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THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

I Cor. 15

The resurrection and it's doctrine is that a man stands up again after he dies. He comes back to life in the body. Paul is approaching here the climax of a great message in the book of Corinthians. Certain false teachers in Corinth denied the resurrection of the dead is very plain. What their grounds were, is related to the Sadducees who were converted. They denied the doctrine of the resurrection. Paul goes at this subject from many different points of view. And he unfolds or uncovers an emptiness that some of these philosophers had. He has preached the message of the cross. And he rebukes them for their errors and their beliefs about the resurrection. The resurrection was the principle part of the Gospel.

It is the greatest evidence of Christianity. It is the greatest exhibition of God's power. It is the greatest truth of the Gospel. It is the greatest reality of our faith. And it is the greatest assurance of coming Glory. This fact thrills the human heart. It is a fact that is mentioned directly more than 100 times in The New Testament. It is the sum total of human hope that the resurrection of the dead shall take place.

Here we have in this section of Scripture one of the oldest written accounts of the resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection of the body. Paul introduces this subject and is very specific.

He brings people very (near to Heaven). Right up to the (golden gates) in full view. He helps them to come to a verdict about the Gospel.

I want to arrange this chapter like a door on three hinges. And the door is pretty steady and sturdy with three hinges to swing from. The first hinge is the foundation - V. 1-19. The second hinge is the foreshadow - V. 20-29. And the third hinge is finalization - V. 35-56.

I. FOUNDATION - V.1-19

V.1 Foundation of the resurrection. Paul runs over again before these people the good news which he had brought to them before. It is not news that he had invented - more over, brethren, I have preached unto you which also ye have received. And wherein you stand - V. 1. This news was something they had received.

The good news is always something that comes to us from someone who has already possessed it. No man ever invents the Gospel for himself. In a sense, no man ever discovers it by himself. This is the very function of the church -- to transmit the good news. No man can hide and received Jesus Christ, unless he receives it somehow in the fellowship of the church.

Paul says this is something that - in which you have stood. The very first function of the good news is to give a man stability. In a dangerous slippery world it has kept him on his feet.

Moffett finally translates Job 4:4 - Your words have kept men on their feet. This is exactly what the word of the Gospel does.

V. 2 - By which also we are saved. The Gospel is something by which these people have been saved. The very glorious salvation. Is it's going from glory to glory.

It is not something which is ever completed in this world. And the means of salvation is something in which a man can never exhaust.

It is also something to keep in memory. If you hold on to this, life, he says - may bring things that happen to us and baffle us. But it is not something that you hold on too artificially. We tend to accept things because they were told, or because they are second hand. Now Paul is saying - by which or so you were saved. Here is the awful possibility that grips his mind. As he thinks of this congregation. That may after all, they have believed in vain.

Paul intends to deal with some of the facts here. And he is going to get the true facts out.

V. 3 - First of all he says, my message was how Christ died for our sins. According to the Scriptures. There's no second hand about this. This is the nut shell of the Gospel. That here was one who came and lived 2,000 years ago. Who walked upon the earth and who was crucified outside of Jerusalem. And was buried. And then on the third day he arose. This is God's anointed son. And Paul says for our sins he was buried. And his body was raised on the third day.

These facts are linked together. If you take anything away - (you have no Gospel.) A cross without a resurrection is no Gospel. These things -- he died, he was buried, and he arose again constitutes the (foundation) of our Christian faith. And 12 simple men, most of them fishermen, never have turned the world upside down unless all of these facts were true.

What about the evidence of these facts. Death is not physical separation from existence but separation from God and eternity. Jesus should never have died. Quite clearly his death was not related to his own sin. But he died for our sins.

→ Christ died, is the foundation. Everybody remembering that dreadful day when the sun went down, at noonday behind the blood splotted cross - on a bloody hill said he is dead.

The hardened Roman soldiers, gamblers at the cross, said he is dead.

The curious crowd, stupid of eternal values said he is dead.

Foolish Pilate letting his own interest trample his conscience said - he is dead.

The Pharisees and the smug elders said he is dead.

The Sadducees who ignored the super-natural, or even divine hope for the ages said, he is dead.

