

Sermon Title: **“Victory in Jesus”**

Series: *Learn, Live, Lead* **Resurrection Sunday 2022**

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Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-58

## **Introduction**

If we had to summarize the totality of the Bible’s message in one word, it would be this: *Resurrection*. Everything spoken before flowed into and everything spoken after flows outward from the *Resurrection* of Jesus Christ. What Jesus accomplished on the cross was taking up on Himself our sin, enduring the wrath of God as judgment against that sin, and God accepting that act as payment for our sin. The Resurrection was the result not only for Jesus but for all who will trade their sin for His salvation, trading our sorrows for His Joy. *This is God’s promise to all who will take refuge in the ark of Jesus Christ!*

*“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.” -1 Peter 3:18-22*

This is the invitation that we both receive and take out into all the world. It begins by faith in Jesus, and it must continue with faith in Jesus. However, from the moment we come to Jesus, the world presses against us causing some to fall back from Him. Whether personal struggle, personal failure, ongoing illness, suffering, persecution- whatever we are facing, today’s message is one that will seek to encourage you to stay the course in Christ!

### **I. Remain in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-2; 56-58)**

*“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you- unless you believed in vain.” -1 Corinthians 15:1-2*

*“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.” -1 Corinthians 15:58*

This chapter’s beginning and ending verse serve as bookends to one of the most powerful chapters in the Bible. Paul argues that if we are struggling to hold on to our faith, then perhaps we have allowed this world to dilute the reality of who we are in Jesus Christ! For, the Gospel is Truth and will endure forever, whether we believe it or not. If we are to fall short of staying

the course with Jesus the deficiency is with our faith, not the Gospel of Christ. I know this is hard to hear, but it is the truth. The moment we stop empowering our excuses, we can begin to take hold of the resources God gives us through His Spirit to find renewal and the strength to endure, keeping stride with Jesus.

And this is what Paul is saying with *hold fast*; our life is a ship amidst a world with both calm and tumultuous waters and to navigate well we must set the ship's headway on the course pursuing Jesus' life as our own. It is not the waves that define our status, but the course we are on. We can trust we are in God's grip with the calm and stormy waters for following Him will lead us through them all faithfully.

But it must be about Jesus! If it is about anything else we are one circumstance away from jumping ship. Believing *in vain* is the concern of the Apostle that their faith was only surface level; easily washed away. To encourage his audience then, and us today, the prescription is a renewed understanding on what the Gospel that we believed in is!

For only then can we continue with *steadfastness, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord our labor is not in vain!*

## II. *The Gospel We Have Believed In (1 Corinthians 15:3-11)*

Paul moves forward with a three-fold defense of the Gospel:

- A. What the Gospel is
- B. Eyewitness to the Gospel's Claims
- C. Paul's Personal Witness

### *What the Gospel is.*

*“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.” -1 Corinthians 15:3-4*

The entire Bible, God's Word to us, has at its center the Person & Work of Jesus Christ. His death, burial, and resurrection are the culmination of and satisfaction to everything the Scripture records. There is no chapter or verse that will lead any in the Old Testament except to this, and everything after flows from this historic event. Without any piece of this, there is no Gospel message. We cannot claim Jesus' life without His death; and there is no Resurrection without claiming His offered life and death for our own.

### *Eyewitness to the Gospel's Claims*

*“And that he appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep (died). Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.” -1 Corinthians 15:5-7*

The life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is a historical event. It specifically, actually took place in the time and after the manner the Gospel writers attest to it having unfolded. After His Resurrection, Jesus was seen openly by many for forty days before His Ascension. This eyewitness account stands alongside the Scripture as a voice affirming its validity and truth.

### ***Paul's Personal Witness***

*“Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy 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. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.” -1 Corinthians 15:8-11*

Paul's own transformed life as a Pharisee among the Pharisee's, once a persecutor of those who placed faith in Jesus and lived their lives after Him, stands to testify of the Gospel's power to do in us what it's promised to do! He is truly a new creation in Christ, the old passing away as the new is coming in. Paul labors to not only see people come to place faith in the Gospel, but to remain faithful to the Gospel in their lives. In other words, to see people finish the race they began running with Jesus.

### **III. Do Not Dilute the Reality of Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-34)**

#### ***What if there is no Resurrection?***

*“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.” -1 Corinthians 15:12-13*

Paul now continues his plea with a look at what it would mean if Jesus had not risen from the dead. As some, like the Sadducee's, have infiltrated the body of believers denying the resurrection is even a real event, Paul shows how the resurrection is central to all that we are and hold to in hope.

If we allow someone to tamper with the clear teaching of Scripture, we must understand what this would mean for each of us. Paul presents six reasons we must protect our message, for if Jesus had not Resurrected, then:

- 1) What we gather to do on Sundays is pointless (v.14)

*“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain”*

- 2) Faith in Jesus is not different than buddha, Mohammed, or any other religious figure(v14)

*“and your faith is in vain.”*

- 3) Everyone who said they witnessed Jesus' Resurrection is a liar (v.15)

*“We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, who he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.”*

4) Everyone is still dead in sin (v.17)

*“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins”*

5) Death is the end; we will never see loved ones again (v.18)

*“Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.”*

6) Because we believe, preach, and live this lie the world should pity us (v.19)

*“If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”*

Sometimes we need to experience life without *something* to appreciate that *something* we do have. In this case it is our faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

***Because there is Resurrection!***

*“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” -1 Corinthians 15:20*

Whether we choose to believe this or not, the ***Resurrection of Jesus Christ*** impacts everyone. Paul now leads us to understand that regardless of if we choose to begin, continue, and end with Christ or not, Jesus is still the King of a Kingdom that is coming which is eternal; it will know no end.

