

A Call to Full-Sized Christianity

by Roger Ellsworth

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being full-sized in Christianity, which means being committed, serving, and having faith in one's relationship with God.

Duration: 30:19

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 15:1, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 4:14, 1 Timothy 4:16, Titus 2:1

Topics: "Christianity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher urges the congregation to be full-sized Christians in their faith, service, and confidence. He emphasizes the importance of not downsizing or cutting back in these areas, especially in a time of downsizing. The preacher draws his conclusion from Paul's teachings on the resurrection of the Lord, urging the congregation to be steadfast and immovable. He calls on them to have full-sized faith, to serve the Lord wholeheartedly, and to have confidence in the work they are doing for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Please find again 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and we're looking today at verses 57 and 58, and the sermon has the title today, Full-Sized Christianity, Full-Sized Christianity. And I'm using the term full-sized as opposed to a term with which we're familiar. You've heard about downsizing, haven't you? Well, I'm calling you to full-sizing today.

When we hear that term downsizing or downsized, it usually is used in connection with an employer laying off employees, and this has become a very familiar term in our society the last several years because of the economic hardships that have become commonplace. And so it's not all unusual for us to pick up a newspaper or to turn on the news on television and see or hear that word downsized. You may pick up the newspaper and read that this company has downsized and that they have laid off 35 people, or you may turn on your television and hear a reporter say, this company is in the process of downsizing.

And so it has become a part of our vocabulary, an all-too-well-known part of our vocabulary. My concern is that there are many Christians who are downsizing today. And ladies and gentlemen, the need for those of us who are Christians is not to be downsizing.

The need for us is to be full-sized Christians. And I just wonder how it is with you. I wonder if you are in the process of downsizing today.

I wonder if you're in the process of cutting back. I wonder if you're in the process of slowing down. I wonder if you're in the process of slacking up.

Cutting back, slowing down, slacking up. Those terms, I think, would have to apply to many today who profess the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I just take you back, brother in Christ or sister in Christ, to that time when you found the Lord.

Can you remember that time? For most of us, it's been quite a number of years ago. Now, some here today would have to say, well, I was saved a few months ago. I was saved just a few years ago.

And those who were saved only a few months ago or a few years ago would be able to quickly respond, yes, yes, I remember exactly what it was like whenever I first came to know the Lord. But as I said a moment ago, most of us would have to say it's been a long time ago. So we might have to work just a little bit to refresh our memories at this point.

But I dare say that all of you who are saved today can recall to some degree what went rushing through your mind at that time. You just, you found it just incredible, just almost beyond belief, almost beyond comprehension that Jesus Christ would pluck you from eternal destruction, would make you part of the family of God, part of the kingdom of God. Is it coming back to you? Do you recall how that gratitude just flooded into your heart and into your soul? And I talked about this some time ago here about how that at that time you found yourself thinking that you could not be asked to do something for the Lord Jesus that you would not be willing to do.

Well, some of us I think would have to say it's not that way now. We'd have to say we're in the process of downsizing. It's easy to get involved in downsizing in our commitment to Christ, isn't it? Perhaps you have gotten disappointed with a brother or sister in Christ.

You know, Christians can do that, can't they? They can disappoint us. I've been disappointed in some of my brothers or sisters and sisters in Christ. Haven't you at one time or the other? And I'll go farther.

I not only have been disappointed from time to time in brothers and sisters in Christ, I have been from time to time a disappointment to my brothers and sisters in Christ. I mean, I know that this is true. People have looked at me and have gotten disappointed.

And oftentimes our reaction when we're disappointed with a brother or sister in Christ is just to say, well, I'm going to downsize. It's also possible to get discouraged with the results. We weigh in labor for the Lord.

We work. We see it seems so few good things happening. And oftentimes after we do that for a substantial period of time, we put forth effort and put forth effort and very little seems to be happening as a result of our effort.

It's, I say, quite easy to just say, well, I'm going to cut back. I'm going to downsize. It may be that some difficult circumstances have come your way.

It may be that you expected the Christian life to mean that you would have no difficulties, or at least the difficulties of life would be lessened. But you profess faith in Christ and you didn't find a lessening of difficulties. You found rather an increase in difficulties.

I've often said Christianity solves some problems. Yes, it does. Thank God for that.

It solves big problems. But also Christianity creates problems that we never had before. Sometimes we tend to forget that the Lord Jesus equated becoming his disciple, becoming a Christian with denying ourselves and taking up his cross and following him.

