

WEEKLY REFLECTION

Who were you before Christ, and who are you now after Him?

1 Corinthians 15 is *the* passage that we must look at, as we consider the impact of the Easter weekend. That Jesus died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day and appeared to Peter and the Twelve afterwards. (v.3-5) Though the apostle Paul delivers a lengthy defense of Christ's resurrection in his letter to the church of Corinth—the context being that people were arguing against Jesus' death *and* resurrection—he doesn't stop there. Instead, Paul argues that the death and resurrection of Jesus should cause us to undergo a palpable transformation of the heart. "Wake up from your drunken stupor," he writes, "and do not go on sinning." (v.34a)

Indeed, when we consider the people that the risen Jesus appeared to, they underwent a 180-transformation. In the Old Testament, we have crafty, slippery Jacob, who was renamed Israel after he wrestled with God (Gen. 32:22-32). Mary Magdalene, who had seven demons cast out of her (Lk. 8:2), was the first person in the Gospel of John to whom the risen Jesus appeared (Jn. 20:1-18). Rash, impulsive Simon Peter was gifted the name of Cephas, or Peter—and he would be the rock on which the resurrected Christ built His church (Matt. 16:18; (Acts 2:14-41). Paul himself acknowledges that he is the "least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because [he] persecuted the church of God" to the point of death (1 Cor. 15:9). But by the grace of God, he underwent a 180-transformation and is known as the most prolific church planter in church history today.

Yes, Christ died for our sins on the cross. But that's only half of the good news. The other half is that He lives *today*. So the question is: who were you before Christ, and who are you after Him? How have you invited Him to change you?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

In what ways are you different, before and after Christ? What are some of the victories that you have experienced lately over the power of sin?

Are you someone who tends to focus on Christ's death for us upon the cross, or are you someone who celebrates and rejoices in the resurrection? There is no correct answer here, but knowing which side of the cross you focus on has an impact on the way that you view and do life!

QUESTION TWO:

If you tend to focus on Christ's death upon the cross—how might you be encouraged to live in the joy and transformation of the resurrection? How might you look forward instead of backwards, and focus on sharing the good news of the Kingdom with those around you?

If you tend to focus on the resurrection and the reign of God's Kingdom—how might you remember the importance of the cross, and share in Christ's sufferings? How might His sacrifice move you towards compassion, as He commands us to love Him and also love His people?

Whatever your focus—how might you integrate your understanding of Christ's death and His resurrection, especially in light of the Easter weekend? How might that move you to live even more differently, knowing that we have already received the Spirit of God, to transform and enable us to live lives worthy of Him?

QUESTION THREE:

Celebrate and rejoice, for He is risen! It is finished.

As you end, think also about where else you can lean into the power of the resurrection this week, and celebrate with one another Christ's victory over sin and death.