

(1 Corinthians) Exposition to Chapter 15

by Brian Brodersen

The resurrection is a central theme in the Bible, and denying it would render our preaching and faith empty.

Duration: 54:05

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1

Topics: "Eternal Hope", "Rapture Theology"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of always being prepared for the sudden return of the Lord. He encourages believers to be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord. The speaker highlights that our labor for the Lord is never in vain and that God takes note of everything we do for Him. He also mentions the glorious promises and future that God has for believers, including the rapture, where believers will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The speaker concludes by urging listeners to live in anticipation of this event and to continue serving the Lord faithfully.

Transcript

Let's turn to the 15th chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, and we looked at a portion of this 15th chapter last week, and we're going to try to give an exposition of the entire chapter today. This is one of the most profound chapters in all of the Bible, in my opinion. There's so many significant things stated in this chapter.

As some of the things that are stated are somewhat incidental in a sense, they're not part of the total argument that Paul is presenting. Before he presents his argument, he talks a little bit about himself and his own ministry, and some of the things he says are extremely significant. And yet, because of the context, we haven't had the time to really look at each of them individually.

You could probably spend months and months just studying this 15th chapter and looking at some of the things that the apostle says here. But we are trying to make our way through the New Testament epistles, so we can't spend as much time as maybe we would like to. So there are some statements and some things that the apostle said that we've just had to sort of brush over quickly in order to get to the main point.

And we'll have to do that again today, unfortunately. But this is one of those chapters that you can read and study on your own. And there's so much wealth in it.

I'm sure if you spend some time, you will agree that this is one of the most profound chapters in all of Scripture. So let me read to you from verse one on through the verses that we covered last week, and then we'll pick up from there. Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you, first of all, that which I also received, 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 and that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that, he was seen by over 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part remained to the present. But some have fallen asleep.

After that, he was seen by James, then by all of the apostles. Then last of all, he was seen by me also as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles who are not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And his grace toward 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 was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Now, if Christ is preached that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection from the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ and we did not raise up.

If, in fact, the dead do not rise for if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile. You are still in your sins.

Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die. Even so, in Christ, all shall be made alive, but each one in his own order, Christ, the first fruits afterward, those who are Christ at his coming, then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God, the father, when he puts an end to all rule and all authority and power, for he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death, for he has put all things under his feet. But when he says all things are put under him, it is evident that he who put all things under him is accepted. Now, when all things are made subject to him, then the son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him, that God may be all and in all.

Otherwise, what will they do or baptize for the dead if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I confirm by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus, our Lord, I die daily. If in the manner of men, I have fought with beast at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me if the dead do not rise? Let us eat and drink for tomorrow. We die.

Do not be deceived. Evil company corrupts good habits, awake to righteousness and do not sin, for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Now, before we proceed, let me just remind you quickly of what Paul is stated in the verses that we just read. The Corinthians, as we pointed out in the past. Had all kinds of problems, and this final problem that the apostle is addressing in this epistle was the problem of the denial of the resurrection, they were denying the bodily resurrection.

But they were failing to see that if they denied the bodily resurrection, they must also at the same time deny the resurrection of Christ. And Paul points that out to them, and then he shows them how absurd their thinking was. For if, in fact, Christ did not rise from the dead, he said, then your faith is vain.

Now, Paul initially reminded them of the gospel that he preached to them. It was a gospel that declared that Christ did rise from the dead. It was a gospel that was foretold in the pages of the Old Testament.

It was a gospel that was attested to by eyewitnesses. It was the gospel that Paul himself had received from the Lord Jesus, a gospel that declared plainly that Christ rose from the dead. So Christ, having risen from the dead, Paul goes on to argue that, of course, since Christ rose from the dead, there must be a resurrection and therefore your thinking, he's saying to them, your thinking on this whole subject is incorrect.

And apparently they had been being influenced by false teachers. And therefore, he says to them in verse thirty three, do not be deceived. Evil company corrupts good habits.

