

## ***Week 10 | “Keep On, Keeping On”***

### **I. INTRODUCTION (1<sup>ST</sup> CORINTHIANS 15:50-58)**

- A. Over the past number of years, we’ve heard a lot about winning, being a winner, and avoiding anything that has to do with losing. But this yuuuge resurgence of discussion about winning is nothing new; it’s central to human nature. We are competitive at birth, sometimes even in the womb, like Jacob and Esau.
- B. In our family, Jen is by far the most competitive person. She simply destroys our family at nearly any game we play, to the point in Monopoly that she leaves all of us, Winston and his two-year old self included totally bankrupted, with a few dollars to our name, and she still wants to keep going.
- C. But this isn’t unique to our family, Jen’s competitive nature comes from her family, from Dwayne and Janna. In fact, it was so bad, early on, Janna had to become the peacemaker in their household, to become the only non-competitive person, because it was so intense in their household.
- D. Well, this competitive nature that God has given to us isn’t a bad thing. We’re designed to win, to succeed, to not end up not last, but first. But the fulfillment of this desire to win, finds its hope, not primarily in this life, but in the life to come.
- E. It’s true, Jesus has brought about a victory through His death on the cross, He’s secured the **DUB**. And from this WIN, Paul, in these verse’s at hand is going to answer what that victory brought about now. Does it only apply to the life to come, or is there implications of His death that change our present situation? Is it possible that Christ’s **WIN** on calvary in the past, can change not only our future, but also our present?
- F. Knowing that Christ has secured the WIN for us, empowers us to watch the game without anxiety, because we know the outcome. And instead of being removed, or sitting on the bench because of fear, we can get into the game, and leave everything on the field.

### **II. A CHANGE HAS TO HAPPEN (1<sup>ST</sup> CORINTHIANS 15:50-53)**

- 1. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:50-53** *“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”*
- B. Well, previously Paul’s told us that we will all be changed, but now he’s telling us expressly that **WE MUST BE CHANGED**, simply because our current corruptible bodies aren’t compatible with God’s future eternal kingdom!
- C. Just as Jesus told Nicodemus in **John 3**, and Peter in **Matthew 16**, that flesh and blood can’t reveal this, and flesh and blood can’t inherit God’s eternal kingdom, Paul is making clear again, the current state of our bodies, can’t inherit God’s eternal kingdom. **WE MUST BE CHANGED!**
  - 1. Now it’s not that Paul is saying, “*There will be no bodies in the age to come.*” He’s just saying, your body as it is, as good as it is, can’t inherit what God is bringing to us!

- D. Previously this truth was a mystery, it was something unclear, but now it’s been revealed, or opened up with us so that we can understand it. The mystery is that not everyone will be asleep when Christ returns, some will still be alive. What happens to them? THEY GET CHANGED ALSO! *Nobody’s getting into the eternal city in their earthly suit.*
- E. Paul gives us three phrases that help us understand how this transformation takes place;
1. *“In a moment”*—It’s a sudden event. The season of the Lord’s return won’t be a sudden event, but the actual moment of resurrection, will be a sudden happening!  
**a. Matthew 24:36-39**
  2. *“In the twinkling of an eye”*—It will happen not as a process like our sanctification in this age, but as fast as you can blink. What we have strived for, labored for, and fought regarding the flesh, will be changed suddenly, as fast as you blink!
  3. *“At the last trumpet”*—This moment of transformation won’t happen in a vacuum because it’s an ordered event, meaning it has a marked day in human history, a fixed day in the Father’s heart.  
**a. Matthew 24:15-35; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13-5:10; Revelation 11:15-19**