The mob that mocked him in his agony said he is dead.

The Centurion who supervised the crucifixion said he is dead.

Mary, the woman who had pierced her soul said he is dead.

His Disciples who were stunned with the horrors of the cross said he is dead.

His acquaintances and the women who followed from Galilee beholding him from afar said he is dead.

V. 4 - And that he was buried and that he arose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

He was buried. The kingdoms about which he talked became narrow to the dimensions of the grave. The robes which men had hoped he would wear - disappeared as he occupied the tomb.

His scepter or reed, and his crown of thorns used for his coronation, were flung aside. His only throne was a cross. His only emblem was the marks of scourge on his naked back. His message was a lonely cry. His only king's cup was a sponge filled with vinegar. And then his last word and final word - death. Where all flowers are faded. On coffin lids, or trampled into the dust. Death, whose only palace is a huge place and he had been numbered among the victims. The dark tomb, the pleasure fountains had passed. He had wept over Jerusalem. And he was dead. And Paul said, he was buried.

And at that tremendous moment, when Jesus cried with a shout of victory -- it is finished. The hand of God stretched forth from Heaven and took hold of the veil of temple, and ripped it from the top to the bottom. No human hand could have done that. And the veil would have kept humanity back from the glory of the presence of God. And the veil through which only one man, once a year, on the atonement could pass in order to make a sacrifice for his own sins and the sins of the people was rent. So that all might enter the presence of God. Now because of what happened at the cross, what about these evidences that Paul brings forth of the resurrection. Without it you just cannot explain the existence of the church at all. The resurrection was vital. Immediately after the cross, the Disciples were separated. The birth and the growth of the church is one great evidence that Jesus Christ arose again.

Christ was buried and he arose according to the Scriptures.

The evidences, Paul said, are very clear.

V. 5 - He said he was seen of Cephus. Peter who had wronged Jesus, and Peter who had wept in the very earliest account of the resurrection story. The word - the empty tomb is, go your way, tell his Disciples and Peter. Mark 16:7. So the risen Lord appeared indeed unto Simon. The amazing thing, one of the first appearances of the risen Lord, was to a disciple who had denied him.

This is the wonder of love and grace. Others might have hated Peter forever.

V. 6 - After that he was seen of about 500 of the brethren, at once.

V. 7 - He was seen of James. The brother of our Lord. And the one who was in charge of the church. This is part of the evidence, he says, of the foundation of the Gospel.

Paul says that if you would like to check this story out, a great part of those 500 still remain alive. You may talk to them. It is not just a vision that some people have.

V. 7 - After that he was seen of James.

V. 8 - At last he was seen of me. And he speaks of himself as one of the least on that never to be forgotten day on the road to Damascus. When he had been persecuting the church, Jesus Christ met him. Paul has brought now all the evidences of the Gospel, the foundation, the facts that are completely unshakeable.

And he implies in V. 8 and 9, that he himself was most sinful. He persecuted the church. I merely thought myself to be right. But I was going contrary to Jesus Christ.

V. 10 - He says there was a revolution of character. By the grace of God, I am what I am. Phil. 3:8.

Also in V. 10 - There was a redirection of his life. And of his energy. He began to reach forth to the mark of the high calling. He saw the pearlie gates beginning to open. Soon he would see his Saviour face to face.

Has the foundation of the Gospel gotten ahold of you yet. Or is it just a theory in your mind and in your life. Does it really have dynamic power, in your life. This is the most moving thing in all the story of Jesus. That two of his first appearances when he arose from the tomb, were to men that had hurt him cruelly and who were sorry for it. Jesus always meets the penitent and the contrite heart far more than half way.

V. 11- The most precious thing in the world - that Jesus had appeared also to him.

He tells this in humility - he is least of the Apostles. And Paul never would have claimed that he was a self-made man. It was by the grace of God that he was what he was. And God had enabled him to do what he had been doing.

V. 12 - There were some who doubted this foundation which Paul proclaimed in the Gospel. They said flatly, dead men do not rise again.

