

The Victory of the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:35-58 (ESV)

Dr. Ritch Boerckel

April 16, 2017

We're going to be reading from 1 Corinthians chapter 15 beginning in verse 35. We've been in a three week series in 1 Corinthians 15, beginning two weeks ago. And so if you would like to listen to the first two messages, you can go on our website and download those two messages. If you'd like to get the fullness of the hope that 1 Corinthians shares with us. Today, we're going to look at the last part of that great chapter. It's a chapter that exults in the resurrection of Jesus and it exults in the promise that Jesus' resurrection secures and guarantees a bodily resurrection for every person who is in Christ. So 1 Corinthians 15, verse 35.

35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" 36 You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

An unknown author wrote, "There is a preacher of the old school, but he speaks as boldly as ever. He is not popular, though the world is his parish and he travels every part of the globe and speaks in every language. He visits the poor, calls upon the rich, preaches to people of every religion and no religion, and the subject of his sermon is always the same. He is an eloquent preacher, often stirring feelings which no other preacher could, and bringing tears to eyes that

never weep. His arguments none are able to refute, nor is there any heart that has remained unmoved by the force of his appeals. He shatters life with his message. Most people hate him; everyone fears him. His name? Death. Every tombstone is his pulpit, every newspaper prints his text, and someday every one of you will be his sermon.”

Wow! That’s sobering isn’t it? It’s true. Pastor Death may not be someone that we want to listen to, but God uses him to prepare our hearts to receive the Good News of Jesus, the message of hope beyond the grave, of victory over death. The reality of death cannot be ignored and so we must think about what happens when we die. We must! We’d be foolish not to. And yet this is the very reason why the Good News of Jesus is such good news!

Friend, if you have Jesus as your Savior and as your Lord, Pastor Death never preaches the last word. After Death has his say, our Great Savior steps forward into the pulpit to preach another message. Our Lord Jesus promises to defeat death and to give a future bodily resurrection to each person who is united to Him by faith. Now this hope of a future resurrection unto life is reserved only to those who are in Christ, for Christ alone is the resurrection and the life. He is the only Savior who raised bodily from the dead and thus, He is the only Savior who can offer a resurrection from the dead. His resurrection secures the resurrection of every person who unites their lives to Him. So I appeal to you to listen to all of Jesus’ claims about Himself and His description of the way in which each one of us can have eternal life in Him.

It is true that death is a deadly foe. It is a powerful foe. Death will win a battle, but it will not win the war. So we consider our own death and the deaths of those that we love always through a lens of hope. There’s always a bright ray of light shining in to that darkness. For we have a Savior who died and who was buried and who rose the third day, proving that He conquered death. And our Lord Jesus promises to raise up all those who place their faith in Him.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

“Christ’s resurrection is the cause, the earnest, and the guarantee of the rising of all of His people.” That’s what Charles Spurgeon, a great preacher of the past said. Because of Jesus’ resurrection, that is the cause as well as the promise, the guarantee of the rising of all who are in Him. That’s really the message of this passage that is in front of us today in 1 Corinthians 15:35-58. Let’s open up our Bibles there so we can follow along in God’s Word. The message is simple, yet so profound: Because Jesus bodily rose from the grave, all who are in Christ will also experience a future bodily resurrection.

If you’re taking notes, and there’s a page for you to take notes in your Worship Folder, we’re going to observe four treasures that Jesus’ bodily resurrection secures for His people, that are outlined in this passage.

Treasure #1: All who are in Christ will certainly obtain a resurrection body.

That is an absolute 100% guarantee. Now remember that the people that Paul is writing to in Corinth are believers who have been taught false doctrine. And they have come to believe that God’s people, that those who are in Christ, will not experience a real, physical resurrection from the dead. They were likely influenced by the Greek philosophers who reasoned that a bodily resurrection is absolutely ridiculous. After all, our body is bad. It’s just a lump of dust. And

death is actually a liberation of our soul from that lump of dust. Why would we want to have our pure soul reunited to a dusty body? They couldn't understand even why that truth would be attractive. And that false doctrine had entered the church. So the Apostle Paul records a question that some of these believers who now were skeptics in the bodily resurrection, were asking.

