

(Through the Bible) 1 Corinthians 15-16

by Chuck Smith

The resurrection from the dead is the heart of the Gospel, and Christ is the firstfruits of those who rise from the dead.

Duration: 1:24:44

Scripture: John 3:16

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the illustration of a caterpillar to convey a message about transformation and the hope of a new body. The caterpillar's desire to fly represents our longing for something better in life. The speaker emphasizes the importance of acknowledging God's will in our plans and recognizing the fleeting nature of life. He also encourages believers to remain steadfast in their work for the Lord, assuring them that their efforts are never in vain. The sermon concludes with a reminder that our earthly bodies will be transformed into incorruptible and immortal bodies when Christ returns.

Transcript

Let's turn to 1st Corinthians chapter 15. The Corinthian church was a real mess. A lot of carnality that led to divisions, a lot of party spirit, a real misunderstanding of the spiritual gifts, a lot of weird concepts.

There were some in Corinth who declared that there was no resurrection from the dead, sort of a Sadducean background perhaps. Paul, having corrected the other problems that they wrote to him about, now finally tackles the final problem of those people who were declaring there is no resurrection of the dead. So, Paul, first of all, declares that this is the heart of the Gospel.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received and wherein you stand, by which also ye are saved, if you'll keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. So the first proof that Paul gives of the resurrection is the Gospel that was preached and of the changed lives that were wrought through the Gospel.

He said, by which you are saved if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. Now, in a little while, Paul is going to tell us that if there is no resurrection from the dead, your faith is vain. You really have nothing to believe in, nothing to hope for, if there is no resurrection from

the dead.

The Gospel that Paul preached, he preached the Gospel that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. The Scriptures that he would have to be referring to would be the Old Testament Scriptures because the New Testament was not yet written. So where in the Old Testament does it speak of the death of Jesus Christ? Many places.

Psalms 22, a description of death by crucifixion. Isaiah 52, beginning with verse 12, and chapter 53, that He was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures on the third day. Now this presents a little more difficult problem.

Where in the Scriptures does it speak about Jesus rising again the third day? When they asked Jesus for a sign, He said, A wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. And so the third day and rising again, Son Jonah perhaps, as sort of an example, and yet it's really hard to tie that in a very definite way.

But if we go back to the book of Genesis, we hear God saying to Abraham, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, and offer him for a sacrifice on the mount that I will show you. Now when God said to Abraham, Take now thy son, thine only son, we have an equivalent to that in John 3.16, For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son. And you remember that Abraham gathered his servants and Isaac and they began to journey from the area of Hebron towards Jerusalem.

And they had journeyed for three days when they came into view of the mount that the Lord showed unto Abraham, Mount Moriah, which is in Jerusalem. During that three-day journey, and Isaac is an interesting type of Christ in the Old Testament. During that three-day journey in the mind of Abraham, Isaac was as dead.

We read in Hebrews 11 that by faith Abraham offered Isaac, believing or knowing that God would if necessary raise him from the dead. For God had said through Isaac, shall thy seed be called. And Isaac at this point did not have any children.

And so Abraham had such confidence in the promise of God that through Isaac shall thy seed be called that he was willing to obey the Lord if necessary to offer Him as a sacrifice, knowing that God would raise him from the dead. So it was Abraham's faith in the resurrection that caused him to be willing to obey this command of God. As they left the servants and journeyed together, father and son, toward Mount Moriah, Isaac said, Dad, we're missing something.

We've got the fire and the wood for the sacrifice, but we don't have any sacrifice. Where is the sacrifice, Dad? And Abraham said, Son, the Lord will provide Himself a sacrifice. What an interesting phraseology.

He didn't say the Lord will provide a sacrifice for Himself, but the Lord will provide Himself a sacrifice in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And so they journeyed together and Abraham built the altar and he placed Isaac thereon. And as he raised the knife, the Lord said, Okay, Abraham, far enough.

Now I know that you will not withhold from Me. Behold, there's a ram caught in the thicket. Go ahead and offer the ram as a sacrifice.

Now the interesting thing is Abraham left the servants. He said to the servants, You wait here and I and the lad will go and will sacrifice and will come again. Abraham told the servants, We're coming back.

I and the lad are going. We're going to sacrifice and we're going to come again. Faith in the promise of God.

Through Isaac shall thy seed be called. He knew that somehow, someday, if necessary, God would even raise him from the dead. And thus the belief in the resurrection after three days dead in his mind in that he had to sacrifice him according to the commandment of the Lord.

And Abraham offered the ram as a sacrifice and he declared, Jehovah-Jireh. He called the name of the place Jehovah-Jireh, for the Lord will provide. And then again he prophesied, for in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

Interesting. Not it was seen. I saw it.

I've seen it. But future, it shall be seen. Very interesting that 2,000 years later, on the top of Mount Moriah, the very same mount where Abraham offered Isaac, God provided Himself a sacrifice.

And God's only begotten Son was crucified on Mount Moriah in the spot where Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice. And so Abraham was only in a play-act drama. Play-acting what God would do in the future.