Now, as we come to verse thirty five, he goes on to address now some of the practical issues of the resurrection and apparently some of the questions that had been put forth. As a means of casting doubt upon the validity of the resurrection, so they were saying things, oh, well, you know, if there is a resurrection, what what sort of a body would somebody have? They were making light of the whole subject. And and it's interesting that even at the time of Jesus, there were those who had this kind of a mentality.

You remember, as you studied the gospels, there were two groups of men that opposed Jesus. There were actually three, but the primary groups were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Now, the Sadducees, as a as a group of people, theologically, they denied the resurrection.

And they would come up with all of these what they believe to be absurd. Results of an actual resurrection, and maybe you remember the one occasion where they came to Jesus and they they put forth this case, they said, oh, there was this man and you know, he was married and then he died. And his wife, she went on and and married his brother and then he died, and then she went on and married his other brother and he died and on through a series of, you know, husbands.

And then the question was, whose wife is she going to be at the resurrection? You see, in their minds, they had come up with what they believe to be a refutation of the concept of resurrection. They were saying on Resurrection Day there would be mass confusion. How could there be a resurrection? So this idea that there was no bodily resurrection was something that the Sadducees embraced.

It was something that was embraced by many in the Greek culture, following after some of the Greek ideas and so forth. And so here in the church in Corinth now, these people had also embraced this sort of an idea that there is no bodily resurrection. And apparently they were coming up with arguments, someone like the Sadducees did.

So Paul says, but someone will say, how are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? And notice his response. He says, foolish one. So you can see in Paul's immediate response that they had thought that through their reasoning, they had shown the impossibility of a resurrection.

What kind of a body is a resurrected person going to have? And, you know, these kinds of arguments have been put forth by people down to the present day. When you start talking about a resurrection, they say, oh, well, how is somebody who died centuries ago going to be resurrected? Because after all, their body has gone back into the earth and their body is decomposed and it's, you know, gone back into becoming a fertilizer for the grass and the plants and different things. And, you know, an animal has come along and grazed in the field.

And part of what was originally that person has now gone through the digestive tract of the animal. And, you know, so the question is, how in the world are you going to resurrect people when their body parts, particles are scattered all over the the world? And so for some people, even to this very day, the thought of a resurrection in that sense sounds absolutely absurd to them. They can't even conceive of such a thing.

But the answer that Jesus gave to the Sadducees is the same answer that we give to those who oppose the idea today. The answer is this. God is able.

And that's what Jesus said to the Sadducees at that time. He said, your problem is this. You don't know the scriptures, nor do you know the power of God.

If a person but for one moment understood anything about the power of God, they would know that a resurrection is not a difficulty with God at all, even if every particle was scattered. God is perfectly capable of finding every particle. But yet on a practical note, that's not even necessary because our human bodies are all made of essentially the same thing.

The thing that distinguishes you from me and each of us from the other is simply the code, the DNA code. But your body and my body and all of our bodies are made of the same substance. We're all made of dust.

So the thing that distinguishes us is the DNA. So God doesn't have to go search for every dust particle. If he's going to resurrect your body, he'll just put some dust together and then throw your DNA into it.

And there you are. And so the apostle. Foolish one.

What you sow is not made alive unless it dies. Paul's going to give them a bit of an education here. What you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be but mere grain, perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as he pleases and to each seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish and another of birds.

There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, but the glory of the celestial is one in the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.

Now, before we go further into Paul's argument, let me make just a quick comment, as I mentioned in the beginning, there are some some statements that Paul makes that are somewhat incidental, but yet they're profound as well. And verse 15 is one of those. I don't know if you realize it or not, but this is another one

of those places in scripture where the theory of evolution is completely denied because evolution teaches that all flesh is the same flesh.

That everything that there is evolved originally out of the same material, but Paul says, no, that's not the case. So there's a refutation right here in verse 39. And then also in verse 41, Paul tells us something that astronomers only found out recently, that stars differ from one another.

For many, many centuries, people thought that stars were all identically the same. And it wasn't all that long ago that they finally discovered that, yes, indeed, stars do differ from one another, as the apostle said so many centuries ago. So those are just little side notes that you can.