35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

These questions, you have to read them. They're being asked in a snarky manner. They were thinking that Paul was teaching that Christians would be resurrected in the same weak, imperfect bodies that they had before they died. They seemed to be envisioning that Paul is teaching the resurrection as some kind of zombie apocalypse. Who would want that? Who would want these dead, dusty, weak, frail, diseased bodies to be resuscitated and come back? What kind of bodies will you have when you're resurrected? I want you to notice Paul's reply. Look at verse 36.

36 You foolish person!

That's his reply to their snarky question! Now this is not the way to win friends, but it is the way to challenge false doctrine. You're foolish in your thinking. That's the reason why you don't understand it. This line of argument is foolish because it does not factor in God's power or His wisdom. Paul is saying, "You're foolish to ask that question in such a manner. Do you think that the God who is all-powerful and the God who is all-wise, who created your bodies in the first place, won't be able to create a resurrected body that has amazing glory?" The resurrection body will indeed reflect God's glory and power.

Today, some ask honest questions like, "What about people who die at sea and their bodies disintegrate and are scattered all across the ocean? How could that person's body be raised?" The answer of course rests in the power of God. Remember the God who spoke the worlds into creation. There was nothing and He said, "Let there be..." Everything that is, came into being. This is the God who has no trouble bringing about a resurrection of all the parts wherever they might be scattered out far and wide, to bring them all back together to bring about a real resurrection of that body into a new resurrection body. He's able!

Paul then uses an illustration to help us understand God's design for the resurrection, the continuity between this body which is ours today that is natural, and that body which will be ours, which is spiritual.

36 What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

He's using the illustration of a seed that is planted into the ground.

37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

If a seed is not planted into the ground and then dies, that seed will remain its own unremarkable self. But if that seed that is planted into the ground dies and springs forth into life, it becomes something truly marvelous. That's the illustration that Paul is saying.

Now, the design of these bodies that God has given us, it truly is wonderful. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. But as a result of sin entering this world, these bodies of ours are imperfect.

They remain in an imperfect state. The Bible teaches us that when God created us, He created us both body and soul. And so the body and the soul are not ever meant to be separated. Sin was the only thing that brought about a death which separated body from soul in the first place. Jesus came to undo everything that sin had accomplished. So that no part of us is going to remain unredeemed. When a believer dies, immediately, their soul is ushered into the presence of the Lord. And then their body is laid to rest. That body is asleep, the Scripture describes that condition. But that does not mean that God is finished with that body and He's going to continue to allow that body to remain unredeemed. He will not let sin have the final say over any part of us. And that's why Jesus raised bodily from the dead to promise us a bodily resurrection.

The truth that the Bible teaches us about our humanity is that our body is as much a part of our designed humanity as is our soul. God designed our body and soul to be joined together in the worship of Him for all of eternity. So let's not think of our soul as somehow pure and able to worship, and our body as something second-class and dirty and corrupt. God's ultimate plan is to redeem every part of us from sin and death. The saints in heaven enjoy communion with God. They are free from sin and corruption. They are perfectly and wonderfully happy. Yet those saints eagerly await a future day when their body will be resurrected and their soul will be reunited to their body. God did not make us to be spirit only. He made us body and spirit. And the spirit yearns for the day of redemption when God will raise up the old body to newness. Romans 8:23 applies to both believers who are living on this earth as well as to believers who are in heaven.

Romans 8:23 we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

We wait eagerly for it. We do so now, and we will in heaven until that time when Jesus returns in the air and He gets a resurrection for all those who are in Christ. The Apostle Paul would say this in Philippians 3:

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Treasure #2: Our resurrection body will be perfect, permanent and powerful.

Paul continues to use this illustration of a seed sown in the soil to help us understand the answer to the question: What really will this resurrection body be like?

37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

Paul is highlighting that the difference in appearance and nature between our present body and the appearance in nature of that future resurrected body is very similar to the difference in appearance in nature of the seed, and the appearance in nature of the plant, or the fruit. And that is quite a stark difference, isn't it?