And prophesied of that day in the future when God would provide Himself the sacrifice in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And it was. So, according to the Scriptures, the Gospel I preached, Christ died, He was buried, He rose again the third day.

After His resurrection He was seen, first of all, by Cephas or Peter. Then He was seen by the twelve. And after that He was seen by more than 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part are still alive in the present time.

Some have already fallen asleep. Now after that He was seen of James. Then of all of the apostles.

And last of all, He was seen by me as one that was born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles. And I'm not really worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God I am what I am. Can't we all say that tonight? Hey, I'm not worthy what God has done for me. I'm not worthy what God has called me to do.

I heard Tony Campola talking to a group and he said, if you knew what a sinner I was, you wouldn't be sitting here listening to me. And he said, if I knew what a sinner you were, I wouldn't be talking to you. By the grace of God I am what I am.

Oh, thank God for His grace tonight. And so Jesus' appearances after His death and resurrection, showing Himself alive, the Scripture said, by many infallible proofs. Being seen by Peter.

Then by the disciples. Then by 500 at one time. Then by all of the apostles.

Then by James, probably his brother, rather than the fact that he is mentioned separately. James, the brother of Jesus, rather than the brother of John. James, his brother.

Jude, Simon. They did not really believe in Him. In fact, Mark's Gospel chapter 3 tells us that they came to rescue Him at one time.

They figured He was crazy. He's beside Himself. But after His resurrection and His appearance unto James, He became one of the pillars of the first church.

Finally, Paul said, Me, like I was born out of due season, I am the least of the apostles. I'm not worthy to be called one because of my persecution of the church. Paul bore in his heart, really, that grief of having been a persecutor of those who believed in Jesus Christ.

He stood when Stephen was stoned, consenting he voted for his death, and then he held the coats of the fellows that were stoning him. The Bible said he wreaked havoc with the church in Jerusalem and then went down to Damascus to imprison those who called upon the Lord as he was breathing out murders and threatenings against them. And as Paul probably was guilty of trying to dissuade many from their faith in Christ, even by force, now it troubled him later on when he became a believer in Jesus Christ, the fact that he had persecuted the church.

I'm not really worthy to be an apostle, but I am what I am by the grace of God. Love it, love it. And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach and so you believe. Now, notice the place of grace in Paul's life, but also the place of works. Now, there are those who talk of the grace of God totally excluding works.

There are those that even look on works as almost something wrong. It is wrong to look upon works if you are looking to your works for a righteous standing before God, because your works cannot bring you to a righteous standing before God. But, having received the grace of God, then my response to that grace is my desire to do for God whatever I can.

To work tirelessly for Him. Not to earn my salvation. Not to even earn righteousness, but just to show my love and appreciation to God for that grace that I have received.

Works have their place in the believer's life. A vital, important place in the believer's life. They can do nothing towards your salvation or righteousness, but they do much to show your love and appreciation for the grace that you have received from God.

Our problem is that we reverse things so often. We seek by our works many times to get God to respond to us. If I fast, then surely God will respond to me.

If I fast and pray, the Lord will respond. If I give to God, He'll respond to me. If I praise God, He'll respond to me.

And we are doing these oftentimes to get God to respond to us. To obligate God to us. But this is the wrong order.

God is the initiator. Man is the responder. The works that I do are not to get God to respond to me.

Lord, now, I'll do this and this and this for You if You'll do this for me. And it isn't to obligate God to have to respond to me. The works that I do are in response to what God has done for me.

Paul, having been the recipient of this grace, responding to that grace, labored more abundantly than all of the rest of the apostles. As Jesus said, He who has forgiven much, loves much. Now, if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how is it that some of you are saying there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

And the disastrous consequences of such a thing would be that if Christ is not risen, our preaching is vain, your faith is vain. We are found to be false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, who He did not raise up if the dead do not rise. For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen.

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is vain. You are still in your sins. Our loved ones who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. Our hope is in that eternal life that is ours in Jesus Christ. And if Christ is not risen, then the whole thing is down the tubes.

Faith is vain. Preaching is vain. Hope is vain.

Paul then affirms, but now is Christ risen from the dead and He's become the firstfruits of those who die. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But every man in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, and afterward they that are Christ at His coming. And then comes the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all of the rule and the authority and the power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.

So Paul here talks about Adam introducing death to the human family by his sin. In Romans chapter 5, for by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so that death is passed unto all men for all sin. Adam brought death to the human family, but Jesus has brought life.

Even as one man brought death, so by one man are many made righteous and have that eternal life and that hope of a life through Him. Christ is the firstfruits of those that rise from the dead. The word firstfruit, firstborn, often indicates not just a first necessarily in a sequential order, but the most important.

But here, of course, it's a reference to the sequential order. Christ the firstfruit. The first one to rise from the dead.

Now, prior to this, those saints of the Old Testament, when they died, were in sort of a holding tank in Hades. In the 16th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells us that there was a certain rich man who fared sumptuously every day. And there was a poor man that was daily brought to his gates, hoping for crumbs that might fall from the rich man's table.

This poor man was covered with sores, and the dogs would lick his sores. And so, Jesus painted a very pitiful sight. And the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom.