Commit to memory when this subject arises, which it so often does, but again, back to the main argument, so also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption, it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. So Paul takes them back to what they would know.

This was an agricultural society to a large degree that he was speaking to. They would they would know exactly what he's talking about. You take this bare grain, you take this seed and you plant it into the ground.

And when something comes forth, it's not the it's not the same thing that you put into the ground. You just put in this bare seed, but yet something comes forth, wheat, Paul mentioned, or perhaps some other plant. We could think of some of the beautiful flowers that are produced out of some of the, you know, the most ordinary looking seeds.

Or bulbs, you put certain bulbs into the ground, cover them up, water them, give them a bit of time, and suddenly this glorious, beautiful flower comes forth. Paul is saying that's what the resurrection is like. You put in this corruptible body, it's raised in incorruption.

You put in this mortal body or this dishonorable body. That's the stone and weakness, it's raised in power. Now, Jesus, in another context, he said something similar.

Jesus said a grain of wheat, unless it dies, it will abide alone. But if it dies, it will bring forth much fruit. In the context, Jesus was talking about the need to die to ourselves in order to bear fruit.

Just as a grain of wheat cannot possibly become the wheat plant or produce fruit apart from dying, so likewise, Jesus said, unless you die to self, you can't possibly bear fruit for God. But Jesus was, in a sense, alluding to the same thing that Paul is talking about here. There's a death that takes place.

We call we call this germination. The seed goes into the ground. And the outer.

Part of it decays and the inward part comes forth into new life. And so that's what happens with the physical body. That's what the apostle is saying.

He's talking about the distinction between the heavenly body and the earthly body, the celestial and the terrestrial. There is a heavenly body. There's also an earthly body.

We happen to presently possess the earthly body. And of course, the earthly body was made for the environment of the earth. But the earthly body is not made for the environment of heaven.

And thus, we need a heavenly body. And so Paul says it is so in a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body.

There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. Now, the one example that we can point to in all of history. To illustrate this is Jesus Christ himself, Jesus, prior to his death on the cross and his resurrection, he possessed a natural body, he possessed the same kind of body that we possess.

The only distinction in the body of Jesus was that his body was without sin. But it was like sinful flesh in every other way. It was just like our body.

It was a body created for this environment and limited to this environment. And while he was in that body, he was restricted to the material realm. But we find that when Jesus rose from the dead, although his body in many ways appeared to be the same and it actually was in one sense the same body, because he still bore in his hands and in his feet and in his side the wounds from his death on the cross.

Yet we find that his body was different. We find that Jesus could suddenly dematerialize. He could suddenly disappear.

And he could suddenly appear. He was with those too many, he had met them on the road to Emmaus, he had walked with them and gone in to reside with them for a time and they were sitting down to eat a meal together and Jesus took the bread and he blessed it, lifting it up to heaven. And they suddenly realized who he was, probably because as he lifted his hands, they probably noticed the wounds in his hands.

And the moment they recognized him, he vanished from their sight. And then some days later, they're gathered together in the upper room and they're talking about the various experiences that they've had in meeting the risen Lord. And suddenly Jesus appears in their midst.

He didn't come through the door. He just suddenly appeared in their midst. You see, he had this new glorified body that Paul is referring to here.

And it's a body with new capacities. It's a body that's similar to the earthly body in appearance to some degree. But yet it's also much different than the earthly body.

There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living being. The last Adam became a life giving spirit.

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural and afterward the spiritual. So the first man was of the earth made of dust. The first man was of the earth made of dust.

The second man is the Lord from heaven, as was the man of dust. So also are those who are made of dust. And as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are heavenly.

And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man. What a profound and glorious statement. You know, as Christians living in this time today, and I think maybe to some degree it's restricted to our culture, we still do not have a proper understanding of death.

We still do not have a proper understanding of death. We still love our lives here in the world far more than we probably ought to. And we still, as Christian people who have this glorious revelation from God, we still have great apprehension at the thought of death.

