and that approach to any question is foolish. You never try to answer any question without reflecting upon God. Nevertheless he now begins to answer the question **How are the dead raised?** And he does so in the most surprising way, by turning the central objection around, the fact that they are **dead**, and arguing from nature that we already know that something must first die before it comes to life. Paul says, **That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;** Death precedes life. And of course he's referring to seeds, planting seeds and the seed has to die so to speak and be planted in the ground before it can sprout forth a new life. Isn't it interesting that nature has already taught us this sequence, death before life? So if death precedes life in every day nature then why is there a problem with the dead coming back to life in resurrection? The answer to the question has been answered for us over and over every time we planted a seed and saw it grow into a plant and produce more seed and we took that seed and planted

it in the ground and watched it grow into a plant. Over and over we have observed that death precedes life in the vegetable world so why is it a surprise that death comes before life in the human world. God designed both man and nature so a common designer argues for a common cycle of death before life.

Now this answer from nature shows you something very important. Nature has lesson plans embedded in it; there are lessons all around us, there is nothing in nature that is neutral, there is nothing that isn't shouting out the glory of God continuously. That's why the Bible says everyone knows God through creation and will have no excuse at the judgment. Everyone, without exception, already knows God; they see Him clearly, they know His eternal power and His divine nature, through what He has made so they are without excuse. That's why it's foolish for believers to say, "You know, I talk to my unbelieving friend about God and I point them to the stars in the heavens and say can't you see there's a God and my friend says, No, I can't see God when I look at the stars!" You need to abandon that approach of pointing him to the stars. You already know that he sees God through the stars. His problem is not that he doesn't see God. His fundamental problem is that he doesn't want to keep God in his knowledge and so he gives an alternate explanation of the stars. As Paul put it, unbelievers are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness...professing to be wise they become fools! They try to explain the stars independent of God! That's what a fool is; someone who doesn't want God in their knowledge so they exclude Him from the explanation.

Now this is the very reason we are not in the school of traditional apologetics. Apologetics is just how you defend the faith to someone, how you give an answer. Traditional apologetics says that the unbeliever just needs more information about God and when they get that information then they'll believe in God, then you can use that as a bridge to the gospel. Wrong! In the first place that's assuming that the Bible is lying when it says they already know God and in the second place it's assuming that Mr. Unbeliever is trustworthy, he's telling the truth and really doesn't know God. And we can't grant that and remain biblical at the same time. And if we do we've only solidified the unbeliever in his unbelief; we've bought his presupposition.

Unbelievers do not need more information about God, they don't need you to point to the stars and point to the plants and point to the animals and point to DNA and say, how can you not believe there is a God? They already know Him, stop wasting your time; that is not their problem, that's saying the problem is epistemological, that is, they don't know and all they need is more information. But the Bible says they already have all the information, they already know God and their problem is ontological, their nature is corrupt, they don't want to know God, they are at enmity with Him and they are suppressing the truth they know about God because He is a very unpleasant thought for those with short accounts. So if their problem is not their knowledge but their nature how are we going to appeal to them? As God says, appeal to them as sinners who are at enmity with Him. It's very simple, you tell them who God is, you tell them who they are and what they are doing, suppressing the knowledge of God and that it is sinful that they are doing this and then you tell them what God did for their sin in Christ. Now that's apologetics to unbelieving pagans but its apologetics to our flesh too because believers still share the flesh.

In fact, all too often, we as believers close our eyes to the lessons in nature. We have allowed the world to so corrupt us with its scientism and explanations of nature that do not consider God that we don't see God's lessons in nature any more. Most people don't even stop and consider nature because they are involved in all kinds of activities and they get bored if they don't have activity after activity after activity. One of the contributors to this problem is media and that's a whole other discussion but the research is showing that media speeds things up. I call it speed reality because it jumps from scene to scene and it trains the brain to expect a rapid succession of events in the real world and yet the real world doesn't occur that rapidly and so it is contributing to people getting bored easily, depression is growing. So if you sit a person down outside and just have them watch a hive of bees for an hour, they'll never make it, they'll go crazy. That's why people can't pray very long either, they get bored and that's why I'm not very media friendly. I think it's destroying people's ability to pray, I think it's destroying people's ability to read, I think it's destroying people's ability to stop and observe nature and when you do that you're losing the link to these lesson plans in nature. Job said, "But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. "Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; And let the fish of the sea declare to you. "Who among all these

does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind? “Does not the ear test words, As the palate tastes its food? “Wisdom is with aged men, With long life is understanding.” Understanding of what? The LORD obviously, but the LORD through the beasts, through the birds, through the fish. If you’ll train yourself to get off the computer, turn off the TV and go out into nature and observe, observe the behavior, observe the design, observe growing patterns, observe movement you’ll become wise, you’ll have a deeper appreciation for God’s genius because you’ll be learning the lesson plans that God has embedded in nature for you.

And in verse 36 Paul says these people who think resurrection is absurd haven’t been paying attention to the lesson plans in nature because if they had they wouldn’t have come up with this foolish question, **How are the dead raised?** Obviously they’re raised in the same way that when you sow a seed in the ground it comes to life as a plant. You bury the body in the ground and it sprouts to life in the resurrection. So don’t come with this foolish question, **How are the dead raised?** The answer has been right in front of you all along, the seed must die before it can come to life. And the person must die before they can be raised.

And therefore from this day forward, every time you look at a seed and a plant I hope you never think of them the same. I hope you see that this is a lesson plan God embedded in nature so that every time I contemplate the seed planting and sprouting forth as a plant I’m reminded of how the dead are raised. In conclusion, recall verse 23 which uses this very metaphor with crops, “But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.” Christ is, so to speak, the first plant to sprout forth from the grave, but that is the assurance that we to will sprout forth from the grave. Resurrection is a truth taught by nature. Next week, resurrection Sunday so enjoy you’re week and we’ll just continue on since we’re already in the greatest chapter on resurrection.

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