Paul's answer is - if you take up that position, it means that Jesus Christ has not risen again. And it also means that the whole Christian faith is wrecked. The whole foundation of the Gospel is destroyed.

What was it that made Paul regard a belief in the resurrection of Jesus as absolutely essential. What was the great values and the great truths that it conserves.

There were some great facts which Paul gave attention too. And felt were necessary.

V. 14 - The first is, his preaching is vain. All of the truth that he had proclaimed is of no value. Then Christ's own testimony was untrue. He had given us the promise that I will arise again. Destroy this temple or body, and in three days I will raise it up. John 2:19.

Second, faith is vain or false. His Disciples were completely deceived. This was the keynote of their joyful testimony. They taught people and preached Jesus through the resurrection of the dead. Act. 4:2. When their Lord was crucified, the Disciples of all men, were the most miserable. Hiding in shame. Suddenly there was the most joy and courageous mortals on earth. What had happened. They had seen their Lord risen from the tomb.

Another thing, the Christian church is a gigantic fraud - it is a majestic structure without any foundation. If there is no raising on the third day - then this is the emptiest thing in the world. It is built on superstition that Christ arose from the dead. If he did not arise from the grave, then how are we

to account for the strength that he has given through the ages.

The Christian experience is a grand elution. Our assurance of forgiveness, our joy of being justified in the light of God, our peace of heart and mind, our answered prayers, our sweet fellowship with God. Our bright hopes for the world to come and all the millions in every age who have had these experiences have been fatally betrayed.

In V. 15 - he says, we have found false witnesses of God. Because we have testified in this way.

And in V. 16 - if the dead rise not, then Christ is not risen.

We, who believe, have been living in a fool's paradise. Instead of departing to be with Christ, those who have died in the faith, have perished like beasts he says.

V. 19 - If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

The joys, hopes, and visions of dying Christians have all been false.

And this word miserable, we of all men have stood with expectation - it means for us to be cast down from the high tower, of blessedness into despair and darkness.

There will be no resurrection of the dead -- our preaching is going to be vain. Faith is also vain. We have been false witnesses. And we are yet in our sins.

In V. 18 - and all who have died in faith, have perished.

The forces which crucified Jesus were (evil forces). And if there was no resurrection--Paul was saying, then these forces of evil were triumphant. And if the resurrection had not taken place, it is that very principle of the moral order.

II. FORESHADOW - V. 20-29.

V. 20
Following the foundation of the Gospel of the resurrection, Paul now launches into a foreshadow of the things to come. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become "the first fruits of them that slept". What does this really mean to be alive in the spiritual sense. It has one meaning that the Christian is one who is implanted in the power of God.

21-22
There have been two distinct circles in which man has existed. As discussed in V. 21, 22. In Adam, all men die. In Christ, there is the possibility of being alive. There is no other third possibility. It is either the natural birth, the natural Adam, or we come to the super-natural which we find in the second Adam.

There is one stream of life - but here is another. So in Christ, V. 21, all should be made alive. For since by man came death. A man came also the resurrection. So the great invasion of sin and death came by man. Now God made like unto man, into the rescue. And Jesus came, the seed of woman, to bruise the head of the serpent, to launch an attack upon the king of darkness.

The first time the (kingdom of death) was invaded, by man, in whose life there was

no sin at all. Jesus stepped down then from the throne to the cross. And he was tempted in all points as we. He tore the bars away and as Peter said on the day of Pentecost - because it was not possible, that he should be holden of it. Acts. 2:24.

We look at a giant airplane on a runway, and we think how on earth will it ever get off. There are hundreds of people, baggage, dead weight. And the engine begins to whine, and the aircraft roars down the runway. And then it goes off into the air. Has the law of gravity ceased. No. Here is the implication, that here is the law in the Christian. In Adam, all die. In Christ, all are going to be made alive. But here is a foreshadow. Christ is the first fruits. Now that goes back 2,000 years. God's salvation depends upon that fact. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then everything else is fraud. If Jesus is not risen, then our faith is empty, and our preaching is useless. And there is no hope beyond the grave for anybody. Our hope is hopeless.