But that apprehension is invalid, really, if we understand what the scriptures say, because what the scriptures are telling us about what we refer to as death is that we are simply going to go from bearing the image of the earthly man to bearing the image of the heavenly man. That's what happens. But, you know, still, we're so earthbound in our thinking so often, oh, you know, that that person died.

I remember years ago, one of our family members, my wife's family members dying. And of course, there was great love between my wife and this particular woman. And so Cheryl went through quite an extensive time of mourning.

And, you know, she would just find herself weeping. And and I remember one time as she was weeping and I sort of started, you know, thinking about it as well. And and I remember in my mind actually caught myself saying, oh, poor, you know, so and so.

And and the second I did that, I stopped and said, what? What? This person is 84 years old, racked with arthritis. Loved God, served God diligently and went to be with the Lord, oh, poor and easy. How sad it is that she has to be in heaven bearing the image of the heavenly and liberated from all.

That is the consequences of sin and all these things. But, you know, we find ourselves as Christians doing things like that because we're not thinking in biblical terms. You know, one of the things that's recorded about the early Christians that baffled, completely baffled the pagans was the fact that they had a celebration at the departure of their loved ones.

They did not have a time of lamentation. It was a time of celebration because this one they love so much had been liberated from the bondage of corruption and now had gone into the presence of God. And quite honestly, that is the attitude that we all need to adopt as Christians, because what we're talking about here is something glorious.

The Apostle Paul, he understood this quite well. That's why he could say that he was in he was in a straight between two, two things and writing to the Philippians, he said, he said, I'm I'm caught in the middle. He said, I'm in a straight between these two things for to depart and be with the Lord is a far better thing.

But to remain here with you is important for your progress in the faith, he said, but that which I choose, I don't know, I'm having an inward struggle over this. See, Paul was under no delusions about the future. He understood that to leave this world was to go and to be with Christ, to be liberated from the earthly, corruptible, weak.

And dishonorable condition and to be elevated and perfected. But he said, yet I feel that I need more time here and I trust that God's going to leave me here because it's beneficial for you. And I think that that is the only valid struggle that any of us should have when it comes to that subject there.

But you see, this is the promise, as was the man of dust. Or as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man. So we are as human beings, we are primarily spirit.

Our bodies. Are really simply a home for our spirits, our bodies are the house for our spirit. But the body is a temporal abode, as a matter of fact, the New Testament over and over again refers to the body as a tent.

And it doesn't refer to the body as a tent just coincidentally, but intentionally it refers to the body as a tent because the tent is a temporary abode. Everyone knows that a tent is a temporary abode. We're told about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that they intentionally dwelt in tents for they were making a declaration that they were pilgrims and sojourners on the earth.

That's why they lived in tents, because a tent is a sign of a pilgrimage, a sojourn. And so the body refers or the Bible refers to our bodies as a tent for the specific reason that our bodies are not the permanent residence for our spirits. But our bodies are constructed for this atmosphere, this environment that we live in.

But when our bodies are no longer adequate. As a means of expressing. Who we are, truly.

The invisible part of us. God moves us into. This new residence, Paul talked about this at length in his second epistle to the Corinthians and there in the fifth chapter.

He talked about those who are in this tent do groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed with the habitation that is from above. And he talked about groaning, we groan earnestly. We long to be in that state.

That was the attitude of the apostle and that was the attitude of many of the first Christians. Life has become so comfortable. Here in this day and age that we have really settled into it, and therefore the thought of death shakes us, which you see, life was very uncomfortable back in apostolic times, being a Christian was far from a popular position to take back in the first century and those early Christians, you might wonder, well, what's the point of being a Christian if you're not going to be able to do that? Well, how could they have gone to death as they did? How could they have marched triumphantly into the arenas and undergone the brutality that they experienced? Well, you know, they could do it because they were looking to heaven.

They believed in heaven. They believed that having borne the image of the earthly, they were now going to bear the image of the heavenly. And they understood that death was merely the gateway into eternity and into the presence of God.

