

Also means goodbye.

Well, good morning. All right, well, we've been talking about the resurrection for a couple of weeks now. And you might remember that Paul wrote this whole chapter that we're on to address one specific issue at the Church of Corinth, and that's that some of the believers were denying that there'd be a physical resurrection of God's people. And what happened is that the church had allowed the culture to seep into their beliefs. That's what we've been talking about.

Just like some churches do today when they get all twisted up on things like homosexuality or social justice or things of that nature, their beliefs had changed to reflect what their culture said was true. The dominant worldview 2000 years ago in the Roman Empire was called Gnosticism. And part of that view was that the physical was inferior to the spiritual, that anything that's made up of matter, which was inherently bad. So the culture said that a person's body was cursed and something that they should want to escape from. And if that was true, then why would anybody want to be raised from the dead?

So Paul comes in and kind of hits the reset button on how they think about the resurrection. So he started, we were a couple of weeks ago with Jesus, reminded them that he didn't stay in the grave, that he rose on the third day, that he proved sin and death don't get the last word. And then he argued that the resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our resurrection. And Paul unpacked how that resurrection is inherently valuable for God's people. That has implications not just for the future, but for how we live our lives today.

So Paul had showed them that a resurrection was coming and that it was a good thing. And as we finish out this chapter, we. We move from the historical reality of Christ's resurrection to what is actually going on when we are raised from the dead. And so we begin in verse 35, it says, but someone will ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?

And that was a big question. And some of this was complicated by the Jewish scholars of the day. They believed that there was going to be a resurrection, but they taught that the resurrected bodies were. We're just going to be exact duplicates of our body now. Now, that doesn't sound awesome to anyone.

Well, no. I mean, our bodies are broken and frail. They wear out. They fail us all the time. Why would anyone want to have their broken body back?

So the real question wasn't just if there would be a resurrection. It was, hey, what's that resurrection going to look like? Are we just gonna be reanimated versions of how we are now? Will our resurrected bodies be frail and broken for all of eternity? Is the resurrection just like a rewind button on decay?

And so Paul jumps in by using an illustration that they would understand. So we Continue. In verse 36, it says, you foolish person, man, I wanna preach like that. I wanna call you guys, okay? No.

What you sow but does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen into each kind of seed its own body. So Paul doesn't answer with philosophy or with another deep theological truth. He takes them to a field and he says, you already know how this works.

And every farmer understands this. You take a seed, you put it in the ground, it disappears, right? It's buried. It looks dead. But what comes out of the ground isn't just some slightly improved seed.

It's something altogether different and far more grand and wondrous. The seed goes in tiny, and it comes out as something glorious. All it takes is one acorn to produce a mighty oak tree, one kernel of corn to produce a stalk that produces lots of grain. That's the first thing we need to understand about the resurrection. The resurrection isn't resuscitation.

It is transformation. God isn't going to stitch together your current weaknesses and make them better. He isn't going to patch up with sin fractured. And he's not just going to rewind your body back to an earlier setting. He's going to raise you into something far greater.

Paul says, what you sow is not the body that is to be. In other words, what goes into the ground is not the final version. And then he anchors that in the sovereignty of God. He says, but God is. Gives it a body as he has chosen.

This is massive. God gives. God chooses. You see, what goes into the ground isn't random, and what comes out of the ground isn't random. And if that is true of the resurrected body, it is also true of the body that you have right now.

So you need to see and understand that God is working in your life for the sake of the glory of his name. Name. Everybody has things that they don't like about themselves. Everybody has things that they wish were different. Maybe they wish they had more hair or less wrinkles, or you wish you were taller or more talented or more attractive or smarter.

But you were created on purpose. You aren't the result of some cosmic lottery. God chose and put you together exactly how you are on purpose. None of it is a mistake. You were made to bring great glory to God.

And that means you need to stop worrying about what you aren't and start paying attention to what God created you to be. See, sometimes the very thing you wish was different about you is the instrument that God intends to use most powerfully. Paul himself, he prayed for a weakness

to be removed. In Second Corinthians 12, it says three times. I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me, this thorn in his side.

But God said no. And do you know why he said no? Because his weakness magnified the strength of God. God is not building you into the person that you would choose to be. He isn't making you into what you're hoping that you will become.

