

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

**11.23.2025 | The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting. Amen |
1 Corinthians 15:50-58 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor**

If you have a Bible this morning, I want to invite you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. If you want to grab the Bible that's in the pew or the chair in front of you, I can tell you that in that Bible it's on page 962. We're going to go to 1 Corinthians 15 to consider this last line of the Apostle's Creed that we believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen. We're in the 12th and final week of this series on the Apostle's Creed. Next week we'll start the season of Advent. We'll be walking through passages of the Old Testament to see the promises of the Messiah, promises that Jesus fulfilled in His first Advent, but also that we await final fulfillment, ultimate fulfillment of in His second Advent.

Today we wrap up our series on the Creed and I pray that this time in the Creed has been helpful for you to clarify and maybe even expand some of our understanding and belief in the core doctrines of the Christian faith. I pray that you've seen that it's not our desire to preach the Creed, but preach the Bible and that the Apostle's Creed has been a great resource for the church for centuries to help us be guided into understanding what does the Bible proclaim. Here we come to this understanding that Bible proclaims the resurrection of the body and the everlasting life.

A couple of weeks ago or I guess a few weeks back now we looked at Jesus' return, the fact that He is going to return and He is going to judge the living and the dead. And when Jesus returns He is going to judge all people, but He is going to do more than just judge. As we saw earlier in our service, He is going to come to make all things new. He's going to come to wipe away every tear from our eyes. He's going to come to consummate His kingdom and His work of salvation. He's going to come so that God and God's people might dwell together for all of eternity. This is what we are considering in this last line of the Creed.

1 Corinthians chapter 15 is a long and important chapter in the Bible. It's a chapter in which the Apostle Paul defends the resurrection of Jesus as central to the Christian faith, but he also uses it as a basis for understanding the resurrection that we will experience as believers one day. As he comes to the end of this chapter in which he's been speaking of Jesus' resurrection and what that means for our resurrection, this is how he ends the chapter. 1 Corinthians chapter 15 starting in verse 50. He says, "I tell you this brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, we shall all 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 imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, this mortal body must put on immortality. 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. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast and movable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Would you like to live forever? I was reading a New York Times article this week, and the author was tracing how throughout human history, there's been this quest for immortality. All across different cultures and different times, there's always been this, seems to be this, this kind of longing to avoid death and live forever. The author talked about how 4,000 years ago the Sumerians had a story about Gilgamesh, who was on this epic journey to find eternal life. Others said that a couple thousand years later there's a story in China about a Chinese magician, who came to the emperor and told him that there was an elixir that offered immortality, eternal life just across the Yellow Sea. He convinced the emperor to give him all sorts of resources, an army, and all sorts of ships, and he set sail never to be seen again. You know the story probably of Ponce de Leon, who came to our land searching for the Fountain of Youth?

Story after story, culture after culture has these tales of people searching for immortality. And the author pointed out that sometime around the Enlightenment, in our Western world, there began to be this shift. There weren't so many stories about people searching for eternal life or immortality, but rationalism took over and people began to think, just how can we live a little bit longer on this earth? Search wasn't so much for eternal life, but just longer earthly life. That's probably been the focus of the Western world for the last few centuries. We give a lot of attention to how to increase life spans. How do we live longer on this earth? It's kind of interesting that we're at this place in advanced

technology that it's actually almost even shifting once again to hoping that we can have eternal, immortal life. There's this guy named Brian Johnson who used to live here in Silicon Valley. He has a company called Blueprint. There's been documentaries made about his kind of crazy life and routines and approaches he takes because he thinks he can neutralize the aging process. I think the bio of his Twitter account says something about how the greatest human achievement will be conquering death. Even artificial intelligence seems to promise some sort of digital immortality. That even when you're gone from this earth, you can live on in some form or fashion. It seems to be that across human history there's been this desire to avoid death, to live longer, to even live for all of eternity, to be immortal.

The Bible actually says that this is very natural to the human condition. The book of Ecclesiastes says that actually God has created us with eternity in our hearts. There is something within us that lets us know that death is not natural, that we were meant to live forever. This is what the last line of the Creed speaks about, that there is a Christian teaching that is unique to Christianity about this desire, about this longing that seems to be a part of every culture, a part of every maybe human soul to avoid death, to live forever. The Creed speaks about this. It says that we as Christians believe in something very hopeful, very real, very important to our faith. And that is we believe in the resurrection of the body. We believe in everlasting life.