But living in the culture that we live and live in with all of the creature comforts that we enjoy, you know, sometimes when we think about that, we think of it in those kind of terms. Oh, that poor brother, that poor sister. They died, they were lying in the hospital for a year with tubes stuffed in every imaginable place.

Pricked by needles endlessly. Kept medicated because of their intense pain. Oh, how sad that they're gone now into that place where there is no pain, there is no weeping.

We think this way, don't we? See, the problem is we don't think biblically. We think like the rest of the world thinks so often. Now, this I say, brethren.

That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, we're talking about two entirely different dimensions. In other words, what Paul is saying is in your present body, in the condition of your present body is unfit for the atmosphere of heaven.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. If I'm going to go into heaven, I have to have a body that bears the image of the heaven. I have to have a heavenly body.

I can't go into heaven in my present body. Behold, I tell you a mystery. Now, here the Apostle Paul is going to.

Reveal something. That. Was, in a sense, almost given to him exclusively to reveal, this was something that was not clearly stated by Jesus.

And actually, it was not clearly stated by any of the other apostles. This particular message was given specifically to the Apostle Paul. Now, when the New Testament talks about a mystery, it the word mystery doesn't mean mystery in the sense of Agatha Christie or something like that.

It means mystery. In the sense of something that is unknowable apart from divine revelation, that's what it means. So Paul says, behold, I tell you a mystery.

I'm going to disclose to you something that no one else has known. This is something that God allowed Paul to do. He gave Paul this insight that no one else had received.

And this is what he said. We shall not all sleep. But we shall be changed.

The Apostle Paul here makes an incredible statement. He says, we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. In other words, what he's saying is that not every Christian is going to die.

Sleep is the New Testament terminology. We use the term die because we're still speaking from the worldly perspective. The New Testament uses the term sleep.

You remember, Jesus even said that about Lazarus. He said, he's asleep. And they said, well, if he's asleep, he'll get better.

Jesus said, all right, I'll I'll condescend to your term. He's dead. You see, the New Testament always refers to the believer's condition after he leaves this world as being asleep.

But Paul says. Not everyone is going to fall asleep, but we shall be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. This is Paul's statement on what we commonly call the rapture of the church.

The rapture of the church, a transformation taking place, a metamorphosis is the word that's actually used here in the Greek. The metamorphosis means a change of form. And that is what Paul says is going to happen in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet for the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.

This is a parallel passage to what Paul declared in his epistle to the Thessalonians, his first epistle, the fourth chapter, the 16th verse. You remember there he said, for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with the shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead shall be raised and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. So this is a mystery that had not even been.

Clarified through the ministry of Jesus or the other apostles, but now the Lord gives to Paul to bring this revelation to the people of God, that there is a generation of people who will not even experience death, but they will go through the metamorphosis, they will go through the transformation for this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible is put on incorruption and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the same that is written.

Death is swallowed up in victory.

Now, here's what we need to understand. The rapture is not only a glorious event in as much as. What it does for us is certainly a glorious event.

And we can look forward to possibly being the generation. That is going to experience this event that Paul spoke of so many centuries ago, but it's not only a means of tremendous comfort and hope for us, but the rapture is God's declaration to the world. And to the invisible powers of his victory over death, that's what the rapture is, you see, because every person and every generation has been subject to death.

Even since the time that Jesus died, still from merely the human perspective on things. Every person has still ever died, regardless of whether they believe in Jesus or not. Now, we know who know the Lord and we know because of what he said that a believer doesn't really die.

For if you live and believe in Christ, you'll never die. You just simply move out of a of a dilapidated tent into a glorious new residence that God has prepared for you. But, you know, the world still doesn't recognize that as far as the person in the world knows when a person Christian or not, they're gone, they're gone, they died.

So the demonstration of Christ's victory over death has not yet been made visible to the world at large. And that's what the rapture is. The rapture is the visible demonstration of the victory of Jesus Christ over death.

His bodily resurrection. Was a foretaste of that, but the rapture is that in a sense, it's that public declaration of Christ's victory over death, and that's what the apostle says. So when this corruptible is put in corruption, this mortal has put on immortality.