But Paul says he is risen - the evidence is the first fruits. There is the foreshadow, of the resurrection of the dead. He is looking back to the day when Christ arose from the dead. He looks ahead and he says afterwards, they that are Christ that are coming - there is going to be a resurrection day.

V. 24 - Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God.

Then our preaching is not vain. Our Gospel stands good and true. Then our faith is not vain. We are not trusting in a dead saviour - but to Him who is the resurrection and the life.

Then we are not now in our sins. He died for our sins - his death paid the price. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ are not perished. Then we are not of all men most miserable. But here is the first fruits of all of them that slept. And the word translated here means that those bodies lying in the cemetery - is translated from which comes the word cemetery. Christ the first fruits, of them that slept. The harvest festival. The first fruits of their harvest. And he is brought before Jehovah God, as the law of the feast of the Passover when everyone commemorated it. The harvest, the in-gathering, ye shall bring the fruits of the first harvest unto the priest and wave before Jehovah to be accepted of you. On the morrow after the Sabbath, the priest shall wave it, Lev. 23:10-11.

The law layed it down that some sheaves of barley must be reaped from the common field. They must not be taken from the garden or the orchid, or the specially prepared soil. They must come from a typical field. When the barley was cut, it was brought to the temple. It was thrashed with soft cane so as not to bruise it. It was then parched over the fire, so that every grain was touched by the fire. It was then exposed to the wind. So that the chaff was blown away. It was then ground in a barley mill. The flour of it offered unto God. That was the first fruits. It is a very significant note. That after that was done, the new barley was to be bought and sold in the shops - and bread was to be made of the new flour. The first fruits were a sign of the coming harvest. The resurrection of Jesus was a sign of the resurrection of all believers. Just as the new barley - the first fruits were dearly offered when the new harvest came in. But it did not come until Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Years ago, there was a church in London that had a harvest thanksgiving. And some people had brought some gifts of corn, for the service. But on Saturday night there came an air raid, and the church was layed in ruins. Months passed and in the Springtime, some one noticed that on the bomb sight where that church

had stood, there were shoots of green. Summer came and the shoots flourished. And in the Autumn, there was a flourishing patch of corn. Growing amidst the rubble. Not even the bomb had destroyed and killed the life of the corn that was in its seed. Life was stronger than death. And the resurrection is the final proof that life is stronger than death. And Paul insists here on the foreshadow of the first fruits, Jesus Christ.

He used another Jewish idea - according to the story of Gen. 3:1-19, 21. Through (Adam sin) and (death came.) V. 22 - he argues the universal effect of the resurrection. By using Adam as the type of Christ, Rom 5:12, 21, Adam's death came to all men. Christ's life is possible to all men. And so the father of the whole world of men was as it were in him. And when he sinned, all sinned. But the coming of Christ broke that chain. And there are two facts that are everlasting and contrasting. Adam is sin and death. Christ is goodness and life. Now whatever we may think about that, or the thinking may be about that today, it is very convincing that Jesus Christ is the new power that came into the world to liberate men from the sin of death.

Before moving on to the closing part of this chapter, I want to say just a word about V. 29. What shall they do that are baptized for the dead. If the dead rise not at all. Why do they then baptize for the dead. Now here is a question that poses some difficulty in an interpretation of it. And there is a truth that we can get out of this. The Greek word used in this phrase means above or over. It means, instead of on, behalf of. It means over and above.

First, the meaning of the (over and above) - some scholars have said that those who get themselves baptized (over the graves of the martyrs). Now this idea would be very meaning. Being baptized on sacred ground. The thought of the unseen crowd

of witnesses all around. It is a very attractive idea. It is a lovely idea. But we do not think that this is probably the meaning of this scripture.

The second interpretation of the word (instead of or in behalf of) If we take it that way, there are three possibilities. First, those who get themselves baptized in order to fill up vacant places in the church! Which the dead have left. Now again that is a great fault. The idea of new believers - the young Christian comes into the church like a new recruit. He takes the place of a veteran. Who has served many campaigns. And that is a precious thought. The church does need re-enforcements and replacements. And new members when the membership is depleted.

Now another idea that has been suggested is, those who (get themselves baptized out of respect for an affection for the dead.