Moreover, the rich man also died, and in Hades, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeing Lazarus, the poor man, afar off, or Abraham afar off, and Lazarus being comforted there by Abraham, he said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus unto me that he might take and dip his finger

in water and touch my tongue, for I am tormented in this heat. And Abraham said unto him, Son, remember that in your lifetime you had the good things and Lazarus the evil. Now he is comforted while you are tormented.

Moreover, between us there is a fixed gulf, and it's impossible for Lazarus to go over there or for you to come over here. He said, Then I pray that you'll send Lazarus back that he might warm my brothers, lest they also come to this horrible place. Abraham said, They have the law and the prophets.

If they will not believe the law and the prophets, neither would they believe if one should come back from the dead. Now, the teaching of Jesus is showing us that prior to his death, Hades was divided into the two compartments. Those who were waiting for the promise of God to be fulfilled.

Those who were waiting the final day of judgment. When in Revelation chapter 20, death and Hades will give up the dead which are in them. Now, those who were waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled, those faithful patriarchs of the Old Testament.

Hebrews chapter 11 tells us concerning them that they all died in faith, not having received the promise. But seeing it afar off, they embraced it. They claimed that they were only strangers and pilgrims here.

Hey man, I'm looking for a city which has foundation, whose maker and builder is God. This world is not my home. I'm just passing through.

I'm looking for the city of God, the kingdom of God. And so, they died in faith not having received the promise. God having reserved a better thing for us that they, apart from us, couldn't come into the perfected state.

They could not come into the perfected state until the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could actually put away a man's sin. All they could do was cover the sin and look forward by faith to the better sacrifice that would be offered when Jesus, as God's only begotten Son, and as the Lamb of God, died for the sins of the world and put away our sins.

Now, Peter tells us in Acts chapter 2 that he descended into Hades when he died. But it was not possible that he could be held in Hades because God had given to him the promise, Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither will you allow the Holy One to see corruption. So, Peter affirmed to those in chapter 2 of the book of Acts, this same Jesus, half God raised from the dead.

Now, Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 4 that when Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth, and you remember, he had said to those Pharisees seeking a sign, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. As He was the three days and the three nights in the heart of the earth, according to Ephesians 4, He was preaching to those souls that were there in prison. And when He ascended, He led those captives, Abraham and Lazarus and all of those that were waiting there for God's promise to be fulfilled.

He led the captives from their captivity. Now, if you go back to the prophecy of the Messiah in Isaiah 61, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to open the prison doors to those that are bound. He's talking about the prison doors of death.

Christ the firstfruits of those who rise from the dead. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27, tells us, and the graves of many of the saints were opened and they were seen walking through the streets of Jerusalem

after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He led the captives from their captivity.

He opened the prison doors to those that were bound. So Christ, the Old Testament saints, at His resurrection, the firstfruits of those who rise from the dead. This company will be completed when the day of the Lord comes and Jesus is ready to return to the earth with His saints to establish the Kingdom of God.

Right now, the first resurrection is a process over a period of time. It began with Jesus Christ. He is the firstfruits.

And it continues as each child of God living and believing in Jesus Christ. As they fall asleep in Christ, the first resurrection continues. It will be completed when all of the martyred saints from the tribulation period have been fulfilled and enter the heavenly realm.

That will complete the first resurrection. The second resurrection of the unrighteous dead will not take place until the end of the thousand year millennial reign of Jesus Christ. The great white throne judgment of God, Revelation chapter 20.

As John saw the throne of God, the books were opened. Death and hell gave up the dead which were in them. And they all stood before God and they were judged according to the things written in the books.

This is the second resurrection. So, Paul gives the order here. Every man in his own order.

Christ the firstfruits. And afterwards, they that are Christ, that is coming. That is the full complement will be completed at the time that Jesus comes again.

And then will come the end when He delivers the kingdom up to the Father. When He will have put down all rule and authority and power. Now this will not take place until He has reigned on the earth for a thousand years.

When Jesus begins His thousand year millennial reign upon the earth, Satan will be bound and placed in the abyssal. But towards the end of the thousand year reign of Christ, Satan will be released out of the abyssal and will gather together the nations to war against Jesus. And at that point, Michael the archangel will stand up.

Satan will be defeated and will be cast into Gehenna. The judgment of God, the unrighteous cast into Gehenna. And now all creation in obedience under the authority of Jesus Christ.

He has now vanquished every rebel against God. You see in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. There was only one government in the universe.

The government of God. A government of light and life. And all of the created beings within the universe were subject to that government.

But one day, a brilliant, beautiful creature of God with the name Son of the Morning, Lucifer, who was perfect in beauty and perfect in wisdom and perfect in all of His ways until iniquity was found in Him, said in His heart, I'm going to exalt my throne above the stars of God. I'm going to ascend into the mount, into the congregation, the sides of the north. I'm going to be like the Most High.

And Satan, Lucifer, rebelled against the authority of God and formed in the universe a second kingdom. A kingdom that was opposed to the first kingdom in rebellion against the first kingdom. A kingdom of death and darkness.