Then she'll be brought to pass the same that is written. Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh, death, where is your sting? Oh, grave, where is your victory? See, that's what the Lord is going to do at the rapture.

He's going to demonstrate that, yes, indeed, he conquered death and he proves that he conquered death by taking an entire generation. And translating them miraculously to heaven without experiencing what we as humans would call death. So you see, it's not only something beneficial to us and something glorious to us, but it's also something that God is going to be declaring his victory through.

Now, this hope of the rapture, in a sense, shouldn't. Well, it's hard to even express it, but in a sense, whether a person will participate in the rapture or not, shouldn't really change their view of death. In other words, the Christians that lived prior to the event and died prior to the event could die with all of the hope that those who might experience the rapture could have as well.

But you see, in order to do so, they would have to have the biblical understanding of what was happening. And that's where, as I've said before, that's where so often Christians have failed, they failed to have a biblical understanding of what's happening or a biblical view. But there is, on the other hand, I think, something quite thrilling about the prospect of this instantaneous transformation where suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, this corruption has put on incorruption, this mortal has put on immortality.

Every generation of Christians could have had this hope. Unfortunately, not every generation of Christians did have this hope because this particular truth itself was so buried under tradition and false teaching throughout so many centuries. But this is the hope that the early Christians had.

Definitely. This was the hope of the apostle himself. And these early Christians, they definitely thought that they would themselves experience this, but they didn't.

But yet, when it came time for them to be received into glory, although it wasn't through this avenue of the rapture, they went forth in great victory, demonstrating Christ's victory over death and especially in the Colosseum's and in the persecutions that took place under the Romans. If you read the historical accounts, you find that the pagans themselves were absolutely in shock at the the way the Christians died. And this led to people being converted because of the courage and the grace that they had upon themselves when they went to such horrible deaths.

But this is something that I think could indeed be experienced by this present generation of Christians. The rapture is something that as you studied the issue thoroughly, it's something that you see precedes the actual second coming of Jesus to the earth to establish his kingdom. Now, we believe strongly that the second coming of Christ is near.

And I think we have a valid basis for that belief. We believe that the second coming of Christ is near because the things that the Bible said would be taking place in the world near to the time that Jesus would return are indeed taking place all around us today. We see it, we pointed out in our previous teaching on prophecy, we see it in the nation of Israel, their existence as an independent country and their ongoing struggle for international recognition and things like that.

We see it in the constant conflict that still exists there between Israel and their neighbors. We see it in the formation of a new superpower in Europe. These things were all spoken of by the prophets as being the very things that would be taking place in the world at the time of the second coming.

As a matter of fact, you perhaps remember Daniel said it would be in the days of these kings that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. And the kings that are referred to there are the kings that rise up out of what was previously known as the Roman Empire. And I can't help but feel that the European Union is a fulfillment of that, or at least the beginning stages of the fulfillment.

So we see Israel, we see Europe, we see things going on socially that the scriptures spoke of. We see things happening technologically and so forth. We see all these things happening that indicate to us that Jesus is coming again.

His second coming is near at hand. But again, as we put together the picture from scripture, we find that the rapture precedes that. So if we see the signs of the second coming and we believe that the second coming of Christ is near, then we, of course, would certainly have to conclude that the rapture is even nearer and that we ourselves might perhaps be, could indeed be, the very generation that would be translated miraculously, the very generation that God would use to declare openly the victory of Christ on the cross over death.

Oh, death, where is your sting? Oh, grave, where is your victory? Death will be robbed of its spoils at the rapture of the church. And so Paul is going beyond their wildest expectations in his defense of the resurrection. He thoroughly defends the resurrection.

He shows them how there will be a resurrection, but he says, I'm going to take you a step further. You think the resurrection is something? I'm going to tell you about this event, this metamorphosis that's going to take place, this transformation that's going to come to multitudes instantaneously. Who will be changed

in a moment in the twinkling of an eye.