He is shaping you into the person that he has chosen you to be. And if that's true now, then how much more when we are raised imperishable? You see, the same God who chose this body will choose that next one. And God doesn't make mistakes. See, your future resurrected body isn't just some kind of afterthought.

It is part of God's eternal plan. Before you ever drew your first breath, before your heart ever beat in your mother's womb, before Adam ever sinned, God knew the end of your story. Ephesians 1. It tells us he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

See, God didn't just plan to save your soul. He planned to redeem your broken body. Your resurrection isn't God's backup plan. It's part of his eternal design to bring great glory to your name. To his name.

Because if the body is a seed, then your resting place isn't a grave. It's a planting field. See, we don't bury believers in despair. We sow them in hope because we know what's coming. Jesus said in John 12, he said, Truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. And Jesus wasn't talking about agriculture here. He was talking about himself. He was the seed that went into the ground, buried and sealed and silent. But on that third day, the tomb didn't produce a corpse.

It was empty because he had risen again. Paul is saying that this pattern is ours. The seed goes down perishable, but comes up imperishable. We go down marked by the sin of Adam, and we come up marked by the righteousness of Christ. And here's where that becomes deeply personal.

See, some of you feel the frailty of your body every single day. You see the limits. You, you can feel the constant reminders that we are made of dust. That's what it says in Genesis 3. It says, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

You know that time is short, and you know that your days are numbered, that you are marching towards death. That is the curse, but it isn't the conclusion. Paul continues in verse 42 he says,

so it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable. What is raised is imperishable.

It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Do you hear the rhythm of this?

Sown and raised. Sown and raised. Perishable gives way to imperishable. Dishonor gives way to glory. And your weakness becomes power.

This isn't a language of repair. The resurrection is God's great reversal of what sin broke. Because right now our bodies are dying. They get sick and they ache and they break and they age. But one day your body will no longer be vulnerable to decay.

Right now you're marked by weakness. You can feel it when temptation presses in. You feel it when fear takes over, when anxiety rises. You feel it when you hurt getting out of bed. But you will be raised in power, not with some self generated strength, but with resurrection power.

The same power that rolled the stone away will course through your glorified body. That's why Paul says in verse 49, just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. See, right now you bear the image of Adam, dust and decay and death. And listen, if you belong to God, if you've repented of your sins, if you have chosen to follow him, then that isn't your final destiny. You will bear the image of the man in heaven.

You won't just be improved, you will be conformed. Romans 8 tells us, for those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. See the resurrection is the completion of the promise. But that isn't it. You see, the resurrection is just one small part of something much bigger.

In verse 50, he continues, he said, I tell you this, brothers flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. See, Paul is talking about our resurrected bodies, but he wants us to see the bigger picture. When we are fully ensconced in the kingdom of God, it doesn't just mean that we get to live in heaven. See, when we talk about the kingdom of God, we are talking about the that fact fully realized reign of Christ over restored creation and this present order, right? Our flesh and blood can't just simply slide into the future unchanged.

When sin was ushered into the world, it didn't merely introduce personal guilt, it disordered reality itself. When Adam fell, it wasn't some private thing failure. It was a cosmic rebellion. And every single corner of creation was fractured as a result. The ground was cursed, pain entered childbirth, work became toilsome, plants produced thorns, and death became an unwelcomed intruder through all of it.

Romans 8 tells us, it says, for the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, and hope that creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. Creation itself is crying for redemption. The oceans, they roar under futility. Forests decay under corruption.

The body aches under entropy. Sin broke more than just morality. It shattered harmony. And now every corner of the universe, every corner of all that was created is out of tune. And Paul is telling us that that broken order can't inherit the kingdom of God.

The perishable can't inherit that which is imperishable. And that word inherit, that's covenant language. God is making a promise to us as his people, and that's something we see him do throughout Scripture. God promised Abraham offspring, and he promised Israel a land, and he promised David throne. And God promised you a resurrection.

Paul is saying that we have an inheritance coming, but not in this condition. See, the resurrection isn't just an upgrade to a broken system. It is an inauguration of a restored one. Look at Revelation 21:5, where it's talking about the new heaven and the new earth. And it says, and he who is seated on the throne said, behold, I am making all things new.