Without prior knowledge, who could examine an acorn and imagine an oak tree? Without prior knowledge, who could take that little seed of a dandelion that has a fluffy white head and a dark little seed at the bottom, and imagine this golden yellow flower with really, really deep roots? Who could imagine that? If we did not have some prior knowledge and education, we wouldn't

be able to tell from examining the seed what form the plant will be. And that's what he says about our bodies. It will transcend our imagination, he says, but it's going to be like that.

When we buy a package of seeds to plant in our garden in the spring, most often on the front, there is a picture of the plant or the fruit that the seed will become. Wouldn't it be great if God did that with our bodies? We're born, and there tattooed on our bellies is a picture of our resurrection body. This is what the seed is going to become. But God gives us something better than a picture. He gives us His Word and His promise. God teaches us four differences in this passage between the body we have now and the body we will have at the resurrection. This chapter is the most explicit chapter in all the Bible that relates to a description of this resurrection body that will be ours. And God writes these things because He wants us to think about it. This is really important practically in our worship of God and service of Him to keep this hope very clear and real and sharp in our hearts and in our faith.

Difference #1: Our resurrection body will be imperishable, while this present body is perishable.

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

My oldest son is a dentist. His livelihood depends upon the perishable nature of this natural body. If teeth do not decay and become diseased, he is out of work. In heaven, there will be no dentists. I'm not saying you won't be there, Alexander. I'm just saying you won't be a dentist there. You'll have to find some other line of work. In heaven there will be no need for back braces, cataract surgeries, chemotherapy drugs, wrinkle creams, hair tonics for baldness or walkers to steady our legs. In heaven, there will be no coffin companies, no hospitals nor graveyards. The dart of disease and death never pierces heaven's walls. Our new body will just keep going and going and going and going and going for all of eternity without ever losing a step.

Difference #2: Our resurrection body will be glorious.

43 It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.

These bodies of ours, again we're fearfully and wonderfully made. But they don't reflect the glory of God as brightly as this new body will. They will be like Jesus' own resurrection body. They will be so beautiful that in comparison, even the most beautiful people here on earth, our modern models will look horrifyingly ugly in comparison. The difference between our bodies now and the bodies that we will receive is the difference between a wormy caterpillar and the delicately beautifully colored butterfly. That is the same creature. But the difference is so great that it's hard to fathom how one could even be related to the other. This present body is our chrysalis that will fall off and that will arrive at this beautiful, glorious, perfect expression of the image of God. And the glorious image of God will shine through this new body with a brilliance like that of the noon day sun.

Difference #3: Our resurrection body will be amazingly strong and able.

43 It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

We are very puny now and we grow weaker as we age. It's been hard for me. Recently, I've seen some videos of some of these athletes that I watched when I was a child, these athletes that were so glorious and powerful and able. And now they're handing out prizes to younger men who are strong and able. I watched Oscar Robertson, a man that I would watch on tv, on this grainy black and white television set. But he was so awesome in the way he played. And he's handing a recognition to Russell Westbrook who broke his record. And as I'm looking I'm thinking, "There's Oscar. Oscar, that can't be you!" And I watch Hank Aaron as he throws out a first pitch, this guy that was so mighty and just belted home run after home run, and he can just barely toss the baseball to the catcher.

That's our natural body. This body is weak and is incapable in so many ways, but that body that is new will not be like that. It will never have encroaching weakness. It will be stronger than Samson. We will never grow tired or injured. Our legs will be swift as the leopards, our ears keener than gazelles, our eyes sharper than eagles, our minds wiser than Solomon. And with all these physical attributes, our hearts will love with an unending capacity. Our emotions won't flit up and down with hormones. Our brains won't forget a single name. We will think with greater understanding than the sharpest inventors and scientists. We will be as creative as the most talented artists and musicians. All that we see in parts here and there in man's body now, then will be magnified in power and glory and ability. This is what John writes when he thinks of this day.