One day, God is going to put an end or Jesus Christ will put an end to Satan's rebellion completely. And when every anti-God fool is brought into judgment and disposed, then Jesus will present this perfect kingdom to the Father. So, God has delivered or then will come the end when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even to the Father, when He will have put down all of the rule and all of the authorities and the powers that had rebelled against the authority of God.

And so in the beginning, God. One government. In the end, God.

And the one government of God again throughout the whole universe. All of the creatures in the universe once again in obedience and harmony to the one government of God. Ages without end.

And then God through the endless ages to come will be revealing unto you what is the exceeding richness of His love and grace towards you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Beautiful future. Providing the dead rise.

If the dead rise not, then, you see, we're miserable. All we've got is this rotten world. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.

And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And death and hell will be cast into Gehenna. He will have destroyed it.

For He hath put all things under His feet, but when He said all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is accepted, which did put all things under Him. Now this is the work of the Father. You remember God said to Jesus in Psalm 110, Sit thou on My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Wherefore, God has given Him a name that is above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father. God will put all things in subjection unto Him. But of course, we understand all things except God, who has put the things under the authority of Jesus.

God is accepted in here in that He is the one that has put things under the authority of Jesus. He Himself does not come under the authority of Jesus. And so, it is manifest that He is accepted, which did put all things under Him.

And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him that God may be all and in all. One government, the government of God, the government of life and life, and all things now in subjection to Him. Now, Jesus put Himself in subjection to the Father when He took upon Himself the form of a human being.

The Bible tells us that He was with God. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. And yet, He humbled Himself and took on the form of a man and came as a servant and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And that is why God highly exalted Him and gave Him this name that is above all names. So Jesus, while He was here on the earth, declared, I came not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And He said, I do always those things that please the Father.

And in the garden, He said, if it is possible that this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not My will, but Thine will be done. And so, He submitted Himself to the Father, becoming a little Lord in the angels that He might suffer death for all men. And now God has highly exalted Him.

He said, Father, glorify Me with the glory that I had with You before the worlds ever existed. And the Father responded, I have glorified Thee and I shall. And now He sits there at the right hand of the Father in glory, waiting until His enemies be made His footstool, until the Father puts all things into subjection unto Him.

But finally, when the final rebellion is put down at the end of His reign, then He will bring to the Father and present to Him that world that has been perfected through the grace and the love and the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Making it possible that we should be a part of God's eternal kingdom. And at that point, according to Paul's teaching here, He Himself will also once more subject Himself to the Father that God might be all in all.

Now, 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? This is the only place in Scripture where baptism for the dead is mentioned. It is mentioned in an argument against the argument that there was no resurrection from the dead. Now, the people in Corinth, as I said, were a mess.

They had all kinds of problems. Carnality and divisions. They had all kinds of mixed up beliefs and doctrines.

And this epistle is known as a corrective epistle in that He was correcting all of the problems that existed in Corinth. Evidently, in Corinth, there were those in the church who were being baptized for the dead. Now, there is no condemnation of the practice here, nor is there any commendation for the practice.

It's only brought up that they were doing it, but Paul is pointing out that it was totally inconsistent. Can't you see, you dummies? If there is no resurrection from the dead, then this practice that you have of baptizing for the dead, why do you do that if the dead don't rise? If there is no resurrection of the dead. And he is just showing to them that their inconsistent practices were inconsistent with their beliefs.

Now, to take this and to make it then a ritual within the church would be totally wrong. In the law of scriptural interpretation or in the laws that have been set out for scriptural interpretation called theologically the laws of hermeneutics, what do we accept for common church practice today? The law of hermeneutics declares that if it was taught by Jesus Christ, if it was practiced in the book of Acts and taught in the epistles, then we accept it for general church practice today. For instance, the Lord's Supper was taught by Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Supper was practiced in the book of Acts as they would gather together, breaking bread from house to house. And there is teaching on the Lord's Supper here in the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. Thus, taught by Christ, practiced in the early church in the book of Acts, taught in the epistles, we accept it for general church practice today and so we gather at the Lord's table and we partake together of the Lord's Supper.

Water baptism taught by Jesus Christ practiced in the book of Acts and taught in Romans 6. Thus, we accept water baptism as a legitimate ritual within the church today. Foot washing taught by Jesus Christ. We do not find any practice in the book of Acts of the church gathering and washing each other's feet,

except that Dorcas was commended because she washed the disciples' feet.

But there is no teaching of it in a doctrinal way in the epistles. Foot washing is practiced by some groups today, but from the general church practice, it has been dropped because it doesn't pass the full criteria. There are groups here and there who have foot washing services.

Now, I suppose if you lived out in the woods in Oregon or something, it might be very appropriate to have foot washing services. We almost had them here at Calvary during the hippie period, only for a different reason. We were trying to protect our carpets.

We actually did consider foot washing services during the hippie period when everybody was going barefooted. It would have been appropriate at that time, but now that we've all become formal again, no need for it. So, following this same criteria, here is a mention of it.

It isn't taught as a doctrine. It isn't commended. It isn't taught as something that should be done.

