

1 Corinthians 15:29-58

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What I want to do is have you turn back to 1 Corinthians 15:12 because it was a key text in understanding the subject matter why Paul says what he says. In verse 12, Paul says, “Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead,”—now we know that Christ is preached, that He rose from the dead, because He did rise from the dead; but here’s Paul’s question for the believers there in Corinth—“how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” That was the problem with the believers in Corinth. It’s kind of hard for us to relate to or understand or believe, but because of the Greek thought that the body is evil—God’s not going to redeem it by raising it from the dead—certainly that’s not biblical Christianity. Your physical body will be redeemed. The physical universe will be redeemed. Jesus didn’t just die on the cross to save us from sin and take us to some place called heaven some day, He came to actually create a new heaven and a new earth. He came to redeem our bodies, to set us free from these bodies of sin and death.

The problem was some of the believers in Corinth evidently were saying that there is no such thing as a physical resurrection. Listen to me carefully. Very very rarely do you hear this point of doctrine mentioned as an essential doctrine of Christianity. We hear the deity of Christ, the Trinity, salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, but rarely do we hear that actually an essential part of Christian doctrine is the resurrection of the body. Just about every cult, every “-ism” every schism, has a skewed view or an aberrant view of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The resurrection of the body is so absolutely essential to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ’s resurrection guarantees—it’s a prototype, a forerunner of—our resurrection and the hope that we have of life beyond the grave.

Go back with me to 1 Corinthians 15:29. Let me remind you back from verses 1-28 just quickly what we covered since it’s been three weeks since we’ve been together. In verses 1-11, Paul gives the historical arguments for the resurrection of the death of Jesus Christ, resurrection of Jesus Christ. He started with the gospel and how the gospel is Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that the third day He rose again. It’s an absolutely essential part of the gospel—no resurrection, no gospel. It’s not enough that Jesus just died on the cross, He had to rise again from the dead. This is verses 1-11.

I realize there are a lot of different ways to outline the chapter, so don’t take my outline as being the only outline that you can follow. Sometimes, even from week to week, I’ll tweak it a little bit, but verses 1-11 historical arguments showing that Christ has risen from the dead and talking about His post-resurrection appearances. Verses 12-19, the second division, is the logical argument. So, a historical argument gave way to a logical argument. Paul began to argue, “And if Christ be not risen, then . . . ye are yet in your sins.” If Christ be not risen then there’s no hope beyond the grave. If Christ be not risen, then we’re liars and Christ is not the Son of God, and he began to lay out all the things that are not true logically, if Christ be not risen from the dead.

The third section we saw, verses 20-28, was the theological arguments. If you haven't studied that yet, you need to go back and listen online. By the way, back in 2014 I taught 1 Corinthians on Wednesday night and spent several weeks going through this chapter. I also did a series that's a topical series, you'll find it under "Topical Series" on our website, called "Hope Beyond The Grave." I spent eight weeks in chapter 15. We're going to, Lord willing, make that into a book, Hope Beyond The Grave. So, we see the theological argument that in Adam, Adam's sin brought sin and death upon the whole human race, but in Jesus Christ, the last Adam, He actually conquered sin and death, rose from the dead, and then He will actually establish His Kingdom, restore the earth, and then submit the Kingdom to the Father that God ". . . may be all in all," and all the theology of the future restoration on planet earth and the new heaven and the new earth coinciding with our new bodies that we're going to have for all eternity.

Now, let's jump into our text, and I'm just going to simply outline it and then I'm going to do running commentary on the passage itself. There are four sections I want to give you tonight, and the first is verses 29-34, Paul's practical argument. So, it's historical arguments, logical arguments, theological arguments, now his practical arguments. He's going to talk about the consequences of Christ's resurrection for the present time. There are, right now, right here, present benefits of the resurrection for our lives. These are benefits or blessings and these are motives that we have now because Christ has risen from the dead.

Verses 29-34, Paul says, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead,"—as you can see, we've got a hot tomato text to deal with in verse 29. He says, "What about those that are being baptized for the dead—" . . . if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? 30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?"—in other words, why are we living in a way that risks our lives of being put to death or being martyred, if Christ be not risen from the dead? Why do we live in jeopardy every hour? He asks several questions in this first couple verses.