And I found that many times Christians, good Christians who have studied the Bible, who have talked about these things, have some misunderstanding when it comes to the things of eternity, the things of eternal life. So what I want to do this morning is just by using our passage, I want to just draw out from us two basic realities, two basic doctrines of the Christian faith that the Creed is speaking to in this line. That we can believe them together, we can understand what they mean, but then we'll be able to draw out what does that mean for us in our day-to-day lives. How do we live in light of these doctrines and these truths? So two doctrinal realities, two central parts of our Christian faith that this last line speaks to and that Paul explains here in 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

The first is that we believe in a bodily resurrection. We believe in a bodily resurrection. One of the things that makes Christianity different from many other beliefs and religions, although it's not solely unique to Christianity, but there is this belief that we will be raised from the dead physically, that there will be a bodily resurrection. So many times when you talk to Christians about eternity, you talk to them about being with God, what they often think of is that we will be souls separated from bodies, kind of in the spiritual place with God. That's what they think of heaven. But if you're thinking of the time right now, that wouldn't be totally wrong. What's often called the intermediate state, the time before Jesus returns, it is true. Our bodies remain here on the earth. Those who are believers in Jesus, their souls go to be with the Lord. They are in his presence immediately, getting to enjoy that communion with him and with the saints. But when we think about eternity, we talk to think about what the last line of this creed is speaking to. This would be a wrong way of thinking, to think about, this is just about souls being in a spiritual place somewhere. The creed is saying we believe in a bodily resurrection. Sometimes Christians can misunderstand this.

Again, I think even Christians who have really studied the Bible, I used to work with a pastor. And many times at a funeral, there would be the body there at the funeral service, and he would say, you know, this is the end of her body, but this isn't the end of her. She is with the Lord. And he meant those as comforting words, trying to let them know that, yes, her body is not alive right now, but you can trust that she is alive and she is with the Lord. But what he meant as comforting was actually a little misleading. Because this person, this isn't the end of his or her body. The Bible says when Jesus returns, he is going to raise up our bodies. We believe in a bodily resurrection. Paul speaks to it here in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. When he says it in verse 52, he says that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed.

Paul speaks of the dead here, he's talking about those who have passed away, especially those in Christ who have died, and he's saying physically they will be raised from the dead. Their bodies will be brought up and given new life. This isn't the only place that Paul or the New Testament speaks about this. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4, we walked through 1 Thessalonians as a group in our church did. In chapter 4, Paul is speaking about the return of Jesus. And this is what he says in verse 16. He says the Lord himself will descend from heaven with the 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. Notice what Paul is saying there. Jesus is going to return, both passages say it kind of in the same way. It's going to be loud, it's going to be obvious, and something is going to happen. Those who have died will be raised to life.

Paul says this idea that we believe in a bodily resurrection is actually central to our faith. This is not something that is questionable in the Christian faith. This is not a secondary issue that we could agree to disagree on. It's really important, and one of the main reasons it's important for us to believe in a bodily resurrection is because here in this chapter, Paul says that our belief in a physical resurrection is actually rooted in Jesus' physical resurrection. The fact that Jesus physically rose from the dead is a sign that we will one day rise from the dead. So just go back a little bit in 1 Corinthians 15 and just see this argument that Paul is making because I just want you to see how important it is that we would grasp this reality that we believe in a bodily resurrection. You see in verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 15, if you just back up a little bit in that chapter, as Paul is speaking about this idea of the resurrection of the dead, he says this, "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

You see, Paul knew that he was writing to people who questioned this reality, people who questioned this doctrine, maybe for different reasons, but somewhat similar to many people today. Many people are unclear about the reality of a bodily resurrection. He was writing to them saying this is very important to our faith, and it's rooted in Jesus' resurrection. He says, "How can you have an Easter Sunday service where you celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead and not believe that we as his followers are going to raise from the dead?" Like he said, that Jesus' resurrection is a sign of our resurrection. He says this in verse 20. If you just go a few verses later, in 1 Corinthians 15, he says, "But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen. The language of firstfruits is really kind of the idea of a down payment, or earnest money. It was the first that was given, and it was a sign that the whole amount would be given. Paul's saying, "When Jesus got up that Easter morning, when he stepped out of the tomb, when Jesus rose from the dead, he did not just go back as a soul to heaven, leaving his body here on earth, but his body got up and walked out of that tomb." And what it was was a down payment. It was a sign of things to come. It was the firstfruits of what all believers in Jesus will experience. He says, "If we believe in Jesus' physical resurrection, it's really important for us to believe in a physical bodily resurrection."