It is just an offhanded argument here showing that their practice was not consistent with their belief. And yet, the Mormons have made a very big thing over baptizing for the dead, and that is why they have the archives of the genealogies that you can go and find out all of your relatives that have died, and you can go in and be baptized for them. And of course, if you're baptized for your dead relatives, then you can save them out of hell and they can be saved if you'll be baptized for them.

And thus, it's very important that you baptize for your dead relatives to save them from the destruction. Well, I could blow your mind, but I won't. There are many Mormons who actually seek to contact their relatives to ask them for permission to be baptized for them.

And so they do get into Spiritism in seeking then to contact the dead. This is not common knowledge. It isn't done by all of the Mormons, but it is done by many of the Mormons.

And this practice of baptizing for the dead, the next step is getting their permission to be baptized for them. But it's sort of far out, and I didn't want to mention it. And, hey, why do we put our life in jeopardy every day if there is no resurrection? Sort of dumb that I've gone through all of the persecution and everything I've gone through.

Why would I do that if there's no resurrection? Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, because I'm facing death every day. If after the manner of men, I fought with the beast at Ephesus. But what advantage is it to me if the dead do not rise? Then let us follow the Epicurean philosophy, the humanist concept, let's eat, drink, for tomorrow we die.

Don't be deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Therefore, awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God, and I speak this to your shame." So, some of you really don't have this knowledge, and I'm speaking to your shame.

No. Some man will say, how are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? Now, the Bible does teach that when Jesus comes for His church, those that are asleep in Christ, will He bring with Him at His coming. So when the Lord comes to get His church, those, our loved ones, who have already gone before, will be coming with the Lord to meet us.

The Lord will bring with them with His coming. So, what body will they have when He comes? When the Lord comes for us and those, our loved ones, who have died, what kind of a body will they have? Will we recognize them? Will we know them? And Paul said, and he said this because they were saying it in sort of a mocking way. Oh, how are the dead raised? What kind of a body will they have when they come? And Paul said, Don't you realize that what you plant doesn't come to life until it first of all dies? I mean, you want to make fun of the idea of resurrection from the dead? You want to mock at the idea? He's addressing these people who were saying there was no resurrection of the dead.

Those that were affirming that it doesn't happen. And now He's saying, You fools! Nature teaches you the resurrection from the dead. That which you plant in the ground does not come forth into new life until it first of all dies.

And that which you sow, you do not sow the body that is going to be, but all you sow is bare grain. And it may by chance be wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as pleases Him and to every seed its own body.

You say you can't believe in the resurrection of the dead. Foolish! Nature demonstrates it. Plant life.

You take a seed. You put it in the ground. It germinates.

It dies. You don't plant the body that's going to be. All you plant is just a bare seed.

And now God gives it a body that pleases Him. I might hold before you an old, ugly-looking bulb. And I ask you, What in the world is that ugly, scaly-looking thing? And you say, Well, Chuck, that's a gladiola.

That's a gladiola. You've got to be kidding. No, it's a gladiola.

Are you sure? Yeah. So I take that old, ugly, scaly bulb. I put it in the ground.

I cover it with earth. And what happens to it? It dies. Germinates.

But as it dies, it splits in two. And from that cleft, there comes a little white shoot. Roots go down.

The little white shoot comes up. As soon as it hits the air, it turns green. It grows up into a stalk.

Buds come out on it. And then they begin to open into the most beautiful colored blossoms. Purple.

White. Variegated red and white. Red.

Pink. I say to you, what is that beautiful white flower with the beautiful variegated red in it? And you say, Chuck, that's a gladiola. Oh, come on.

What do you take me for? What do you mean that's a gladiola? You told me that ugly, scaly old thing was a gladiola. Now you're trying to tell me this beautiful flower is a gladiola? You've got to be kidding. You see, you plant the bare seed.

God gives it a body that pleases Him. You didn't plant the beautiful blossom. You didn't take the beautiful flower and blossom and put it in the ground and cover it with earth.

All you planted was a bare bulb that died, but has now come forth in a new body given to it by God, a body that pleases God. So you didn't plant the body that was going to be. All you planted was a bare grain.

God has now given it a new body that pleases Him. And Paul said, so is the resurrection from the dead. So one day, when you see that gorgeous creature with a lot of curly hair, and someone asks you, who's that? Someone says, oh, that's Chuck.

Oh, come on. You're putting me on, you know. Hey, just blossomed out, man.

Now, all flesh is not the same flesh. There's a flesh of men, a flesh of beasts, another of fish, and another of birds. We all have different kind of meat.

There are also celestial bodies or heavenly bodies, and there are terrestrial or earthly bodies. And the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon.

You see, the stars and the planets are different. The one has its own energy and life-giving force going forth from it. The other is just a planet, depending on the energy that's coming.

But different bodies, different forms in the heavens, different celestial bodies. And one star differs from another star in glory. Now, so also is the resurrection of the dead.

The seed, or we are planted, actually this old body he's talking about now, is sown in corruption, but it's going to be raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it will be raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body, and there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. I am living now in a natural body. The real me is not this body.

The real me is spirit. But the body is an instrument that God has given to me by which I might express me. So what I am, what I feel, what I think, I can relate to you because of my body, and you in turn can relate to me what you are and what you feel through the medium of your body.