Verse 31, "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. 33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." So, the exhortation, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."

Some of the consequences right now in this present time of knowing that Christ is risen from the dead and that there is a future resurrection of our bodies are number one, if you're taking notes, verse 29, salvation and evangelism; at least, I think that's what's going on in this text, but I would say salvation and evangelism. We should be motivated to win others to Christ because there is life beyond the grave in Jesus Christ. Amen? We should want others to have eternal life and to have their sins forgiven and have hope beyond the grave.

Go back to verse 29. He says, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" I can't tell you how I would love to just keep going and not even talk about this verse, and the reason is because it's one of

those texts that I have to admit I don't know for sure how to interpret it. You say, "What? You're a pastor, you get paid for preaching the Bible, and you don't know what the text means?" Yes, that's true. I don't have a red phone on my desk that I can call God up and say, "Hey, what's the skinny with this verse? Can You please explain it to me?" It's one of those challenging texts of which are many ways to interpret. But let me give you some things to go by. First, we can be sure about what it does not mean, okay? We can be sure about what it does not mean. We don't know for sure what it means or what's going on, I'll try to set the meaning in the context, but let me tell you what it is not teaching or implying.

It is certainly not teaching or implying or supporting an idea that you can be baptized for somebody who died in sin—not a Christian and is dead—and you can be baptized for them in proxy and that they can go to heaven or be saved. I say this because the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, or the Mormons, base their doctrine of baptism for the dead, and they do baptize for the dead. This is why they have these big vaults there in Utah where they keep all the genealogical records so you can go back into your genealogy, back into your ancestry, and you can find people who weren't baptized in the Mormon church and you can be baptized in proxy for them. They use this verse, I believe out of context, to teach this doctrine that you can be baptized for people that have died.

Another reason we know this is not true is because the Bible teaches very, very clearly that salvation is not by our good works or by our deeds or by baptism. No one gets to heaven by baptism or because they've been dunked in water. As a matter of fact, the thief on the cross was not baptized, but Jesus said, "Today you will be with Me in paradise." If you accept Jesus Christ before you can be baptized in water, you were to die, you would go to heaven. You would not be turned away at the gate of heaven and say, "Sorry, that's too bad. It's great you accepted Christ, but you didn't get baptized, so you can't go to heaven."

Water baptism is an outward showing of an inward work. If you haven't had the inward work of regeneration, then baptism doesn't do anything to get you saved, and the Bible's clear that we're saved "by grace . . . through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast." Any interpretation that teaches that we can do some work in order to get saved ourselves or for others to be saved certainly is not a correct interpretation.

So, what does it mean? Well, I started by saying, "I don't know," and that's, again, what I would say, "I don't know." There are a lot of different views, a lot of different interpretations. I'll give you a couple of thoughts, and forgive me that I can't really land on any one for certain, but that's just kind of the way it is. One thought, and it's the less popular thought, but it's one that I tend to think is a good thought is that the church at Corinth was messed up, no question about that. They were believing things and doing things that were just flat out weird. I thank God I wasn't called to pastor the church at Corinth. I think that a possible interpretation, it doesn't quite fit as good with the context, was that they were baptizing for the dead and Paul was simply trying to point out their logical inconsistency, " . . . if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" That's a possibility.

Let me give you another one that's probably a better interpretation, that is, the idea of being baptized for the dead means that those who are being saved and baptized are being baptized in order to take the place here on earth of those that have died and gone to heaven. So, when it says, ". . . baptized for the dead,"—it means that you've actually filled the gap that has been vacated. A Christian dies, they go to heaven; another Christian believes in Jesus and is saved, and they come into a relationship with Christ, they take that person's place or position.

A third interpretation, which I think is most likely—if I was going to bet on one, this would be it—was that they're baptized believers, they accept Christ and are saved, but the reason they've been baptized is because of the witness and the testimony that has been given to them by a believer who was probably martyred or died for their faith in Jesus Christ. A good example of what I'm trying to say is Saul of Tarsus when he watched Stephen being stoned. He saw Stephen looking into heaven and seeing the heavens open and Jesus at the right hand of the Father and saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," it wasn't long after that that Saul was on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians, and Jesus came to save him and to intervene in his life. When He did that, He said to Saul, ". . . it is hard for thee to kick against the goads,"—the King James Bible has 'pricks.' It's a long, pointy stick they would use to prod the oxen in the fields whenever they plowed. It's a figure of speech for the conviction of the Holy Spirit. So, as Stephen gave that gospel message and witness and then died, so then Saul actually was motivated to accept Christ, came to know Christ, and in a sense took the place of Stephen or came to know Christ as a result of his testimony and his faith through Jesus Christ. That's a possible interpretation as well.