1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Our resurrection body will be like His resurrection body. It's that hope of God's redemption of our soul and of our bodies that is our motivation to move past discouragement, to overcome temptation, and to continue to grow in holiness before the Lord. He who has hope "purifies himself as he is pure," as John would say.

Discouragement is a primary tool in Satan's toolbelt. I don't know if there's any other tool that Satan goes to more often than the tool of discouragement. And it's this amazing, glaring bright truth of our future resurrection that snuffs out the flame of discouragement. So much of our discouragement that Satan throws at us relates to the weakness of our bodies. We get sick and we feel poorly and things go wrong and we lose abilities that we'll never ever gain back again. And God says, "Here's my promise. Both soul and body will be like my own Son's life." Isn't that amazing?!

I love Joni Eareckson Tada. This is what she writes. She's a woman who when she was a teenager, she dove into a lake and broke her neck and became a paraplegic. And she's been that way, I think she's over 60 now. She says:

"I still can hardly believe it. I, with shriveled, bent fingers, atrophied muscles, gnarled knees, and no feeling from the shoulders down, will one day have a new body, light, bright, and clothed in righteousness—powerful and dazzling. Can you imagine the hope this gives someone spinal-cord injured like me? Or someone who is cerebral palsied, brain-injured, or who has multiple sclerosis? Imagine the hope this gives someone who is manic-depressive. No other religion, no other philosophy promises new bodies, hearts, and minds. Only in the Gospel of Christ do hurting people find such incredible hope."

Amen!

Difference #4: Our resurrection body will be fit for heaven.

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

By calling our resurrection body “spiritual,” Paul is not saying that it is just simply spirit. No, this body will be physical, yet it will be fit for heaven. When a person goes deep sea diving, he or she needs a scuba suit to survive that environment. When a person goes into outer space, he or she needs a space suit to survive that environment. These bodies aren’t designed for the depths of the ocean. These bodies aren’t designed to thrive in outer space. When a person goes to heaven, he or she needs a body that is able to thrive in that environment. These bodies of ours are not designed to thrive in that environment. These bodies, affected by the Fall, need to be changed. In order to see God in the fullness of His glory and survive, we need new bodies. In these bodies, standing before the fullness of God’s glory would be like standing at the epicenter of a nuclear explosion. We’d be disintegrated! So God gives us new bodies so we can stand in His very presence and be fit for heaven.

As an aside, someone asks the question: “Will we recognize each other in heaven?” And what Paul is teaching us is that there is much continuity between this body and the next. In other words, we’re not wholly different people or it’s not a wholly different body. Yes, it is changed, changed remarkably, but it is the same body being an instrument of the same individual person. So, Steve will still be Steve and Sally will still be Sally. We will still be the same persons. Our personhood is God-ordained with all of its unique individuality. And that’s going to be part of our experience in heaven. We will have complete loving relationships with people even as we have them here. And we will remember the people from this life and remember our relationship and grow in our relationship. I believe we will recognize babies that have died and are now fully developed in their new bodies. Now, in thinking upon this, some get concerned with Jesus’ words in Luke 20.

Luke 20:34-35 And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage,”

So that strikes a fear in happily married folk. Just a word of encouragement. We need never fear that our experience of love in heaven will be less than our experience of love on earth. Whatever joy and satisfaction we have in our love relationship with our wife here on earth, it will be exponentially greater, exponentially grander, more glorious and more joyful in heaven. Because the earth is just a shadow of the reality that is to come.

Treasure #3: We will inherit the kingdom of God.

50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

God says to the believers: “I am granting you an inheritance. It’s not just a part of an inheritance. I am making you, by virtue of your union with my Son, Jesus, a co-heir with Jesus. So you have

a full inheritance.” We receive every spiritual blessing in heavenly places through Christ Jesus. So we are full heirs of the inheritance of Jesus Christ. And heaven is a place more glorious, more beautiful, more wonderful than we could possibly describe. And what the Apostle Paul is saying is that in order to receive our inheritance, we need to be changed. We cannot receive this inheritance until the resurrection.