Again that is a precious idea. We know it to be true. And many of us came into the church because we knew someone whom we had loved, who had loved us, and died praying and hoping for us. That is another interpretation that might be placed on that Scripture.

Once again, there is another way of looking at it from the standpoint of questions that may have existed in that early church. That the church practiced the question of vicarious baptism. That is if a person intended to become a member, of the church, who would actually consider or maybe even made a decision - but he died. Then sometimes someone else humbled themselves and underwent baptism for him after he died. It was a kind of baptism by proxy. That really is a superstitious way of baptism. Now Paul did not give any great approval on this, and he is saying, if

there is no more direction, if there is no resurrection from the dead, the dead will not come forth.

What is the use of being baptized for the dead. Jesus Christ is alive - if not, why be baptized in the name of a dead Saviour.

If Christ is dead, there is no point in it anyways. So Paul says, if it is not true that Christ lives, then why should we be baptized.

Therefore, foreshadows of the resurrection of the dead, if there is no risen Christ, the tomb is as worthless as any tomb. There is a cross - no more than a martyrs cross.

No risen Christ, death the king of terror. - With no arrival - it is a black shadow. - And there will be no trumpet to sound. From eternal sleep. - And the whole history of Christianity is without intelligence. - If there is no risen Christ, no first fruits, no foreshadow, then there will be no seeing again of the faces of our redeemed dead. - The dear sweet faces which we have loved long since, and lost awhile. - And so we go into deep mourning and just await the final judgement with no comfort at all.

III. FINALIZATION

V. 35 - 56

I know that we are putting these hinges on pretty fast. The foundation of the

5-35 Gospel - the first 19 verses, the foreshadow which are the first fruits. V. 20-34. And the finalization of the resurrection of the dead, Paul comes on up to a victorious future, ultimate, as he expresses the victory that will come. V. 35. But some men will ask the question, how are the dead raised up. And with what body do they come. Now this opens up the opportunity for Paul to bring the final future understanding of the resurrection of the dead.

V. 36 - Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except to die. As explained in the first fruits, Christ must die first. Before he can produce. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not to the body, that shall be the bad grain. It may chance of wheat or some other grain. But God giveth of the body as it pleaseth him. To every seed, then his own body. So in this section then, we ask questions that he wants to answer. How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come. In spite of all that Paul has said, there are some people who will not be satisfied. This is the question of a skeptic.

We could think through this - some who have lavish funerals that delay the inroads of disintegration. Others whose bodies have been smashed to bits by accident. Or who have been drown in the depth of the ocean. Or there are those who have been buried by cremation. Because of the lack of cemetery space - what about them.

How are the dead raised up. We could ask the same question that Paul asked King Agrippa. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead. Acts 26:8. How do we face this question in the minds of many. How could ashes that are scattered, and elements and bones in the depths of the sea, and bodies that have gone back to mere dust, be brought together again.

How does the Holy Spirit answer these very natural questions. How are the dead raised - with what body do they come. What will it be like when we get into Heaven.

V. 36 - Paul said, oh foolish one. Paul had a brilliant understanding of the Scriptures. So he had no problem in his mind about this.

He answers the first question, how are the dead raised up, V. 36, 38. He gives a simple illustration of death. That is an illustration and example.

The second question, with what body do they come, V. 39, 43. He points out and shows us the distinctions that are essential. V. 44, 50.

It is true beyond all possible doubt that the dead are raised up. It should make a big difference on how we live our lives down here. If we know this. If dust and ashes are in fact, the end. If the cemetery is the end, we are indeed finished.

And Paul might well say, eat and drink for tomorrow we die. The dead are raised up, and if a man in his flesh must see God, if there is an appointment for him waiting for each one of us. That day is going to be important.

Paul, in dealing with them, about the resurrection body - he takes the seed in V. 36. That was put in the ground and dies, but in due time, it rises again. And it rises with a very different kind of body, from which it was sown. The seed is dissolved. But it rises with a vastly different body that God gave it. So these earthly bodies will be buried and will dissolve. Be dissolved by death. So in this verse he says, that a grain of wheat - first take it in your hand and then plant it in the ground. What happens to it. It dies, but soon you will see a green shoot. Unmistakeably it comes alive again. Not the same grain you put in but there is a plant.

