

**Read: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26**

## Christ First, Then Us

### **1 Corinthians 15:20-23**

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The summer months are fantastic. Not only do kids have off school and families go on vacations, but it's also one of the best food times of the year. Yep, you guessed it, it's time for sweet corn! After months of nourishment and growth and care, when the ears are still firm and the husks still green, farmers begin harvesting for hungry corn lovers everywhere. And perhaps that first batch of sweet corn harvested is the best—because it means there's lots more to come!

You might call that first batch of corn the *firstfruits*. That's what God's Old Testament people called the very first of their grain harvest every year. And it's an appropriate name—it was the first of the fruit of the ground, the very first of the wheat or the barley brought in from the fields.

But why, then, does the Bible call *Jesus* the firstfruits? That's what the apostle Paul said in our reading: "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep." What does that mean? Why is Paul comparing Jesus to a plant?

That's the good news about Easter! Just like the first of the harvest means there's lots more grain or corn to come, so also the first resurrection—*Jesus' resurrection*—means there are more resurrections to come. Or more simply: Jesus' resurrection means we too will rise from the dead! Jesus is the firstfruits because he's the first of many, including you and me, to be raised from death!

Think about what that means. On that first Easter, Jesus' once lifeless body lived again. His eyes that had closed in death only days ago, opened. His voice that had become silent, spoke. His feet that had walked among his followers, stood among them again. His hands that had broken bread with his disciples, shared a meal with them once more. Jesus, once dead, lived!

So shall you and I. On the last day, when our Savior returns to raise all the dead, we too will live again. Our eyes will open. Our voices will speak. Our feet that once ran, jumped, skipped, and danced will run, jump, skip, and dance once more. Only this time, when Jesus raises us it will be

forever! Just as Jesus lives and will never die again, so also we will live with Jesus and never die again.

We too will defeat death. Jesus, our firstfruits, is the guarantee. Because he lives, we too will live!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What is the very first of the harvest called?
- What happened to Jesus' body on Easter?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- When does Paul say that we will rise from the dead?
- In this life, we run and get tired, we fall and break bones, we catch a cold and get sick. When we rise, our bodies will be like Jesus' body. What do you think that will be like?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- The apostle Paul says that Jesus is "the firstfruits of those who have *fallen asleep*." Why do you think he calls our death a sleep?
- Look again at verses 21-22. Why have all people died in Adam? Why will all believers live through Christ?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, thank you for rising from the dead so that one day my eyes will open, my voice will speak, my ears will hear, and I will live with you forever—never to die again. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 152:7,8 – I Know that My Redeemer Lives**

He lives and grants me daily breath;  
He lives, and I shall conquer death.  
He lives my mansion to prepare;  
He lives to bring me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name!  
He lives, my Jesus, still the same.  
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:  
"I know that my Redeemer lives!"