I tell you, Christianity creates some problems that we didn't have before. And oftentimes people, because of the difficulties that come flooding into their lives, get disillusioned with their Christian faith. And their response is to say, well, I'm just going to cut back.

And we could go on and on, listing reasons that people are in the process of downsizing. Some people, let's just be candid about it, get so occupied with the things of the world. They just get so busy.

And this is very common in these days, to hear people talk about, well, I'm just so busy. You'd think we're the first generation of people who have ever lived who ever had anything to do. And we've got more labor-saving devices and more leisure time than any generation that preceded us.

But you'd think that we're the busiest people who have ever occupied the human stage. It's not that we're so busy. It's just that we allow our lives to be cluttered up with a lot of things that we ought to get rid of.

And we call it busyness. Well, this is what happens to a lot of people. They get busy with things and their response to their busyness, they don't seem to have enough time to do everything that they think that they should be doing.

The key word is they think. And so their response to their busyness is to say, well, I've got to cut back somewhere. Isn't it amazing how when people decide that they have to cut back somewhere, it seems like God gets the ax right off the bat.

I've got to cut back somewhere, so guess what? I'm going to cut back in my service to the Lord. I'm going to cut back in my service to the church. I'm going to cut back there.

Well, there are all kinds of reasons given for downsizing. Paul here, when we come to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, is wrapping up his letter to the church at Corinth. And Paul here in wrapping up his letter calls these readers to full-sized Christianity.

He wants them to be full-sized in their Christianity, which is another way of saying that he warns them here about downsizing, downsizing in their Christianity. And as we examine Paul's words here, primarily in verse 58 of 1 Corinthians chapter 15, we can say that Paul wanted the Corinthians to be full-sized Christians in three areas. And I want to just share these three areas with you today.

And I want to join the Apostle Paul. Paul is calling the Corinthian believers to be full-sized Christians. And I want to stand, as it were, with Paul, stand with him shoulder to shoulder.

And I want to make his call my call. And I want to press it upon you. I want to call you, Parkview family, to be full-sized, full-sized in your Christianity.

In this day of downsizing, I'm urging you not to downsize in these three areas. And what are these three areas? Well, first of all, there's the area of faith. And secondly, there is the area of service.

And thirdly, there's the area of confidence. And I think that you will see all three of these in this 58th verse. In other words, I'm calling you to be full-sized in your faith.

Calling you to be full-sized in your service. Calling you to be full-sized in your confidence. Now, do you have verse 58 there still in front of you? Well, look at it with me, please, and see if you can find these three things that I have just mentioned.

Parkview family, I'm calling you to be full-sized in your faith. That's the first thing. Now, some of you may be looking at that 58th verse and you may be saying, well, pastor, I don't see Paul saying anything there about being full-sized in faith.

Well, he begins the verse by saying, therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable. Be steadfast, immovable. Now, the key word in that verse is therefore.

You probably years ago learned this little rule of biblical interpretation, didn't you? When you see the word therefore, you should ask what it is there for. And Paul is drawing a conclusion here. And Paul is drawing this conclusion on the basis of what he has been talking to them about.

And what is it that Paul has been talking about? Well, if you will look at this 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, you'll find that Paul is talking about the great central doctrine of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Jesus. And he, with that in place, he goes on to talk about our resurrection, the resurrection that awaits all believers. Isn't it glorious, ladies and gentlemen, to ponder this because Jesus Christ arose from the dead.

All who belong to him are guaranteed to arise from the dead. Jesus is the guarantee of our resurrection. Paul calls him the first fruits.

He's the first fruits of those who sleep. He's the guarantee that there'll be a whole crop of resurrections unto eternal life and unto eternal glory. So Paul is dealing here with doctrine, and he's really dealing here with the central core of the Christian faith.

And with all of that doctrine in place, Paul says, therefore, therefore, he's drawing a conclusion. He's saying to them, be steadfast and immovable. With, he's put doctrine down, and he says, be steadfast and immovable.

Be full-sized in your faith. Don't give up the doctrinal core of Christianity. That word steadfast comes from a Greek word, which means to be seated, to be seated, or to be settled, if you please.

And that word immovable comes from a Greek word, which means to be motionless. And so Paul is essentially saying this, now I've delivered to you all of this doctrine, and I want you now to hold to this doctrine. I want you to be settled in it.