So this is central to our faith. So when we come to a place of death, we have a funeral, thinking about it in our own lives. It's important to realize. We don't need to worry about trying to live on in digital immortality. We don't need to worry about necessarily thinking about how we're going to be immortal in other ways. We also don't need to think that this is the end of someone's body. In fact, it'd probably be good if we adopted the imagery that Paul uses. Paul says that while someone's soul is alive and with God, it's like their bodies are asleep. One day those bodies will be awoken, but for now they rest. So we as Christians should allow those bodies to sleep, trusting that their souls are with the Lord. And we should long for a day when Jesus returns and he awakens those bodies. And he raises them to new life. And when that happens, there will be this change. So here's the second just important doctrine for us to grasp as we think about this whole idea of the resurrection of the body and the everlasting life. We believe in a bodily resurrection.

We also believe in a bodily transformation. We believe in a bodily transformation. That yes, the bodies of those who have passed away will be raised up, but it's not just going to be the bodies as they were before. Paul says that we are going to be changed. He speaks about the importance of us being changed because of what we are inheriting when Jesus returns. Notice what he says in verse 50. He says, I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. He says the kingdom of God is eternal. It is imperishable. The kingdom of God does not break down. It does not fall apart. It has no end. And so those who are going to dwell in the kingdom of God with God forever have to be changed.

We can't be people who have bodies that that break down and fall apart. We can't have bodies that are mortal and cease to have life in them. Something must be changed in us so that we would be able to dwell with God in his eternal imperishable immortal kingdom for all of eternity. So he says we will all be changed. Notice what he says in verse 52. In a moment and the twinkling of an eyes where we just read the last trumpet for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed. Meaning when Jesus returns there's going to be many who are dead physically and they will be raised to life a bodily resurrection and they will be changed. But he also says there will be people here on the earth still alive who are believers in Jesus and they will also experience this transformation.

So again, first Thessalonians 4 Paul is speaking similarly about this return of Jesus. He says those that were dead they will be raised and then we who are still alive we will be caught up to meet him in the air. When Jesus returns the dead are raised then those who are alive are raised up and we are all changed so that we might be a part of this eternal kingdom. What Paul says is that the kingdom of God is being made new all things being made new therefore we must be made. Our bodies must be changed verse 53 this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality. There must be a change to us physically. He talks about perishable you can just think about breaking down.

Anybody ever recognize that their body is perishable? Maybe in a time of sickness maybe in an injury maybe just in the aging process. You notice that your body is not imperishable it goes bad right. Bodies are not at this state meant to last. He says if we're going to be part of a kingdom in which nothing breaks down which there is no disease there is no injury that our bodies have to be changed to match that. He says our mortal bodies must put on the immortality if we're going to be part of an eternal kingdom we need to have bodies that are going to last forever. There's going to be this bodily transformation that we call this a process of glorification. A lot of times when we talk about our glorified bodies I think what can happen is we sometimes think of bodies that we would glory in. You think about the body that you have and maybe the ways that it feels perishable at times and you can think sometimes you know I can't wait for my glorified body.

People sometimes wonder well what will I look like how old will I be what I think those are interesting questions but I'm not sure they're the right questions. We speak of glorified bodies or we speak of this process of glorification what we are saying is that in our bodies that are transformed there will be no presence of sin and no effects of sin. The perishable the mortal is all an effect of sin in this world. What Paul is saying is that one day we are going to be changed not so that we just look better not so that we just feel better but so that we are totally separated from. It is removed from us the presence and the effect of sin. This glorification is the the consummation of our salvation.