Now, some have actually tried to measure the twinkling of an eye. And I don't know that anyone's ever been able to get an accurate measurement on us, but on it, but, you know, even the blink of an eye would be fine with me. But the point is this, that suddenly, suddenly you will find yourself in the presence of God.

Stripped of this corruptible body and there you stand in that glorious heavenly body. Suddenly the sting of death is sin. The strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, listen. Therefore, my beloved brethren.

Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor in the Lord. Is not in vain. See, Paul talks about this glorious event of the rapture.

It's going to happen in the twinkling of an eye. Suddenly you'll be there. You'll be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

There won't be any advance notice. We've got as much advance notice as we're ever going to get. It's going to happen.

So there won't be any time to prepare. So Paul says, always be prepared because this event is going to come so suddenly, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. In other words, what Paul is saying is always be right where you would want to be when the Lord returns.

Always be doing what you would want to be doing when the Lord returns. You see, we never can slack off. We get tempted sometimes to slack off.

We think, OK, I've done enough for a while. I need a little break, Lord. I need to please myself for a while.

I've been pleasing you. And I know that's good and important, but I need a week off. It's a bank holiday, Lord.

Yeah, we do things like that. I was telling Cheryl the other day as we were driving along. Some of the challenges that the Lord is putting forth to me right now and I was telling her about a bit of the the argumentation that's gone on between me and the Lord.

And, you know, there are certain things I feel like God is challenging me to, I feel like he's calling me to certain things and I'm saying, Lord. I already took the big step of faith. Look, I moved to England.

What else do you want me to do? Now, just give me a break for a while. You know, let me let me just think about myself. You know, I'm not consciously saying that, but but deep down, that's really what it comes down to.

I've sort of come to a place of of resting a little bit because after all, I took the big step of faith. But so, yeah, fine. You took the big step of faith.

So what now take another big step of faith. Keep going. Don't stop.

But we have a human tendency, don't we? And that's what Paul is exhorting us against right here. He says there's this this glorious event that's coming, this mortal is going to put on immortality. This corruption is

going to put on incorruption, it's going to happen in the twinkling of an eye, you're not going to have time to get ready for it.

So always be doing what you want to be doing at the return of the Lord. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Oh, listen to that.

Always abounding in the work of the Lord. You know, there's never too much we can do for the Lord. I was listening this past couple of weeks to a tape series.

On the life of Spurgeon and here's a man who really began his public ministry at about the age of 17 and labored tirelessly. Until he entered heaven at the age of 57. He never stopped, he came into the kingdom running and he just kept going.

And the accomplishments of this one individual, it's astounding, it's mind boggling what this one person could have done. And I look at that and I must say, I'm challenged, I'm provoked, I'm envious. I want to have that same kind of commitment, that same kind of dedication, that same kind of zeal right to the very end.

That's what Paul is saying here, be steadfast, immovable, but notice he says, therefore. You see, his exhortation is based on everything he's previously been talking about. In other words, what he's saying is because of this glorious eternity that awaits us, because of this resurrection, because of this very the image of the heavenly.

Forever. And because of the possibility of this immediate transformation without even passing through the corridor of death, he said, based on all of that, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. For you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

There are many things we can do in this life that are in vain. And let me just say this, everything you do in this life that doesn't have Jesus Christ connected to it will be in vain. Everything you do will be in vain.

Now, that doesn't necessarily mean you need to stop doing everything you're doing. It just means that you need to redirect your motive in what you are doing, redirect your motive in what you are doing and whatever you're doing, do it for the Lord, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. We never labor in the Lord in vain.

The Lord takes note of everything that we do for him and one day he will reward us for it. And so in light of these glorious promises, the wonderful future that God has for us, let us be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Whatever you can do for the Lord, do it.

It won't be in vain. And who knows, sometime soon we could all find ourselves suddenly there, standing around the throne and enjoying those things that were told about in Revelation 4 and 5, seeing the Lamb taking the scroll and loosing the seals, and all of God's final plan being unfolded before us, we might be. We could be.

I think we are that generation. Let's live like we are.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/brian-brodersen/1-corinthians-exposition-to-chapter-15/>

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