But here is where there is a challenge which without faith, we cannot navigate this storm. We still die. *Right?*

Jesus' Resurrection was the first fruits, meaning all that He experienced, we will share with Him in. Not just His suffering, but also His Resurrection. There are two realities coexisting here- a spiritual and physical realm coming together in the reign of Jesus. There are still portions of God's Promises to us through Christ that have yet to come. No part of this journey with Jesus in this life will ever be without the need of faith.

*“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*

**-1 Corinthians 13:13**

While Jesus is working through us with His Spirit, every day forward is moving in a cadence that will see all things brought into subjection to Jesus, and He will present this Kingdom, (His Bride) to our Father in order to receive this inheritance given to the Son who shares this with us. This is how and when we step into our inheritance as co-heirs with Jesus. We are not there yet, but every day, every circumstance, every calm or stormy sea is one step closer to His Return.

Death is ultimately the final blow for sin, the devil, and the demonic realm. Until then, some of us will die. Yet, should Christ Return and we are alive, the dead will rise first, then we will rise

with them to meet our Lord together in the air! Dead or alive, neither has the advantage for God is the God of the living and desires all to know and receive of Him fully. *There is so much of God that if everyone feasted to satisfy a hunger that could not be satisfied, God would still be more than enough.*

*“Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals. Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.” -1 Corinthians 15:33-34*

So, knowing this let us not loose heart. Do not allow the challenges to our faith to cause us to dock and engage in influences that feed our defeated sin, stir our doubts, and lead us to engage in acts that dilute our faith.

Moments when life proves difficult can be dangerous terrain for saints, for it is here we hear the cries of our own hearts, the whisper and invitation of the enemy, as well as the persistent push from the world to sin against the Savior who loves us.

*“But as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.” -2 Corinthians 6:4-10*

#### **IV. The Best in Christ is Yet to Come! (1 Corinthians 15-56)**

We are not ready to receive fully what God has in store for us. Patience is not easy to be led with; we are eager for deliverance and satisfaction immediately. Yet God’s leading of us to be patient is rooted in His own patience displayed through His love and longsuffering, desiring that none should perish.

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” -2 Peter 3:9

What is the promise Resurrection is bringing to us today?

- 1) *The Promise of **bodies*** that will be without sin and its consequences (brokenness, exhaustion, fatigue, illness, depreciation / weakness, and death to name a few things) and can not only receive but experience to the fullest of joy what is in store for us.

*“Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.” -1 Corinthians 15:49-50*

- 2) *The Promise of **Reunion*** before Inheritance

*“Behold! 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 imperishable, and we shall be changed. For the perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.” **-1 Corinthians 15:51-53***

The Call of Christ for His Bride will be so sudden, Paul compares it to a mere blink of an eye! How eager is God for this moment? When it is time, it will happen faster than can be put into words. *We are longing for that moment? **So is He!***

Is there advantage to be alive over being dead when Christ Returns? By no means!

*“For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.” **-1***

#### **Thessalonians 4:15-18**

The timing of this event is known to no one but God our Father; even Jesus as God’s Son knows not when this moment will be.

*“But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, ‘keep awake.’ For you do not know when the time will come.” **-Mark 13:32-33***

While Jesus awaits this moment, He is far from being idle. In fact, in Jesus’ final moments before His crucifixion when He rightly should be comforted by the Disciples instead speaks comfort to encourage them.

*“Let not your hearts be troubled, Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” **-John 14:1-4***

#### **V. Victory In Jesus! (1 Corinthians 15:54-58)**

It is in that moment, united with Saints past and present, raised together to be with Christ that the final manifestation of His Victory for our lives will take place.

*“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.” **-1***

#### **Corinthians 15:54-57**

Because of Jesus, death for us is like a bee without a stinger, or an enemy revealed only to be conquered by Jesus and the cross.

This is the joy that was not only set before Jesus, but the same joy that He is leading us into: Home with Him forever.

If you could talk to your future self; the you in resurrected Glory seated with Christ at the great marriage feast, what words would your future, glorified self have to say to you right now? We need not stretch our minds to image, for the Word of God reveals this to us here and now!

*“The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”*

**-Revelation 22:17**

For those who have started the journey with Christ,

*“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.” **-1 Corinthians 15:58***

Steadfast and immovable invite us to be anchored in Christ, set to His course, filled with the strength and power of His Spirit to overflow God’s Kingdom treasury into the world around us. No matter what we have, are, or will be going through, nothing is without meaning and purpose. We may not see nor understand right now, but we can trust and commit ourselves to our Father’s Will, just as our Savior and Lord Jesus did.

His faith translated in obedience to our Father’s will and though it led Him through the worst of times, He was Resurrected, has Ascended to the Right Hand of the Father, and is preparing the Kingdom for when it is time to come for His Saints. Our faith will lead us to experience nothing less.

And finally to those who have wandered from our Lord, have not received our Lord, or intend to leave this moment for more time to think, God’s Word to you this day is,

*“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” **-Acts 17:30-31***

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” **-John 3:16***

*“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” **-Romans 10:9-10***

*“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” **-John 1:12-13***

**This is the Victory that overcomes the world.**

**Victory in Jesus!**