### III. WE GOT THE VICTORY, THROUGH CHRIST (1<sup>ST</sup> CORINTHIANS 15:54-57)

1. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:54-57** *“So, when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- B. It’s true, Christ has obtained the victory, not through a wrestling match with Satan, but through His sacrificial death, as our pure and spotless Lamb, He’s administered the death blow to God’s great opponent, the devil.
- C. But even though Christ’s labor on Calvary secured the **DUB**, it’s still yet to be fully realized in the follower of Christ. One commentator rightly said, *“Even if the last resurrection is still future, the basis of the victory is a present gift, providing grounds for present exultation and thanksgiving.”*
- D. Dr. George Eldon Ladd calls this, *“The inaugurated, but not yet consummated kingdom of God.”* This is helpful wording for us. Our danger in this subject is to take one side or the other. But God’s will would be for us to remain in the middle of the road, living the tension of the **NOW** and still **NOT YET!**
1. One side of this thought becomes too **OPTIMISTIC** about God’s kingdom, assuming everything is here and now, and we are no longer waiting for anything. This leads to dangerous views of the future, assuming that most of Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled, and we can convert the earth, prior to Christ return.
  2. But the other side of this thought becomes too **PESSIMISTIC** about God’s kingdom, assuming that nothing will happen in this age, because it’s all in the future. This leads to dangerous views about the present, because we’re so future oriented that we disengage in the present.
- E. Biblical eschatology says that Christ finished work on Calvary was complete, and lacks nothing, securing power, authority, and kingdom dynamics for the follower of Jesus here in this age.

- F. But it also says that we won’t be able to do everything, and as good as we follow Christ, we will still come up short, therefore we are longing for His return, when His past victory, is made manifest throughout all the nations of the earth!
1. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:57** *“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- G. Friends, logic won’t bring about this needed victory and transformation, reasoning can’t bring it about, and the strength of the flesh is unable to accomplish this, only God can do it!
1. Jesus as Christ is the first fruits of our resurrection, meaning, because He was raised, we will be raised. How He was raised, is how we will be raised.
  2. But also, because He absorbed death in His body, we now don’t have to feel death. Now death might come to us, but there is no longer a sting for the believer, or there doesn’t need to be a sting for the believer.

#### IV. KEEP ON KEEPING ON (1<sup>ST</sup> CORINTHIANS 15:58)

1. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58** *“Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”*
- B. Paul’s apostolic heart is on full display here in this verse. To a people that have rejected his authority, and Christ’s doctrine, which he has taught them, he’s here, concluding a stout defense with such incredible words of kindness, *“...beloved brethren...”*
- C. But it’s here, with the words, *“Therefore...”* that Paul is taking us all the way back to the start of this chapter, reminding us, *“that in light of what I just said, in light of the doctrine of the resurrection, CHURCH, YOU MUST KEEP ON KEEPING ON! Brethren hold fast to this doctrine, because it doesn’t just have implications for the future, but also for the present.”*
- D. This is his final exhortation to rid themselves of this false doctrine that rejects the resurrection.
- E. Instead of retreating, instead of shrinking back, they are called to advance, to pursue Christ, to move on, and live a life of risky moves, they are again to GIVE THEMSELVES FULLY TO GOD’S WORK!
1. Don’t be so pessimistic about the future that you lose touch with the present work that God’s called you to do, and don’t be overly optimistic about the present, that you lose sight of the fullness of God’s future kingdom! LIVE IN THE TENSION! Do the work now, and look for the future that yet coming!
- F. Why is the resurrection of the dead important for you?
1. It secures everything you have received in Christ—*Salvation from sin, Acceptance into God’s family, Power to overcome sin, kingdom authority to fulfill God’s call upon your life, and eternity with Christ!* If you lose this doctrine, you lose all the above.
  2. It removes the fear of death—Beloved, this life, isn’t the end of the road for the follower of Jesus. We no longer have to fear death, because Christ has removed the scorpion’s sting.

3. It changes the way live today—Because of the knowledge we have about what Christ did in the past, we have confidence in the future, and therefore, we can forge ahead in the present, knowing that our labor in, and through Christ, isn’t in vain! It’s meaningful, no matter how insignificant it might feel.