And so through the medium of our bodies we come into relationships with each other. I get to know you. I get to understand you.

I come to appreciate you. I come to admire you. I come to love you.

That's what God intended. That we come into meaningful, loving relationships by the medium of our bodies. But the body isn't me.

Just the medium by which I express myself. And one day this old corruptible body is going to be planted in the ground. This weak body is going to be planted in the ground.

This dishonorable body is going to be planted in the ground. That I'm going to be raised in glory, in incorruption, and in honor. For there is a natural body.

It will be planted in the ground, but there is also a spiritual body. And I have a new body waiting for me. Now as we, in a couple of weeks, we'll be getting to 2 Corinthians 5. Paul goes on with this very same lesson.

And he said, We know that when this earthly tent, the body in which we presently live, is dissolved, that we then have a building of God that is not made with hands, that is eternal in the heavens. He's talking about

the new body that I have. God has prepared a new body for me.

A building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So then, we who are in this body do groan, earnestly desiring to move out of them. Not that I would be an unembodied spirit, but I want to move into that new building, that new body.

I want to be clothed upon with that new body which is from heaven. For I know that as long as I'm living in this body, as long as Chuck is living in his old body, I am absent from the Lord, but I would choose rather to be absent from this body and to be present with the Lord in that new body. Jesus said, In my Father's house are many mansions.

I'm going to prepare one for you. He's talking about that new body that He's gone to prepare for you. Glorious new mansion my spirit's going to move into.

Now, I am always interested in the capacities of this body. I've sought to find the limits of the capacities of this body. And it's always interesting to find out just how high this body can jump.

How fast it can run. And things of that nature as you test your body to its limits. It'll be very interesting to discover the limits of our new bodies, which I'm sure are vastly superior to these.

Now, there's the natural body. There's the spiritual body. And so it is written, verse 45, The first man Adam was made a living soul, but the last Adam, Jesus Christ, was made a quickening spirit.

And the Greek there is hard to translate. Is made a making alive spirit. A spirit that makes alive.

How be it? That was not first, which is spiritual. The first was Adam, the fleshly. And then, afterwards, that which is spiritual.

So the first man is of the earth. Earthy. The second man, Jesus, is the Lord from Heaven.

So I received a body from Adam. One of these days I'm going to receive a new body from Jesus. Fashioned into His image.

Into His likeness. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be, but we know when He appears, we're going to be like Him.

The second is from the Lord. The spiritual. The heavenly.

And as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy. And as the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly.

But flesh and blood can't inherit the kingdom of Heaven, so I've got to have a new body. A new body that will be fashioned like to the body of Jesus Christ. His spiritual, heavenly body.

That's what my new body will be like. Now, when God made the body in which you presently live, He made it out of the earth. Dost thou art to dust thou shalt return was spoken of the body of man.

It came out of the earth and the same 17 elements that make up the dirt outside are the same 17 elements that make up your body. One little kid when his mom told him that, you know, we were made out of dust, came running into the kitchen all excited a few days later and he says, Mama, mama, come quick. I just looked under the bed and someone's coming or going.

But that was spoken of the body, not of you. Not of the Spirit. This body was not only made out of the earth, but it was made for the earth.

Of the earth, earthy. So God designed your body to exist in the environmental conditions of the planet earth. Your body is designed to withstand 14 pounds of pressure per square inch.

Your body is designed to take the oxygen out of this 78-29 nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere in which we live, 1% neon-freon and some other gases. Designed for the earth. The body wasn't designed for space.

It wasn't designed for the stratosphere. It wasn't designed for the moon or Mars or Venus or Jupiter. It was designed only for the earth.

Now, to take your body out of the earth, you've got to take artificial environment with you or you can't survive. Those men who went to the moon had to take artificial environment with them. You saw the pressure suits, the space suits, to maintain the 14 pounds of pressure per square inch.

You saw the tanks of nitrogen and oxygen on their backs so that they could have that same balance of atmosphere. They had to take all of the artificial environment to recreate the earth's environment in order to survive on the moon because the body wasn't made for the moon. Your body wasn't made for heaven.

Flesh and blood can't inherit the kingdom of heaven. Your body was made for the earth. So, God wants to bring you into His glorious presence in the heavens.

In order to do that, rather than outfit you with a space suit and give you nitrogen and oxygen tanks, heavy shoes to clomp around in, He's just made a new body for you that is designed for the environmental conditions of heaven. So, for the child of God, death is called sleep because all you do is move out of the old body, the tent, into the new house that God has prepared for you. Just that simple.

Notice again, the body that comes out of the ground is not the body that you planted. All you planted was a bare grain. God gives it a body that pleases Him.

I will have a new body. I don't know if it will look anything at all like this body and I really don't care. It's going to please God and I know it will please me.

I expect improvements. Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. That is, this corruptible body cannot inherit the incorruption.

Now behold, I show you a mystery. We're not going to all sleep or we're not going to all die, but we're all going to be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So Paul here is now bringing them a new revelation, a mystery, something that hasn't been revealed by the Lord up to this point, and that is that there's going to be one day a glorious transformation of the children of God. We're not going to all sleep or die, but we're all going to be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.