It's important that we understand that it does not teach that you can be baptized for dead folks. He's not really teaching anything, he's asking questions, and in the context he's talking about the fact that we live in jeopardy every hour. Look at verse 30, "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" So, the context is that of as Christians we're going to be persecuted. We live in a hostile world. People are going to oppose us. Paul goes on to say, "I die daily,"—in other words, I face trials and tribulation and persecution, so Paul could possibly be put to death and others would see that, have a testimony, and they would come to believe in Jesus Christ. Throughout church history many have come to know the Lord because of the witness of some who have died for their faith, because of the witness of a martyr. So, that's very possible what he's talking about.

The second practical consequence is in verses 30-32, that is, suffering and service. Did you know belief in the resurrection of the body makes Christians brave, makes Christians strong, makes Christians bold. It helps them to endure the trials and the troubles that we face in this life. Look at verses 30-32. He says, "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? 31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." The Christian life is a dying daily and being challenged in our walk. Verse 32, "If after the manner of men,"—notice that expression, 'after the manner of men,'—"I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?"—if the dead do not rise, why should we have the conflict with people who oppose the gospel and want to persecute us? We should just actually ". . . eat and drink; for to morrow we die."

When Paul talks about 'after the manner of men,' remember earlier in the chapter he said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." So, if there's no hope beyond the grave, why would I want to be persecuted and have opposition against me, if I'm living for Christ? It motivates me rather to live for the Lord even in the face of opposition and persecution and death to understand that my body will be resurrected and that Jesus rose and I will rise and that there's hope beyond the grave. Someone said, "The resurrection of Jesus Christ and of our bodies makes believers strong, makes for strong, brave Christians."

Here's the third practical implication, verses 33-34. It becomes a motivation to separate myself from sin and sinful lifestyles. If I believe that Jesus rose from the dead, if I believe that I will be raised from the dead and that there's a life beyond the grave, in this life right here and right now, I want to live a godly consecrated, dedicated, holy life. So, it motivates me to separate from sin.

Notice verses 33-34, "Be not deceived"—and many of them were being deceived—"evil communications corrupt good manners." That "evil communications" means if you're listening to the false teachers, if you're listening to people telling you things that aren't true, if you're being subjected to false doctrine, then it could corrupt the way that you live. I love the figure or the expression, "What you believe determines how you behave." As a matter of fact, you should write that down. It's not an original John Miller quote, I think it's from Warren Wiersbe. I've quoted Warren Wiersbe so much, for so many years, I think that it's me now, and I'll have to apologize to Dr. Wiersbe when I get to heaven for doing that. What you believe determines how you behave. Why do you think Romans has eleven chapters of doctrine before you get to Romans 12 and he says, "I beseech you therefore . . . by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice" Because what you believe determines how you behave. If you believe in a future resurrection of the body and life beyond the grave, you're going to be motivated right now to live a godly, holy life. This is why he said, "Don't listen to false teachers that corrupt your manners."

But then the exhortation, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not;"—someone said he's calling them to wake up and clean up. I like that, wake up and clean up—"for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." False doctrine can lead to false living. If you don't believe right, you're not going to behave right. This is why I'm so committed to preaching and teaching the truth of God's Word and sound doctrine because I believe that's the foundation for Christian living.

Here's our second main division, and it's somewhat the heart of what Paul wants to say. It's verses 35-49. In this section, Paul is speaking of the resurrection body, it's nature. Now, there's a lot of questions. We might believe Jesus rose from the dead; we might believe that we will rise from the dead, but that doesn't take away the questions of: What about if we were cremated? What about if we were thrown into the ground and then we just went into the grass and the grass was eaten by a cow and the cow had milk and the milk was drunk by somebody and they died, what's going to happen? Or, maybe someone was buried and then they planted an apple tree over the grave, and the roots went down into the casket, the tree went up and had apples and someone ate the apples and you died and you were thrown overboard and a shark

ate you. Do you think God's going, "Oh no! Bummer! What am I going to do? How am I going to resurrect him?" It's not an issue. But there are questions that people had, and some of the Corinthians had them as well.