Notice what it doesn't say? It doesn't say, I'm Making all new things. It says, I am making all things new. This is restoration. This is Genesis being reversed, all things made new.

And that absolutely includes our bodies. And he continues, in verse 51, he says, Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. And the word mystery there, it doesn't mean something we don't understand. It means something that was once concealed and is now revealed.

See, not every believer will die before Christ returns, but every believer will be changed. Every believer will have that resurrected body, because that change isn't some moral improvement or spiritual upgrade. It is a transformation at the very level of existence. It's ontological. And when does that happen?

In verse 52, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. See, that trumpet is the herald of history's culmination. It signals the arrival of a king. It's the same trumpet we see in first Thessalonians, which says, for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. So this isn't gradual evolution. It is instantaneous. It's a divine snap of reality. That trumpet signals authority.

It signals that judgment and vindication have arrived. And it signals the final act in God's redemptive plan. The moment is the culmination of everything that Scripture has been building towards. And then notice what Paul says in the next verse. He says, for this perishable body must put on the imperishable.

The mortal body must put on immortality. This is that language of cosmic repair. And it isn't just about individuals. It's a declaration about creation itself. The perishable cannot inherit the imperishable.

Our lives are marked by weakness and sin and brokenness. And that is fundamentally incompatible with the eternal kingdom of God. Anything that is corrupted and broken by sin and dying as a result can't inherit something eternal. It's absolutely critical. See, the resurrection of the church, of the saints, of us, isn't optional.

It isn't just some metaphor or spiritual abstraction. It is literal, tangible and personal. This is how God makes his people fit for an eternal kingdom. And think about that for a moment. The body you now inhabit, the one that fails and ages and aches, will be raised perfect, imperishable.

And verse 54 brings that to life. When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality. Then shall come to pass the saying that is written. Death is swallowed up in victory. I hope you hear that.

Death itself, the last enemy, is swallowed up. That's the climax. Every struggle, every pain, every infirmity, every grave, every death, all of it is decisively defeated by God's power for his people. And it doesn't say that death will be delayed. It says that it's swallowed up.

It's consumed, it is crushed, it is erased. And notice the poetry of it. In verse 55, O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? See, death has long been humanity's tyrant.

From the moment Adam sinned, death marched through creation like a relentless conqueror. It claimed our bodies, it stole our loved ones. It inflicts fear and anxiety, and it overwhelms us with grief. And its power seems absolute. Its sting seems inescapable.

And yet, in the power of the resurrection, death is defeated. Its victory is no more. Its sting has been removed, not through human effort or moral striving, but through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In verse 56, it says, the sting of death is sin, and the power of the sin is the law. See, death is painful because sin entered our world.

So even when we know somebody is a Christian, even when we know they love Jesus and they lived a long life, their death still hurts. We're still overwhelmed with grief because of sin. And it says here that sin is empowered by the law. And what that means is that law exposes our sin. Romans 5 puts, it says, now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

See, what this is showing us is the depths of our sin. The more law we have, the more we fail. And what's crazy is that we love the checklists and the rules because it makes us feel like we can be good. But the opposite is true. The more you understand about what God wants from you, the more you realize just how short you fall.

But that's where Jesus comes in. He stepped into that reality and he fulfilled the law perfectly. And he did it all on your behalf. When he was crucified, he paid the price that your sin earned. He absorbed the penalty that we deserve.

And when we repent of our sins and follow him, we are saved. And we get to take part in all of this. Paul celebrates that. In verse 57, he says, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. There it is, the power of the Gospel in three words.

Victory through Jesus. The grave couldn't hold him. Sin couldn't condemn him, Death couldn't defeat him. And because he lives, we share that victory not as some abstract promise, but as a reality we will enjoy for eternity. So what do we do with this truth?

Because the truth of the resurrection. I've been saying this. It's not something you can just file away. It's a doctrinal reality in the back of your mind. Paul doesn't just bring us to this climax and pat us on the back.

Look at verse 58. He says, therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. Everything in this verse hangs on that word. Therefore, Paul has just taken us to this summit of redemptive history where death is swallowed up in victory and the mortal are clothed with immortality. And now he says, therefore.

In other words, because the resurrection is true, because death is defeated, because Christ is risen, because you will be raised. Live like it. Doctrine is not meant to sit on a shelf. The resurrection isn't information to admire. It is fuel for transformation.