This is the event called the rapture when all of us will be changed and this corruption will put on its incorruption. This mortal will put on its immortality. 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, death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? For the sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. We will be changed.

We will receive a new body adapted for the heavenly environment. One more illustration and then we must move on. A caterpillar has an interesting little body that is designed to crawl on the earth.

And that little caterpillar crawls through the fields and I've watched them as they cross the highways on hot summer days. And I've walked across the road on hot summer days and that black asphalt can get awfully hot and I can imagine a little caterpillar with all of those feet walking across the highway having crossed through the fields could probably be saying, Oh, I am so tired of hot, dirty feet. I wish I could fly.

And that little caterpillar might try to fly. It might climb up a tree and out on the twig and jump and wiggle as fast as it can. But the body is not designed aerodynamically.

It is designed only to crawl on the ground or up the side of the wall. And so the body falls. But one day that little caterpillar crawls up the wall of your house and exudes a little glue and sticks itself under your window sill and spins a chrysalis around itself.

And if after a period of time you watch that chrysalis hanging there, you'll see it begin to jerk. Convulsive kind of jerks. If you continue to watch it, soon you will see it burst open and beautiful gold and black wings will unfurl.

And it will perch there for a moment on the chrysalis. And then that tiger swallowtail butterfly will begin flying around the yard, over the fence, in a way. What's happened? A metamorphosis.

A change of body that has allowed it to exist in a totally new environment. No more hot, dirty feet. It can now fly.

As I look around this world in which we live and I see the mess, I sometimes say, God, I'm so tired of hot, dirty feet. I wish I could fly. I show you a mystery.

We're not going to all sleep, but we're all going to be changed in a moment in a twinkling of an eye at the last drop. And this corruption will put on incorruption and this mortal will put on immortality and I'm going to soar through the skies to forever be with my Lord. When He comes back to reign on the earth, I'll come back, but I'll have my new body then.

The new capacities and who knows what it is going to be. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. One glorious thing about what you do for the Lord, it's never in vain.

You know, I've put time and energy and all into projects and worked hard only to see them just when you think, ah, we've got it made, and then just watch the whole thing crumble. All of that energy, all of that time down the tubes. And you think, wow, what a waste of time and energy.

You can never say that about anything you do for the Lord. Your labor for the Lord is never in vain. Never in vain.

You say, but they didn't believe or they didn't receive. That's alright. God doesn't pay commissions.

Only salaries. He pays you for that labor that you did not for the results of the labor, just for the fact that you labored for Him. Therefore, abound in the work of the Lord because it's never in vain.

Now Paul writes to them. He wants to go to Jerusalem and he wants to take money with him from the Gentile churches as a gesture of goodwill because the saints in Jerusalem have gone through some real heavy times. And there's a real financial need in the church in Jerusalem.

And they have sort of a standoffish thing with the Gentiles. So Paul is hoping that this will break down that attitude that they have when he can come with a very generous offering from the Gentile churches to show the Jews there that hey, they are brothers. They love you because we're all a part of the body of Christ.

And so he is writing to them now about taking up a collection for the saints that are in Jerusalem as he had asked also the churches in the area of Galatia. Now he said on the first day of the week, which would seem to indicate that they did gather together on Sunday, let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him that you don't take any collections when I come. Paul didn't want them taking offerings while he was there.

He wanted them to do this in advance before he got there. And when I come, whoever you shall approve by your letters, I will send them to bring your liberality to Jerusalem. And if it is necessary that I go also, I will take them with me.

Now I will come unto you when I will pass through Macedonia, for I am going to pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide with you. In fact, even spend the winter with you that you may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

For I will not see you now by the way, but I trust to tarry a while with you if the Lord permit." Now Paul's plans here are all loose. Hanging loose. Whatever the Lord permits.

Now this is what I'm hoping to do. This is what I plan to do. I'm going to pass through Macedonia, Upper Greece, and I'm going to come on down there to Corinth.

So I want you to have this offering all set. And I plan to spend maybe the winter there with you if the Lord permits. You know, it's always good when you're walking with the Lord to just hang loose.

Whatever the Lord has in mind. I think that we make a mistake sometimes in getting so set in routines that we're not available for God to change our plans. You know, a good way never to be disturbed is to always expect to be disturbed.

If I'm always expecting God to disturb me at any time, then I'm never disturbed when He does. But if I try to so order my life down to every last little facet, then I'm really disturbed when I am disturbed. But if I'm expecting to be disturbed, then I'm never disturbed.

Because I'm expecting. So, James said, go to now you who say, hey, tomorrow we're going to do this and this and this. He said, you should rather say, if the Lord wills tomorrow, we will do this and this because you don't know what tomorrow holds.

Life is but a vapor. It just appears for a moment and is gone. So you really don't know what tomorrow is.

So, better to say, well, if the Lord wills. And so, Paul here, if the Lord permits, this is what I am planning to do, providing the Lord permits and the Lord wills. But he's leaving the options open for God to guide him.