51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

Not everyone is going to die. The Lord Jesus, when He returns in the air, some of His people will still be alive on the earth at the time He returns. So we’ll not all sleep. We’re not all going to die. But we all, all who are in Christ, will be changed. We’ll be given this resurrection body.

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

That’s the coming of Jesus in the air.

For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

In order to receive our inheritance, this is part of the essential necessity of receiving our inheritance, that which is perishable must put on the imperishable because the inheritance can only connect to an imperishable person and body. The Apostle Paul again is reiterating this central truth that the resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees the resurrection of His people who are joined to Him. All of the prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus’ first coming—His death, burial and resurrection—then also show and prove that God is faithful to fulfill all the promises related to Jesus’ second coming as well.

Treasure #4: The sting of death is removed.

What a precious treasure this is!

54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

This is when this event is completed. The victory over sin has already been secured, but death is still allowed to remain. On that day, death will be no more. The Apostle Paul describes death as this brutal enemy, a monster with a horrible sting. He gives no hope that any of us are going to avoid its pain. This dragon of death remains in our path and we must fight it. There is a modern picture of death that has death as a dark reaper with a shroud on and skeleton face, with this wicked grin upon his face as he has a scythe in his hand with a sharp blade. Every minute that we live, we move closer to the sharp blade of death. And with that smile of derision death says, “I will have you and I will sting you with an unending, infinitely painful sting.”

What the Gospel tells us is that while death indeed brings deep grief, the believer who unites his or her life to Jesus can look at death unmoved by fear, unfazed by death’s threats. We can say, “Death, your sting is a temporary thorn, a thorn that has been removed by my Savior, Jesus. You are a pinch that lasts for a moment and you will be gone. O death, you say you have taken the

dearest on earth from me? It is not so! For through Jesus, my dear ones are alive with God right now and I will soon follow. O Death, you say you drain life from this body of mine? No! You can only put this body of mine to sleep, a sleep from which I will awaken refreshed, restored in power and glory. O Death, you say that you take from me comforts, companions and joys? That is not true! You simply open the gate for me to experience joys that are eternal, inexpressible, at my Savior's side. O Death, for all you take and take and take and take, my Lord Jesus gives and gives and gives and gives again. I consider that my present afflictions are not worth comparing to the glories that will soon be mine!"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Death will not have the last word. Not upon our souls and not upon our bodies. And that is the reason why Jesus, at the funeral of His friend Lazarus, declared:

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Just yesterday, I went to visit a dear member of our church who entered into Hospice. It is likely that Betty will not ever leave the bed in which she now lies. And I asked Betty, "Do you have a Scripture you'd like for me to read?" She said, "Yes. Psalm 23." "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." I shall lack nothing. "He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul. Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will feel no evil." And we just stopped there and we talked about that. "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." That's the promise of the Good Shepherd in the Old Testament and it's the promise of the Great Shepherd in the New Testament as well. And it's a promise we can hold on to at all times.

The applications are really folded up into a single verse. The Apostle Paul teaches doctrine for 57 verses and then in one verse, he gives an application. Some folks want 57 verses of application and just a little scattering of doctrine. But not the Apostle Paul! Let's read verse 58 because this is the application. It's amazing how impacting it is to our everyday life.

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

He's speaking to those who are united to Jesus through faith. There are three applications I want to draw for you.

1. Look to Jesus and live.

The Apostle Paul is writing to his brothers at the end in this application. He has already been quite clear that if we are not united to Jesus by faith, then we have no benefit from all the promises and provisions that Jesus has secured for us. We have no connection. That's the reason why Jesus, after declaring Himself to be the resurrection and the life, He asked the question, "Do you believe this?" He makes it really personal. If you don't believe this, and by believe, I mean, trust in, rest in, look to Jesus so that you can receive the gifts, the blessings that He has secured through His death, burial and resurrection, then you will receive none of those blessings. You'll

be left outside of His life, outside of His resurrection. And you will remain in your sins. And that's to remain in this body of death. It's only a resurrection unto death. And that's why I ask you: Do you believe? I don't ask, do your parents believe? Or does your church believe? Or do your friends believe? Or do your children believe? It's not enough! Do you believe? Because it's only then that you will experience the resurrection power of Jesus in your life. It's only then that you will be transformed. It's only then that you will have hope secured forever.

