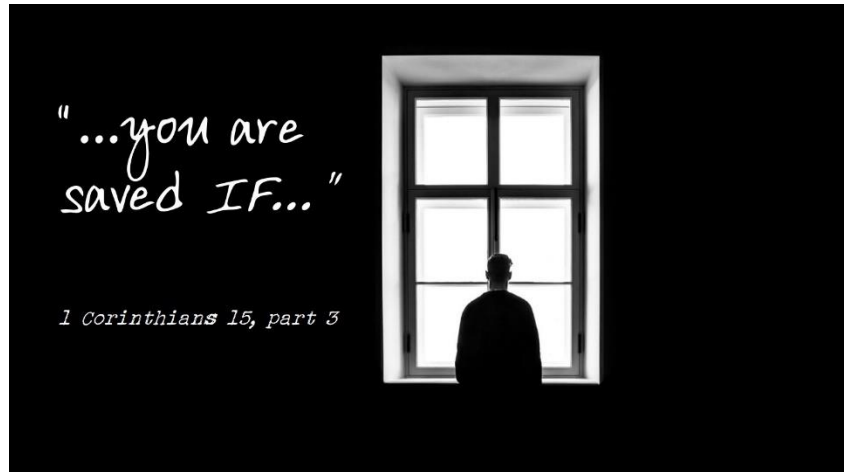


**“...you are saved *if...*”**

**- 1 Corinthians 15, Part 3 -**

**by Pastor Tim Dodson  
at JF Believers Church  
in Menomonie, Wisc  
on Aug 29, 2021**



1 Corinthians 15:31 -58 *I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ*

*Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage [is it] to me? If [the] dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" 33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." 34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak [this] to your shame. 35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" 36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other [grain]. 38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. 39 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. 40 [There are] also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial [is] one, and the [glory] of the terrestrial [is] another. 41 [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. 42 So also [is] the resurrection of the dead. [The body] is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam [became] a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 The first man [was] of the earth, [made] of dust; the second Man [is] the Lord from heaven. 48 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. 49 And as we have borne the image of the [man] of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [Man]. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. 54 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." 55 "O Death, where [is] your sting? O Hades, where [is] your victory?" 56 The sting of death [is] sin, and the strength of sin [is] the law. 57 But thanks [be] to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 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.*

**15:31–32 “I affirm, 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 beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"**

We could read verse 31 as: “As surely as I rejoice over you as my children in Christ Jesus, every day of my life I am exposed to death.”

“I die daily.” I am moved in so many ways by that statement. This is where the gospel meets the litmus test of my salvation: The true believer lives a different life-style than the world while still in the world...he is a living witness of the Lordship of Jesus Christ...where we stand is tested by who and/or what is master over our lives...our response to His salvation by whether we live in righteousness and godliness. The true believer lives a different life-style than the world while still *in* the world, and he is a living witness of the Lord Jesus Christ and our response to His salvation by living in righteousness and godliness. The fact remains...the true Christian *will* suffer persecution from the world. When things get difficult...*and they will get difficult*...it is the individual that is truly redeemed who lives factually in the light of Christ’s resurrection as well as his own and embraces the life to come, that makes it through. It is *that* individual that remains standing. Paul says he “died every day.” In 2 Corinthians 1, he speaks similarly saying “*We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.*” (1:8-9)

What a vast difference in the manifestation of our faith today versus that of Paul. Certainly we must realize that the prosperity, comfort and safety of living in the West has not done anything positive for the purity, commitment, and spread of Christianity. In truth, we have been lulled into a “new Christianity” that plays church, listens to pop praise on the radio, touts an extra-biblical if not anti-biblical “family first” agenda, and place Jesus-fish on the back of our cars in “bold declaration” of our belief in God. Yet in other countries like China, India, and the old Soviet Union, the faith has not only *survived* persecution, it has inexplicably *thrived*. In the meantime, with all of our freedom of religion in the USA, we have grown weak, divisive, and spiritually impotent. What does that tell us?

Now let me make this clear: I do not *desire* persecution. I just want us to understand what comfort and ease does to us. Instead of taking it to the streets, we generally find ourselves *at least seeking* to operate in an atmosphere of relative tranquility. The real question is, are we living for the now, or for the eternal? If there is a resurrection and a “forever life” coming, then what should that mean to us? If there is no resurrection from the dead, what is the point of all this? We might as well party because if that’s the case, everything we believe in is a lie.

**15:33-34** “*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.*”

Paul is not switching subjects, but steps back to the root issue that is presented throughout 1 Corinthians: those who were causing problems in the community of believers. Moreover, those who are rejecting scripture...in word or deed, in any way. We cannot believe it is harmless, or somehow an exercise of love to be in any kind of unity with such hurtful and divisive individuals. We are so willing to divide with others over silly non-scriptural issues, yet we will often still unite with those who reject the very basic aspects of the faith. The Bible is full of exhortation to walk separate from those who do not stand on the truth of scripture, or are not believers at all.

**Pr 22:24** “Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go...”

**1Co 5:9** “I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people...”

**1Co 5:11** “...you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a Christian yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, *or is abusive*, or a drunkard, or a swindler. Don’t even eat with such people.”

**2Jo 1:10** “If someone comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ, don’t invite him into your house or encourage him in any way.”

**2Co 6:14** “Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can goodness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?”

The Old King James uses the word “communications” and the NKJ uses “keep company with” which is more accurate to the original. For the original does not mean *conversation*, but moreover it means the communion with such folks. I am saddened to hear of how many of us here in this church are still social media “friends” with those who are under church discipline...which only encourages them in their sin and presents a picture that we are not unified in our judgement.