There are three analogies that Paul gives in verses 35-41, though the section goes to verse 49. I'm going to point them out to you. The first is he uses the analogy of a seed. We're talking about the nature of the resurrection body, so he describes it by using an analogy of a seed. Verse 35, "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up?"—keep your eye out for question marks. He's actually anticipating argument—what they would say, how they would argue against this doctrine. "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up?"—explain that to me, Paul. How are the dead going to come back to life and be raised up? And, what body do they come? Second question. How are they raised up, what their body is going to come?

Notice Paul's answer in verse 36, "Thou fool"—I love Paul. He didn't mess around. He just said, "You're a moron." I'm not just saying that, that's what the Greek word is "moron." You're a moron. Why are you asking that? Is anything too hard for God? One of the most often asked questions I have is, what about cremation or what about this or what about that. How can the body be resurrected? And my question is, "Is anything too hard for God?" The answer is no. He says, verse 36, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened,"—or made alive—"except it die." When you plant a seed, for it to produce life it has to die.

Verse 37, "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: 38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." I'm not a horticulturist and I don't know a lot about plants or seeds, but I do know that if you take a tulip bulb, and that's one of my favorite analogies, which is not very attractive. Have you ever looked at a tulip bulb? It's pretty ugly looking, right? But if you put it in the soil, the right soil with the right sunlight, right time of the year, right depth, right amount of water, what comes out of the ground? A beautiful tulip flower. What if you planted tulip bulbs and tulip bulbs popped up? You'd freak out, "Ahhh!" So, the tulip bulb goes in the ground, it dies, and out of that death of that seed comes a beautiful tulip. That's what your body is like in the resurrection. It's like planting a seed. You plant this ugly tulip bulb—your body is like a tulip bulb. It's ugly. I just thought I'd encourage you. But you're going to see in this passage a glorious resurrection body is going to be yours in Christ Jesus. So, he talks about seeds and the planting of seeds of that type.

I love what Joni Eareckson Tada said in her book, *Heaven: Your Real Home*, in the chapter that she wrote called, "Who Are We In Heaven?" By the way, I highly recommend this book by Joni Eareckson Tada on heaven. It's one of the best books on heaven you can get. She said, quote, "Trying to understand what our bodies will be like in heaven, it's much like expecting an acorn to understand his destiny of roots, bark, branches, and leaves. Or asking a caterpillar to appreciate flying. Or a peach pit to fathom being fragrant. Or a coconut to grasp what it means to sway in the ocean breeze. Our eternal bodies will be so grand, so glorious that we can only catch a fleeting glimpse of them now." What a glorious prospect that it's planted in weakness,

it's raised in strength. It'll be planted in corruption, it's raised in glory. So, it's like a seed. That's Paul's answer.

Now, that which is planted is related—and here's an important thought—it's related to the flower, but it's not the flower. So, your new body will be related to your old body, but it is a new resurrection spiritual body.

Here's the second analogy, verse 39, different kinds of flesh. So, our bodies in the resurrection are going to be a different type of body. "All flesh is not the same flesh"—we know that—"but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." Scientists can actually tell if they find bones in the ground or they find a dead creature in the ground, they can tell whether or not this is human flesh or if it's cattle or if it's a bird or what kind of beast it is; so God gives each one of them a different type of body. The key, verse 38, is ". . . to every seed his own body. 39 All flesh"—has its own kind of body—" . . . but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." So, we're going to have a new kind of body.

Then, in verses 40-41, Paul talks about the planets and the heavenly bodies. This is another verse, by the way, that the Mormon church misinterprets, and I'll point that out. But here we see that different celestial bodies and heavenly bodies—planets—are different. They differ from one another. He says in verse 40, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." You might be saying, "What in the world are they talking about?" Again, let me tell you what he's not talking about what the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints say. They say that this is a proof-text in the Bible for different levels of heaven, that there are different levels of heaven. That's not what Paul is talking about or describing. He's not saying that there's celestial heaven and there's terrestrial heaven, and the super saints go to the celestial and the lesser saints go to terrestrial. That's not what he's talking about.