I want you to be seated on it, as it were. I want you to be immovable. Don't be moving about with every wind of doctrine.

He warns about that in another place, being carried about by every wind of doctrine. You know people like that, don't you, who every time a new and novel and unusual teaching comes along, off they go. They're not seated.

They're not motionless. Off they go. They're carried away.

They're in motion now. And Paul says, essentially says to them, I have given you this doctrine, and you be settled in it and settled on it. And don't be carried about.

Be motionless. Some of you may be saying, well, pastor, I'm just not sure that you've made the point that Paul's talking about being full-sized in our faith. Well, let me take you back to 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 37, where Paul says, if anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

And essentially what you have Paul saying here is, I have given you all of this doctrine, all of this doctrine, and I want you to now hold to the doctrine that I have given you. Acknowledge, he says, that this doctrine comes from the Lord. It's not just a product of my own imagination.

It's not just me speculating about things. No, I have written to you about things, and all the things that I have written to you are from the Lord. And so you be settled.

You be steadfast. You be seated. You be motionless.

I tell you, that word therefore takes you back to all the doctrine that Paul has established, and it's doctrine that Paul has in mind when he says, be steadfast, be motionless. Now, perhaps you're saying, is this really a necessary emphasis today? I think it is. I tell you, I'm concerned because so many Christians seem to be so quick to give up ground, give up ground, to give up doctrines that used to be considered to be central to the Christian faith.

Back when I began preaching many years ago now, it was unheard of for Christians to deny things that are often denied today. I think it would have been very hard in those days to find anyone who would deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. That was considered to be an essential doctrine of the Christian faith.

But lo and behold, times have changed, as they say, and it's not all that unusual now to hear people say, well, I'm not so sure that the virgin birth, that we should believe that. I could go further. I can tell you, back years ago when I began preaching, that it was virtually impossible to find a Christian who would deny the sinless life of Jesus.

Are you aware that now, in recent months and years, polls have been released, polls that check the beliefs of professing Christians, and many of these polls indicate that there's been slippage on this matter of the sinless life of Jesus. And now an alarming number of professing Christians say, well, Jesus probably made mistakes, which is kind of a delicate way of saying Jesus probably did wrong, which is a delicate way of saying Jesus probably sinned. Oh, I tell you, my friends, in this day in which many are abandoning the church, we who are in the church must not be abandoning the faith.

We must be holding to the faith. I can tell you another area where there has been slippage. There was a time in which it would have been practically impossible to find a Christian who would deny the finality of Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior.

You may be saying, what do you mean finality? I mean by that that Jesus is the only way of salvation. We could call it exclusivity. He is the exclusive Savior.

There's no other Savior. I tell you, whenever I started in the ministry back many years ago, it would have been hard to find someone who would have denied that Jesus is the only Savior. He's the only Savior.

Now you find alarmingly people who profess faith in Christ saying, well, there are probably many ways to be saved. Jesus is one way among many. Where did we get the idea that Jesus is the only way of salvation? I'll tell you where we got it.

We got it from Jesus, who said over there, don't you remember in John chapter 14, where he said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me. That's clear enough for me to understand.

Isn't that clear enough for you to understand? And if Jesus taught that and we claim to be his followers, then I tell you that we are obliged, we're obligated to stand where Jesus stood. Well, Paul here then, after laying out the central doctrines of the Christian faith, calls these Corinthians not to downsize. He calls them to be full-sized.

He says be steadfast, be settled, be immovable, be motionless. And so that's one area in which we are to be full-sized Christians. We're to be full-sized in our faith.

Paul constantly in his letters to Timothy and Titus calls those young men to sound doctrine, and he warns about, as I've already said, being carried about by every wind of doctrine. Oh, my friends, let's take home to our hearts what the Apostle Paul said to Timothy and Titus, and let's make sure that we are full-sized in our faith. By the way, the blessing of being a Christian is in large measure in proportion to your degree of faith.

I've often put it to you in the words of Charles Spurgeon, who used to say, brethren, be great believers. Little faith will take your souls home to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your souls. And so may I urge you in this day when many are renegotiating Christianity, and many are selling off this part, and they're selling off that part, and they're giving up this doctrine, and they're giving up that doctrine, may I simply say that it is my desire that we here at Parkview be full-sized in our faith.

Now, having said that, I want to come to the second thing, and this is more obvious here in the text. Look at it again, verse 58, where Paul calls us to be, calls them, and also calls us to be full-sized in our service. You see that phrase there in the work of the Lord.