We often talk about salvation in a few parts. There is justification. You can think of justification as being freed from the penalty of sin. Last week we talked about the forgiveness of sins and how forgiveness is costly and how Jesus bore the cost in his death. He paid the price for our sins so that we no longer bear that debt. We have been freed from the penalty of sin. The moment that you trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior you are justified. Freed from the penalty of sin. But then begins this process of sanctification. There is justification which is freed from the penalty of sin but there is sanctification which is you are being freed from the power of sin. That we are not only guilty of sin but each one of us are sinners. Sinful people who make sinful

And what happens is in this process of sanctification the Holy Spirit who indwells God's people is at work to make us to look more like Jesus. Make us look more like the people God created us to be. What's happening is we are being freed from the power that sin has over us until one day we experience glorification in which we are freed from the presence of sin altogether. When our bodies are transformed there will not be any more temptation. There will not be any more longing for sin. Sin will not be an option as the perishable puts on the imperishable. We will not feel the effects of sin. This is why he talks about there being no more pain, no more disease, no more crying or mourning because the presence of sin, the effects of sin are all gone.

Isn't this a good news for us today? This is something that we would long for, something just better than life here on earth that lasts a little bit longer. Or even immortality that would leave you on this earth for an eternal period of time. What about a body that has been changed to dwell with God forever? A body that is free from the presence of sin and the effects of. He says one day this is coming when all things will be done away with including death. Death will be swallowed up. He says in verse 54, "When that happens, when the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, when this bodily transformation happens, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." Paul is saying when Jesus returns and all of this transformation happens, death will finally be swallowed up.

But what about until that day? What is our hope? What is our life look like as we await the day when death is swallowed up in victory? Because we believe in a bodily resurrection, because we believe in a bodily transformation which were removed from the presence and the effects of sin, I think it calls us to two things here at the end of chapter 15.

Because of those beliefs, therefore, we have victory over death. How does this affect our lives right now? How do these doctrines not just change our view about the future but even the present? Right now, we have victory over death. So Paul says that one day, death will be swallowed up in victory. In other words, one day, death will be no more. Earlier in chapter 15, the apostle Paul is talking about how Jesus is currently reigning as king. And he's putting all of his enemies under his feet.

All of the things that plague our world, all of those that would be against him, he is putting them under his feet until one day, the last enemy, which is death, will be under his feet. And it says in verses 25 and 26, "He must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." In other words, until Jesus returns, we are still going to experience physical death. It is only when Jesus returns that transformation happens that death will totally be swallowed up in victory. That death will be conquered as the final We're going to experience death on this earth. No matter what kind of crazy routines Brian Johnson comes up with, no matter what kind of fountain of youth or hopeful things that someone pursues, the death rate will still be 100%. We'll all experience death until death is swallowed up in victory

So you say, "Well, what does this have to do Well, Paul, when he says that death will one day, when Jesus returns to be swallowed up in victory, he's quoting from Isaiah 25.8. And that quotation from the Old Testament leads him to quote from the Old Testament, Hosea 13.14. And this is the quotation he gives us, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" And he goes on to explain that the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. If I could just try to paraphrase or put in other words what Paul is saying. He's saying while we still wait for the day when death is swallowed up, right now the sting of death has been removed. While we still wait, Jesus has returned and death is totally done away with, in the meantime, we have victory over death. Why? Because he says the sting of death is sin. The real pain of death is not actually the physical death, but is actually the separation from God that one would experience for all. The sting of death has been removed because the forgiveness of sins has come in Jesus. Because Jesus has come and died and rose from the dead, we already have victory over death. The sting of death has actually already been removed even though death has not been foddily swallowed up.

80 years ago this year, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was in Nazi Germany. He was being held at a concentration camp and in April of that year he was hanged. And accounts of his last day are that he was remarkably calm. He taught the Bible, and he knew his death on earth was coming and he said while this is an end, it is actually just the beginning of my life. How could someone approach death Because he knew that the sting of death had already been removed. People like Dietrich Bonhoeffer can approach death so calmly because 2,000 years before Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jesus died. And Jesus was not calm as he approached death. You read about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and he is in anguish, sweating, drops of blood. Not because of the painful crucifixion that he was about to experience, but because he was going to take the wrath of God in the cup. He was going to take the sting of death and because Jesus took the sting of death, we never have to feel it.