Notice verse 41 explains it, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory." Again, I'm not an astronomer. I understand that this month there's going to be, I think, a couple, if I'm not mistaken, lunar eclipses. There'll be a lunar eclipse and then a solar eclipse this month, so there's all this cool stuff going on in the sky this month, this August, if you know where to look and what time to look and all that stuff. But the sun differs from other planets, and other planets differ from the different stars and from the earth. He's just basically describing that there are different types of heavenly bodies. These are analogies to help us wrap our minds around something that is hard for us to fathom or comprehend. That's all he's saying in this text.

Now, verses 42-49, Paul, in speaking of the resurrection body, makes a series of contrasts. He's going to contrast our future glorified, spiritual body with our humble, lowly bodies that we have right now. Verse 42, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption"—when you die in your physical, mortal body, it's described as corruption. You say, "Yes, the older I get the more I know this by experience." You begin to wear down. "It is sown in corruption; it is

raised”—though—“in incorruption.” So, note the contrast. Right now my physical body is corrupting, but my spiritual body will be incorruptible.

Verse 43, “It is sown in dishonour; 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” What’s our natural body? It’s our physical body we have right now, and I’ve often taught, and I believe it’s true, that even though you’re saved and going to heaven, your body is not redeemed. It will be redeemed, but right now it’s unredeemed. That’s the third phase of salvation—glorification. When we go to heaven, we’re with the Lord, our salvation will be complete and we will have a new glorified body. So, there’s a natural body, verse 44, and there’s a spiritual body.

Verse 45, “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” The first man, Adam, this again is a proof-text for the historicity of Adam, definitely Adam, but implying also that Eve was a true historical person. There truly was a first human being, his name is Adam. I don’t believe that there was half-man/half-ape, Neanderthal man, whatever. I believe that’s a concoction. The first man was Adam, the first woman was Eve, and in Adam and in Eve’s sin in the Garden brought sin and death upon the whole human race and upon, certainly, our physical bodies. So, the first Adam was Adam, the first in the Garden. Then, the last Adam is reference to Jesus Christ. He “ . . . was made a quickening spirit,”—He came out of the grave in a resurrected body. He now is our prototype.

Verse 46, “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.” It starts with our natural body, our body of humiliation, body of dishonor, body of corruption; and it will lead, secondly, to our spiritual body.

Verse 47, “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” As I read that, I say, “Praise be to God!” Amen? We will have new bodies. No more sin, no more suffering, no more sorrow, no more weakness—glorified bodies that we will spend eternity in. What a glorious prospect that is!

Here’s the third section for tonight, and it’s ushering in to what I think is one of the most glorious sections of this fifteenth chapter. That is, verses 50-53 where we now have the resurrection body, it’s translation. I want you to watch this text. Follow it closely. This is a text on the rapture. You say, “Well, wait a minute. You’re going from the resurrection of the body to the rapture?” Yes, because in the rapture of the Church, there will be a resurrection of the bodies of those that have died before the rapture. This is why Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4, “ . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up”—*harpáz* *ÒÀ* snatched up—“ . . . to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” This is a rapture passage. It involves the resurrection of the body.

Verses 50-53, Paul says, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the

kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep,”—that’s a reference to death, physical death, only the body, not the soul, dying physically—“but we shall all be changed”—we’ll be metamorphosed—“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

This verse and the ones following are some of my favorite verses to read at a funeral service, some of my favorite verses to read when I’m in a graveside doing an internment service. They’re so blessed to know that our loved ones who died in Christ, they will rise again. They will live with Christ in new, glorified bodies.

A couple things about the rapture, verse 51, is described as “a mystery.” The Bible describes a mystery as something in ages past was not made known but is now revealed. It’s also something—listen carefully—that cannot be known by self-discovery unless God reveals it. So, “mystery” is something that was not revealed in the Old Testament; and secondly, cannot be known unless God reveals it to us, and He has in His Word. John’s gospel, chapter 14, verses 1-4, is a rapture text. First Thessalonians 4:13-18 is a classic rapture passage and this 1 Corinthians 15:50-53. Notice the rapture will happen when the Lord comes that those who have fallen asleep, their bodies, they shall be changed. They shall be metamorphosed. Like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, our bodies will be transformed, and it will happen, “In a moment,”—we get our word “atom” from that. It was considered the smallest bit of time that could not be divided—“in the twinkling of an eye”—not the blink of an eye, but the twinkle of an eye—“at the last trump.”