Have you ever wondered what that word abounding means? How easy it is for us just to read words in the Bible without thinking about what we're reading, without inquiring into these things, and we rob ourselves of blessing because we don't really inquire as to, we don't think about what we're reading. Oh, it's so good to have a good dependable set of commentaries that we can keep with us, and as we read our scriptures, read right along in our commentaries, and find insight into these things. That word abounding that Paul uses there simply means exceeding requirements, exceeding requirements.

It means, it refers to overflowing or overdoing. It refers to going beyond what is expected, going beyond what is expected. Now, I tell you, my friends, God did not save us just so we can sit.

My dad drilled this in my noggin from the time that I, well, he drilled it in my noggin ever since, for all those years that I was growing up and farther back than I can even remember. And dad used to say, we're saved to serve, saved to serve, saved to serve. Did you all have parents or pastors and teachers who drilled that into you? We're saved to serve, saved to serve.

I grew up hearing that, saved to serve. And there's work for us to do. There's work for us to do.

God has given you, brother in Christ, he's given you, sister in Christ, work to do. And he expects you to do this work. What is the work that, of the Christian? What's the work that we are to do? What does it mean to serve the Lord? Well, serving the Lord essentially comes down to doing, to any attitude or any act, any attitude or any act that advances the kingdom of Christ can be called service to the Lord.

Any attitude, any act. And the Lord calls us to have attitudes that will advance his kingdom. And he calls us to act, to do things that will advance his kingdom.

And not just to, to say, well, how little can I do? This is something that concerns me in great measure these days. There are so many in our churches who seem to, to want to, to do just as little as they can do. You're, you're saved because Christ did as much for you as he could do.

He did as much. He, he went to the cross of Calvary and there he drank the cup of the wrath of God until it was dry. He did not go to the cross of Calvary saying, now how little can I, can I do? He, he did not shirk the cross.

He did not go around the cross. And you tell me that your response to such a savior is to say that you want to do as little as you can do. How are you doing in this area of service today? Are you downsizing? Are you cutting back in church attendance? Are you cutting back in giving your money to the kingdom of Christ? Are you cutting back in praying for the ministry of the church? Are you cutting back in ministering to the needs of those around you in the name of Jesus Christ? Are you downsizing? The call is to be full-sized in service to the Lord.

Well, there's one other area here, and I think that it is also very obvious, and that is the area of confidence. And I'm so glad that Paul put this in the verse. See how the verse ends? We're talking about verse 58 in 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

He says, knowing, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. He says, you can serve the Lord with confidence that your service is accomplishing something.

It's not for naught. It's accomplishing something. Knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Well, it may be that we'll have to get home to heaven just to see how much we did accomplish in our service to the Lord. We can't always tell. And sometimes we, as I said a while ago, downsize because we get to looking around and it seems as if our service is not accomplishing anything for the Lord.

I've had people say to me over the years, well, pastor, I've served and served and served, and I can't put my finger on anything that I have accomplished. Well, remember that human perspective is always limited and things are not always as they seem. Eternity will tell the story, won't it? And some of us, some of you are in for some very pleasant surprises when you finally come home to heaven and you stand in the presence of the Lord of glory who bought you with his own precious blood.

And there in the presence of the Lord, you learn that those things that you did to advance the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ actually accomplished things. Things that you did not realize at the time. That money, which you seem to need so much for your own comfort, you went ahead and gave to the Lord Jesus to advance his kingdom, went far beyond where you imagined and it helped a missionary preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and people were saved.

And you're not going to know about it until you get home to heaven. And that class that you taught and didn't seem to be accomplishing anything in the process was actually the means of putting a fire in the heart of a young person. And now that young person has gone out to serve the Lord and many people have come to the knowledge of the Lord as a result.

And you will know then that your labor was not in vain in the Lord. Nothing that you do for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ is wasted. And God's people said, let's bow together for prayer.

Father, help us today to in this day of downsizing, help us, Father, to be full-sized Christians. Help us, Father, to not be cutting back. Help us not to be slowing down.

Help us not to be slacking up. But Father, help us to be renewed these days in our zeal to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing as we serve that our labor is not in vain. May, Father, we be here at Parkview, full-sized Christians, full-sized in our faith, full-sized in our service, and full-sized in our confidence that you're using us to achieve good things.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27525.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/roger-ellsworth/a-call-to-full-sized-christianity/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net