And this is what I am intending, this is what I'm hoping, this is what I'm planning, if the Lord permits. But I'm going to tarry here at Ephesus until Pentecost. That would be until June.

Then hoping to come on over to Macedonia, passing on down, and spend the winter. Corinth is a great place to spend the winter. And so spend the winter there in Corinth before I take off for Jerusalem.

Desiring, of course, to be back in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost for a great door, an effectual door is open unto me, and there are many adversaries. I love that.

I'm going to stick around here because there's a lot of problems. A lot of enemies. A lot of adversaries.

So, hey, this is rich. I'm going to stick here for a while. You know, where we face adversaries, time to run, you know.

A lot of adversaries around. Let's get out of here. But it was a challenge to Paul.

Oh, that we would be challenged more for the work of the Lord. There's an effectual door, but there are a lot of adversaries. But oh, the opportunities are so great.

I'm going to stick around here for a while. Things are really cooking, you know. Opportunities are great.

A lot of adversaries, but the opportunities are great. Now, if Timothy comes, see that he might be with you without fear. Don't intimidate him.

He's a young man. For he works the work of the Lord as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him.

Now, you remember when Paul wrote to Timothy, he said, let no man despise your youth, but be thou an example unto the believer in your godliness and in your walk and all. And now he is writing to the church and saying, now don't despise. He's just a young man.

But he is laboring for the Lord even as I do. And Paul wrote of Luke in another epistle, I really don't have anyone who has the same burden and mind that I do than Luke. I mean, Luke was just really a pattern of Paul.

He had caught the same vision of Paul. And Paul said there's really no one that sees things quite as much like me as does Timothy. So he is writing to them.

Receive Timothy. He's serving the Lord just like I do. Don't despise him.

But conduct him forth in peace that he may come unto me, for I look for him with the brethren. So help him along in his way because I'm waiting for him and looking for him. As touching our brother Apollos.

Now you remember in the beginning of the epistle, Paul spoke about Apollos and some were saying I'm of Cephas, I'm of Peter, I'm of Apollos, I'm of Paul. And he said one plants, one waters, God gives the increase. I planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase.

He who plants is nothing, he who waters is nothing. It is God who gives the increase. Now, Paul is writing to them concerning Apollos.

Now touching our brother Apollos. I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren, but his will was not at all to come at this time. But he will come when he shall have a more convenient time.

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, be ready like men, be strong. Stand up like men actually. Let all your things be done with love.

So even as Paul closes so many of his epistles, you remember Romans 13, he got into these short little exhortations. The last of Thessalonians, he gets in the short little exhortations. So here, short little exhortations now.

Watch. Stand fast in the faith. Be strong like men or stand like men.

Be strong. Do everything with love. And I beseech you, brethren, you know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of... I love that.

What a great addiction. They've addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. That you submit yourselves unto such and to everyone that helps with us and labors.

I am glad for the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and of Achaicus, for that which was lacking on your part, they have supplied. So I appreciate these fellows coming with the supplies that they brought. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours.

Therefore, acknowledge ye them that are such. Now the churches of Asia, Paul was at Ephesus, you remember, they salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you.

Paul first met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth. They were converts of Paul there in Corinth, it would appear. He first met them there.

Then they went on to Ephesus and worked with Paul in Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla salute you in the Lord with the church that is in their house. Churches don't have to meet in buildings.

They can meet under trees. They can meet in houses where two or three are gathered together in His name. You've got a church.

The Lord is there gathering to worship Him. And so the church that is in their house greets you. All the brethren greet you and greet one another with a holy kiss.

The salutation of me, Paul, with my own hands. So Paul had dictated the letter up to this point and now he takes the pen out of the hand of the secretary there who he's been dictating the letter to and squinting bad eyes, he says, I'm going to write this in my own hand. And so the big scribbly letters because he can't see very well and so they really recognize, yeah, this is Paul.

Look at that. So the salutation of Paul is with my own hand. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.

Let him be anathema. Anathema is a curse. Any man who doesn't love the Lord Jesus Christ is really a curse.

Don't maranatha the Lord cometh. This is the mental attitude that we are to have at all times. The mental attitude with which we live in this materialistic society.

The mental attitude as we face the materialism of the world. The Lord cometh. We are in the world.

We are not to be of the world. We are to have our every contact with the world as light as possible, realizing that the Lord is coming. Don't get too involved in the temporal material things.

Get more involved in the eternal spiritual things. As we get into 2 Corinthians, Paul will tell us, for we look not at the things which are seen, they are temporal, but the things which are not seen, they are eternal. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus. So be it. Glorious, 1 Corinthians.

And next week, or following week, we begin 2 Corinthians, first couple chapters. And you'll find that it will also be a very fascinating epistle. You know, it's always exciting to realize that our next meeting could very possibly be in the air for maranatha.

The Lord is coming. And so may the Lord be with you and bless you this week. May the Word of God just dwell in your hearts richly through faith.

And may you begin to comprehend with the saints just how much God really does love you. And may you begin to experience more and more God's touch of love and power in your life as you seek to walk with Him in a way that is pleasing unto Him. God bless you.

Fill you with His love. In Jesus' name.

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