Don’t let this “last trump” statement confuse you. There are those that believe in a posttribulational rapture or a midtribulational rapture and they try to equate this trumpet at the rapture to the seventh trumpet in the tribulation period—two different complete trumpets. This “last trump” is a figure of speech. It’s military, and it pertains only to the Church. It’s the last trumpet of the Church to call them home to heaven. It’s not the seventh trumpet, it’s the last trumpet for the Church, and I don’t believe that you should confuse the two, and the results are that this “last trump” for the Church, they’re caught up to meet the Lord in heaven; and the seventh trumpet, God’s wrath is being poured out upon a Christ-rejecting world on earth.

The marvelous truth about the rapture is “ . . . the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”—that’s those who died before the rapture. They’re already with the Lord, but their bodies will be resurrected, reunited with their soul and spirit. Verse 53, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Now, in 2 Corinthians 5, the Bible says that our bodies are like tents and that our bodies actually are temporary and frail, that we’re going to get a new permanent body, “ . . . a building . . . not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

My last section, and I won’t tarry, verses 54-58, is the resurrection body, its victory. Paul just really turns it on at the end of this chapter and talks about the glorious victory that is ours

through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Verses 54-58, “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,”—this is a reference to Isaiah 25:8—“Death is swallowed up in victory.” Isn’t that great? Death is swallowed up in victory, and then he says, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” Amen?

What a marvelous chapter, 1 Corinthians 15. Again, I’d love to do a whole sermon on verses 54-58 and spend more time here. Perhaps we’ll do that some Sunday, but in verse 54, “Death is swallowed up in victory, 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”—death will not have the last word. Did you hear what I said? Death will not have the last word. Death will be defeated. It’s already defeated. It’s waiting for that day.

Notice in verse 56, victory over sin and the law comes through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and our future resurrection. “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law”—so, the resurrection brings victory over sin, death, and the law. Then, the victory is through Jesus Christ our Lord. Verse 57, “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Only through Jesus Christ are we going to have victory over death and victory over the grave.

Verse 58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren”—this is the practical application—“be ye stedfast”—don’t be going backwards. Don’t be half-hearted. Don’t be giving up. Don’t be moved. Be unmoveable. “. . . be ye stedfast”—don’t be swayed or knocked to the side—“unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

“Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.” Amen? Keep your eternal perspective. If the Lord tarries, and we live long enough, we will go the way of all flesh. But, “. . . this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality . . .” Do you know to go to heaven you need a new body? Your body right now, right here, won’t work in heaven. You go, “My body right here, right now, won’t work on earth let alone heaven.” If you dive into the deep, blue sea you’ve got to have a mask on, have tanks on, you’ve got to have air. If you go to outer space, you’ve got to put a space suit on. Forgive me, I’m just a little skeptical. All of this about we’re going to inhabit Mars, we’re going to live on the moon; you go to the moon, I’ll stay in California. I don’t want to live in a space suit. I don’t want to float around trying to grab my peanut butter and jelly sandwich. We’re not made for space, we’re made for earth. God’s going to give us a body that’s suited for heaven.

Remember when Jesus rose from the dead He could appear and disappear? We’re going to be able to freak our friends out with our new bodies. Jesus actually was able to be touched and

felt. We're going to be able to see our loved ones and hug them and embrace them and kiss them. We're going to be able to reach our hand out and put our hand on the face of Jesus. We're going to be able to eat with Him. What a marvelous truth! And, not gain weight! Praise be to the name of the Lord! And, not have to exercise! How good is that? All the glories and the beauty of the new body! It should motivate us to be " . . . stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"

One of the perspectives that I could get as a pastor is I do a lot of funerals. I've done so many over so many years, and it constantly brings me back to the reminder that this life " is even a vapor, that appeared for a little time, and then vanisheth away." And, where will you spend eternity? What investment can you make in your life beyond the grave? Keep an eternal perspective.