It is amazing and it is a miracle. And it comes out of that grain that you put in the ground. It dies and it is quickened to life. Jesus said, except the wheat falleth into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringth forth much fruit. John 12:24. The history of the resurrection of the body is no greater than that. If you refuse to believe the resurrection of the body, then logically, you say - I don't believe in harvest. Because I don't understand the process. If you look at that grain that you put in the ground, and then in a few months, you have harvest. Here is a new life, and a new plant out of old grain. As planted in death. And you can only explain the miracle of its growth if you put God behind it.

V. 37 - The next basic principle that Paul lays down, is that in the world even as we know it, there is not one kind of body. Each separate part of creation has its own body. That argument proves that God gives to each living creature. A body that is suitable, and God will give us a body fitted in the resurrection.

V. 38 - God gives it a body, as it has pleased him. All the harvest fields of the world are eternal witness to the work of God. The Lord, Jesus, the first fruits. Think of him after the resurrection in a new body. And yet the old body. It was planted into the ground dead, it was raised a new body. Not subject to the laws of the old body and the limitations of time and space. Paul says there is no difficulty in believing the resurrection. If you believe in the harvest.

We cannot explain how God does all. But you believe in the resurrection of the grain.

V. 39 - The next basic principle he uses in life, that there is development.

Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth. All flesh on earth is not the same flesh. There is a flesh of men, beast, fish, birds. And this is true of the body.

V. 40 - There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon. Another glory of the stars.

V. 41 - 42 - There is eternal difference. This is breath-taking. You think there are no two people alike. There are no two stars alike. No two fish. No two flowers. No two blades of grass. There is an amazing distinction in the glory of the earthly forms all around us. So also, in the resurrection of the dead.

He teaches us that the difference that exists here will exist forever in the glory. A human personality may be wiped out by a disaster, or by disease - but it is preserved forever. Just as we have differed in appearances here, we'll differ there. That is why we will know one another when we get to Heaven.

We have stood by the graveside of a loved one with our hearts broken. But have we see that.

V. 42-43. Three words Paul has used to describe it. It was sown in corruption, it was sown in dishonor, it was sown in weakness. By the grave we have seen the corruption of the human body. No matter how colorful the funeral may have been, or how great the attempt may have been to take away some of the sting from it at the graveside. There is dishonor. We had witnessed the weakness. And we have put the body into the ground. To decay. It is already in the process of decaying.

Paul tells us however, there is one thing in which we will all be alike.

V. 50 - Paul says, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of Heaven. When the trumpet sounds, we shall all be lifted out of the grave. On that great day. And that body was sown in corruption is going to be raised in corruption with no disease, no pain, no blemish. It is going to be perfect. It was sown in dishonor, it is going to be raised in honor. The bodies of men and women who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, are going to become the jewels of Heaven. So the answer to Paul's question - V. 44 - there is he says a physical body. And there is a spiritual body. Right now I live in a natural body. In Heaven, I am going to live in a spiritual body. This natural body is governed by the soul. But it will be delivered in that day, and not be subjected to the endless troubles of defeats and failures here. And the spiritual body is going to be completely controlled by the spirit of God.

Think of Jesus after his resurrection as he walked down the Emmaus road - he went to the Upper Room. There had never been a resurrection from the dead until then.

You might ask what about Lazarus. Lazarus was not resurrected from the dead. He was revived from the dead. And because he still had a body that was weak and decaying, he went back into the tomb. When Christ arose, he was beyond the limitations and the weaknesses of the human body. And he comes through and did not even need to open doors.

How was Jesus brought out of the grave. And his resurrection body set free.
V. 45 - The first man, Adam, was made a living soul. The second man, Adam, a quicken

The image of the earth is indeed failure, sickness, and pain.

V. 49 - But flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.

We face the future, unless Jesus comes first for us, we know that we all will experience death. What happens then. They will put us in a coffin, and we will wait until that great resurrection day. And in that day, we will bear the image of Heaven. Yet possessed with Heaven and life now - but beyond the grave, only that which is spiritual can enter Heaven.