You can have hope in the midst of loss. You can have comfort in the midst of your grief. You can have peace even in the midst of pain because you have victory over death. It should not only change the way we view death, realizing the sting has been removed, but it should change the way we comfort those who are walking through a season of grief and Be able to take the comforting words that the sting of death has been removed and to encourage each other, comfort each other with these words. We should live as people who have victory over death and we should live as people who have steadfastness in It's the last conclusion that I want to draw for you as we come to the end of 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Paul says that because of Jesus' resurrection, it means a bodily resurrection, therefore death has lost its sting. You can know that you have victory over death as you await for death to be swallowed And that should mean that you are steadfast in this life.

Paul, for 57 verses, has built this doctrinal case that why we should believe in a bodily resurrection. And he ends in verse 58 by saying this, "Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters,

be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." You notice how he begins with a "therefore"? He says, "I'm drawing a conclusion from all that doctrinal teaching, all this theological explanation. What was it for? Here's the reason that you might be steadfast and immovable." Those are synonymous terms to say, "Brothers and sisters, be unwavering. Be unchanging. Be unflinchable." Continue faithfully. Don't get pushed aside by every circumstance in your life that changes. Don't be drawn away by every new teaching and fad that is out there. Continue faithfully. Be rooted in the gospel and the hope of the gospel. Build your foundation on this firm foundation. Be steadfast. Be immovable. But being immovable doesn't mean you're not doing anything.

He actually says the steadfastness should be pointed in a certain direction. Notice what he says, "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." He says, "You should be steadfast to overflow in your work for the Lord. You should be busy with the things of the work of the Lord." Overflowing, abounding in your steadfastness in what God has called you to do. I think it's important to always remind ourselves that the work of the Lord certainly involves the things of His church. Specifically, what we do here as His people. When you come and participate in the things of God's people here at the church, whether you are discipling others, teaching, helping run a ministry, whether you're being disciplined as you participate, in a Bible study, in a group, gathering with God's people, these are a part of the work of the Lord. We should be faithful to abound in the works of the things that we are doing here as a gathered body of believers.

It's also really important to remind ourselves often that the work of the Lord is not just limited to what happens in the local church. Paul says earlier in 1 Corinthians that whether you eat or drink, you can do it all for the glory of God. He says to the Colossians, "Whatever you do in word or in deed, if you do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, and you do it in thanks to God, it is the work of the Lord." You can change a diaper, clean a house, it's the work of the Lord. You can raise kids or care for parents as the work of the Lord. You can write an email, present a presentation, work on a project, whatever God might give you in the work of the Lord if it is done for the glory of the Lord. If it is done in the name of the Lord. Paul says always be abounding in this work. God has given you these things that you are called to do. Be overflowing in them. Don't stop, don't be changed, be steadfast, always abounding.

Why? Because he closes by saying knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. Let's just think about this verse and the way Paul constructs it. Here's where we're wrapping up. He draws the conclusion from all of the discussion, the teaching on the resurrection. He says therefore here's what you should do. Be steadfast and movable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Why? Knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. My question is how are those two things connected? He begins by saying here's why you should do it because of the resurrection and because of the resurrection then you should know that all of that work is not in vain. How are those ideas connected?

I think Paul is saying that because death has been defeated, because God is at work to make all things new, because we're not just going to exist as souls somewhere off in the distance, but we're going to exist as people raised in transformed bodies in a new heavens and a new earth that everything you do in the Lord will matter for eternity. That he sees every work that you do in the Lord and he will reward you. Jesus says don't lay up for yourself treasures in heaven that are perishable. Things that will not last, things that will break down and destroy. Rather lay up for yourself treasures in heaven, those things that are imperishable that will always last. That's what Paul is saying here. Because we believe in a bodily resurrection and a bodily transformation which we get to dwell as people with God forever in the new heavens and the new earth, let that compel you. Let that motivate you to steadfastly work in the things of the Lord. Because not one of those things is in vain.

Listen, everything you do for yourself, for your own glory, everything you do to serve the kingdoms of this earth is in vain. Every dollar we save up, every possession that we take hold of, it will not last. It is all perishable. But every work that we do in the Lord, no matter how big or how small, like Jesus says in another place, actually the less that people see it, the more he's going to reward you. Every work that you do in the Lord, none of it is in vain. All of it matters. So let's be people who believe this, that Jesus is going to return and when he does, our bodies will be raised up, will be transformed, to be freed from the presence and the effects of sin, and let that compel us to have hope, even in the face of death. To know the sting of death has been removed. And let that compel us to have steadfastness in this life, always abounding in the work of the Lord.