And Paul gives us three commands here. He says, be steadfast, be immovable, and always abound in the work of the Lord. To be steadfast, to be immovable means that you don't drift. You don't gradually loosen your grip on the truth. You don't lower your standards.

Why? Because the resurrection anchors you. Hebrews 6 tells us. It says, we have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain. So what is the anchor?

It is the finished work of Christ and the certainty that we have of what is to come. That reality means that you don't reinterpret God just because life gets hard. You don't abandon obedience. You don't renegotiate holiness. To be steadfast shows up in your ordinary life.

It's a day by day by day decision to remain anchored in what God says is right. It's continuing in the things that God declares are good because he says they're good. It means standing beside your spouse when they can no longer offer anything in return. It means continuing faithfully in prayer, even when heaven feels silent. It means gathering with the church even when you're tired or annoyed.

Steadfastness is a long obedience in the same direction. It's a day by day, by day, by day continuation in obedience. And how do we do that? Because it's so much easier just to give up or to go elsewhere.

And the answer is that the resurrection guarantees the ending. You see, if the story ends with Christ on the throne and you raised in glory, then there is nothing that justifies spiritual compromise. When you know how the story ends, you don't panic. In the middle chapters. Christians aren't naive.

We know that suffering is real, but we also know that it is temporary. Paul said in 2nd Corinthians 4, he says, for this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. Those are the words of a man who knows the resurrection awaits him. Your pain isn't pointless and your obedience isn't wasted, and your faithfulness never goes unseen. And if steadfast means you don't drift, immovable means you don't budge under pressure.

This is about conviction. Our world is not neutral. It pushes and pressures and shames and threatens, but we are not easily shaken. Psalm 1 describes a righteous man as a tree planted by streams of water whose roots are deep. And that tree isn't blown over by every theological wind.

And Paul, he spent his entire chapter arguing that if there is no resurrection, then everything else collapses. But because there is a resurrection, everything matters. If Christ is risen, then truth is fixed. If Christ is risen, then morality is not negotiable. And if Christ is risen, then history isn't random.

Immovable. Christians are grounded in this objective reality. And that's where this becomes practical. You see, you don't adjust biblical truth to fit cultural trends. You don't soften sin to make it more palatable.

And you don't let anything redefine what God says faithfulness is. You stand where Scripture stands because the resurrection means Jesus is Lord. That's what Romans 14 says. For to this end, Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord, both of the living and of the dead. If Christ conquered the grave, he gets to define reality.

Immovable doesn't mean stubborn about preferences. It means unyielding about truth. And we never need to fear the consequences of our faith. Because the very worst thing that can happen is death, Right? But death has already been defanged.

And then the final call here is to abound in the work of the Lord. The resurrection isn't an excuse to retreat. It is motivation to engage. Always abounding. That means overflowing.

It means leaning in. The work of the Lord isn't just about what happens here on Sunday morning. It is every act of. Of obedience done for Christ on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday. Colossians 3 says, Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men.

And think about the implications of that. Abounding in the work of the Lord can be teaching a Sunday school class. It could be changing diapers. It could be showing up to serve when no one thanks you. It could be sharing the Gospel awkwardly but faithfully.

It could be calling someone because they come to your mind and you prayed for them. It could be giving generously even when it pinches you. And Paul says that we should always do it. Why would anyone want to live like that? Because the resurrection means your labor isn't in vain.

In this world, so much feels futile. You work hard and things break. You pour into people and they walk away. You pray and pray, cry out to the Lord. Your circumstances don't change.

But the resurrection guarantees that nothing done in the Lord evaporates. Revelation 14 says, and I heard a voice from heaven saying, write this. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed indeed, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and for their deeds follow them. Your obedience echoes into eternity because the tomb is empty.

Your obedience never is. See, without resurrection, everything is vanity. But with resurrection, everything done for Christ has eternal weight. That's why you don't quit. That's why you stand strong.

That's why you press on day after day and week after week and year after year. Because you're not investing in some dying kingdom. That is our motivation. Live your life like you know how the story ends. Live your life in light of the resurrection.

So have you. Please stand for a closing hymn. It's Victory in Jesus, number 353.