Paul does not mean that the unbeliever can say, that's all very well for the Christian. But I'm not going to bother about it. It doesn't matter about me.

Oh no, you won't be left. The dead who die out of Christ are not left to disintegrate in corruption. Rev. 20:12. I saw the dead small and great stand before God. Every one of them, from every race, nation, unbelievers, all are included.

They have never received the Lord from Heaven. And therefore, they die in corruption. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 20:15.

So I might ask you the question - are you still living in the first Adam. Has Jesus been implanted in your heart. Would you be fearful to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Too many people have the idea that their earthly bodies go back to dust and scatter around. And it seems impossible and fantastic -

51 but Paul proves the resurrection of the dead in this chapter. He gives us the finalization of it. That in V. 51 - behold I show you a mystery. He alerts us to all of our faculties to discover what he says. The mystery is not something that cannot be explained or something that can never be proven by intellect.

It is something that men cannot argue away. You do not find God by arguing. You never will. But here is the mystery. Paul says, we shall not all sleep. They are asleep in Jesus. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And to be with Christ is far better.

52 Then what will happen. V. 52. In a moment, suddenly the twinkling of an eye. The trumpet will sound. And the dead shall be raised incorruptible. Notice, we shall not all sleep but all shall be changed. There will be a generation which will not die, for in the midst of life, among the ordinary events of life - they will not go down through the valley of the shadow and face death. There are no dates given here. But we do not know the exact moment, which is in the purpose of God, that it will happen. It may come in our day. It could come tonight.

In case of those who have died, corruptible flesh will put on incorruption. The body that is layed aside in the tomb will be raised a new body.

Remember now, you do not inherit this incorruption - you put it on. You inherit eternal life, you put on Jesus Christ. At conversion, you put off some things and you put on some new things. The fate of your soul will also be the fate of your body. The two are partners. They separate for a little while as the body waits for the resurrection. But what happens to your spirit, one day happens to you. It is put aside in the grave, but it is raised incorruptible.

In the course of this life, death cannot touch the soul of the spirit, of a Christian. It touches the body.

Thess. says the Lord himself will descend from Heaven. And the trumpet of God and the dead shall be raised first. Chapter 4:16-17.

V. 55-57 - Is the assurance that comforts us. Oh death, where is thy sting. Oh grave where is thy victory. Paul laughs at death and at the grave. He stands before the enemy, that has been before every enemy and every human being. Except Ennoch who went and walked with God and did not come back. Elijah who was taken to Heaven in a chariot. It never would have existed apart from sin. The law of God passed the sentence of death upon Adam. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

The sting is taken out of death because sin is cancelled. And the strength of sin of the law to condemn us is removed. It is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Death is no longer an enemy of the Christian. It is an instrument of freedom. There will always be a human fear to enter the valley.

V. 58 - Does that make your heart rejoice. Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. What is the application of this message. He tells us that we are to prepare for the victory, for the great day. It tells us that we ought to perform every duty for our Lord with diligence always, abounding in the work of the Lord. Never be satisfied with just a little bit of service for him. Never be satisfied with giving him just part of our lives, but giving him the

total reign. Be sure that we work for the Lord.

Ask yourself how much of your service in the past days has been the work of the Lord. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. How much has there been a testimony of witness in your life. Have you earnestly tried to reach the perishing. How much of your life has simply been just a routine.

Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory. Victory over sin, the sting of death is sin. Over mortality. This mortal body, we become immortal. Victory over death. It will be swallowed up. And victory over the grave.

Oh grave, where is thy victory. The hour is coming in which all that are in the grave will hear his voice and come forth.

Christ is your light, you shall not walk in darkness. Christ is your joy. You shall have comfort in sorrow. Christ is your righteousness, no condemnation.

Look unto him, risen from the dead for your justification.

You will gain nothing, by further delay. Today is the tomorrow that you talked about yesterday. You said tomorrow, I will confess Christ. Do it now. Tomorrow, being saved, I will join the church. Do it now. You said tomorrow I will let the world know that I am not ashamed, nor afraid to accept him before the world.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.