The second two applications are for believers.

2. Be steadfast and immovable.

To be steadfast and immovable means we let nothing move us from our confession of hope in Jesus. We live on this confession. This confession is the ground, the foundation upon which we stand. We know and Paul knows, that's why he gives us this command. We know that many forces in this world are at work to knock us off this foundation. We have discouragements. "God, are You really true and faithful to Your promises." We have troubles and we have trials and we have distractions. We have people and Satan himself that wants to do us harm. And what the Apostle Paul says is, "Don't listen to these false teachers. They're trying to move you off of this foundation. But instead, on the basis of the historic fact that Jesus Christ died on a cross, He was buried and He rose the third day, five hundred witnesses can still attest to that truth," he says. On that fact, be steadfast. Don't listen to this little voice over here and that little philosopher over there. Don't listen to this temptation and that allure of this passing world. Build your life upon this. Be steadfast and be immovable. Jesus is Lord! He is resurrected and He is life. And there is no life outside of Him. Be steadfast and be immovable, my friends. And when you feel your soul moving from this foundation, Beloved, meditate upon the certain resurrection of Jesus.

3. Always abound in the work of the Lord.

If you are in Jesus Christ, you are His body. That means that God, the Father has a service for you to accomplish, being Jesus in this world. He has gifted you by His Spirit to join with other believers in His church to labor, to use this body that He's given you, a body that's wearing out, to join with other believers in His church, to serve the Lord, to labor, to work to advance the Gospel of Jesus. To advance that Gospel through evangelism, sharing with others the good news; through discipleship, encouraging and instructing and helping other believers along the way; through acts of compassion. Every person has a vital part in God's work. This isn't just for pastors. This is for every person who in the future will have a resurrection body. If that's you, this word is for you. Make sure you're always abounding in the work of the Lord.

If we have slipped from our commitment to serve God in our life, think of the resurrection. Think of Jesus' victory. Think of the day when you will be raised with Him. Ask the question: What investment will I be happy that I made on that day, with this present body? This present body is decaying. Everything about this present body is passing away. There is a future day. What will I be so overjoyed to have done with this body in this time, on that future day? That's what Paul is asking. He says, "In view that you're going to arrive in that future day and that's going to be your eternal existence, think about what you're doing with this body right now."

You know, it's right for us to tire this body out in service to the Lord. It's not right for us to be weary. That's a spiritual matter. But it's right for us to be exhausted! What better investment can we make with this instrument that God has given us? Always abounding in the work of the Lord.

I want to press this to you. Does that phrase describe your life? And if not, I urge you to think about the future day of resurrection. Meditate upon it. Pray over it. Grab hold of it until you can see it.

There are some believers who neglect the work of the Lord altogether. There are other believers who dabble in the work of the Lord as sort of a hobby. God says, “Make My work central to your life’s purpose.” On that future day, you will have an opportunity to manifest the life of Jesus in your mortal flesh through your words and service to Him in this life. What a joy we’ll forfeit when we treat these bodies as though they are given to us to invest in things that are passing away.

Friend, I know that we will get discouraged by many hardships as we serve the Lord. I know that! As you serve the Lord in an abounding way, people will treat you roughly even as you try to love them. It’s unavoidable! People will overlook you and not appreciate your sacrifices. It will often seem as you serve the Lord, like there is so little fruit that is coming from your labors. You’re going to question whether it’s worthwhile. Your body is going to grow tired and weary in the process. You’ll feel stress and want to escape it. You’ll endure painful trials that weaken your resolve. You will enter into the sins of others and experience a depth of heartache that is almost unimaginable as you serve the Lord. This was true of the Apostle Paul and it is true of every one of God’s servants. We should expect it. And that’s the reason why the Apostle Paul finishes this amazing chapter with

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

That’s a promise!

He is risen!

Congregation: He is risen indeed!