The point is this: scripture is not calling us out of the world that is lost...for we cannot be salt and light if we do. But we ARE called to not associate with those who claim the faith and yet hold to error, false teaching, lies, or are abusive. If we associate with them—accept them as friends and companions—they will eventually influence us and corrupt our behavior, lead us into sin and error. Paul says we need to “wake up” to this fact and live accordingly.

***15:35-38 But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’ Foolish one, 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.***

Paul begins to deal with the nay-sayers point by point. He is being patient, but he still refers to these adversaries as “fools.” Apparently knowing the questions being raised, he begins to do his best to answer them, although it is difficult to explain the mystery of resurrection. The first enquiry is what form this resurrection will take. Paul begins to explain by using terminology a society rooted in agriculture would understand. What is sown in the ground is merely the seed of what will come. The seed dies and is placed in the ground, and through a great mystery we fail to understand that completely even today. We do know that the seed comes forth in life in a far greater form than when it was planted. It is a fact and is readily accepted by all even though we do not understand it. Yet in the resurrection of the human body, we are far less apt to accept such a mystery.

But let us...for the sake of this whole chapter 15 series, wrap our minds around that small statement: that the seed is ***not made alive unless it dies***. This is both the mystery and the mandate. “IF” it dies. Unless you are willing to die to this world, your old life, your personal plans, desires, and wants, and be “reborn” under the calling and plan of God, *which is more awesome than you would have ever come up with anyway*...you will not be “made alive.” This *is* the path to salvation. There is no other way...no middle road.

Eventually...in the after life, we will be all that we are intended to be. We will blossom in beauty and fruitfulness.

***15:39-42 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, and 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. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.***

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that God placed all of His creation in the form and place He so designed. Each unique and special. He made no mistakes. Everything and everyone is not the same. Only God holds the strings. Only God is the Creator, and Paul is asking us to trust that.

***15:43-45 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual 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.***

Our earthly body is corruptible; our resurrected body will be incorruptible. Corruptible means that they age, deteriorate, die, decay, and decompose. But our heavenly bodies will differ radically. They shall be incorruptible: never age, never deteriorate, never die, never decay, and never decompose. They will be transformed and never perish. They will be completely free from defilement and depravity, from death and decay. God has made our bodies to fit the environment in which we exist. When we exist in the heavenly realm, our new bodies will be designed for that realm.

When these natural bodies die, there will be nothing glamorous or pretty about it. We will die; no more breathing, no more heart beats. All the things we worked for and purchased in this life will be left behind. All the pleasures of this world will cease. All family connections will come to an end. There is nothing honorable in death. It's just weakness. It's just death.

Ah, but for the children of the kingdom, there is indeed glory in our resurrection. Our new bodies will not be subject to the limits of these earthly models. Jesus, in His new resurrected body, entered rooms without using the door. Yet please note that even though it was a spiritual body, it was a body just the same. He could be touched, He was physical.

***15:46-48 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 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.***

It is amazing how hard men will work to make their fleshly bodies (the earthly man) fit while slighting or ignoring the spiritual. But the body is only temporary and the spiritual is forever.

*1Ti 4:7 –8 "Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next."*

These bodies are essentially just dirt. Our bodies are made from the dust of the ground according to Genesis 2:7, 3:19. Scientists have discovered that the human body is comprised of some 28 base and trace elements, all of which are found in the earth.

***15:49-50 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.***

On this earth we are men and women, mere humans. We bear the image of Adam, the first man. When we are resurrected we will bear the image of the heavenly Man; we will bear the likeness of Christ. Our present bodies are not suited for the heavenly realm. The ones we have now will get sick, break down, and finally quit. However our new bodies will never get sick and will never die.

*Rev 21:4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

*15:51-58 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 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. 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.*

For the believer, our death is simply the shedding of this old body and taking on the new. There is no doubt that Satan, not wanting us to experience or relish in such a great spiritual concept, has worked overtime to build up an incredible fear associated with death. He wants us to hold onto these frail bodies and frail world with everything we have. People will spend every dime they can lay their hands on to have just one more day in this world.

**1 Thess 4:16** *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."*

Not all of us will die; some may very well be alive when Christ returns. Whether we pass from earthly life to spiritual with or without the element of death, we will all receive new bodies. Try to imagine the unthinkable: all our brothers and sisters in Christ from all of time being resurrected around us in a moment. It's not science fiction. It's scriptural fact. There are a lot of people that I am separated from right now, but they aren't dead. I will be with them again and forever.

"In a moment" speaks of the smallest of time measurements. In a "twinkling of an eye" we all will be changed. This can only be in reference to the rapture of the church. As children of God, with knowledge of scripture and now an understanding of this mystery, our attitude concerning our brethren who have gone ahead of us should be one of joy, not of sadness. We may be saddened by their absence, but according to this and other passages, **they** are not sad. They have "put on incorruption." They are living in eternity. "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Isa 25:8** *"He will swallow up death forever! The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears. He will remove forever all insults and mockery against his land and people. The LORD has spoken!"*

All of history's apparent satanic victories, the Garden of Eden, the cross, endless wars and atrocities of man's inhumanity against man, have been overthrown by one deity-infused act: **the resurrection of Christ**. Therefore, or, *because of all this*, real transformed followers of Christ are called to and empowered for a life that is "*steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*" Let me ask you today; does that describe your life? Please note the phrase "the **work** of the Lord." This is to describe our life in Christ. "IF" it does not, then scripture itself and Christ Himself renders judgement against you. Not for us to take some elitist stance against you, but for *you*...for you to look into that mirror and see the truth of who and what you are.

"In God's world, for those who are in earnest, there is no failure. No work truly done, no word earnestly spoken, no sacrifice freely made, was ever made in vain." F. W. Robertson

The fear of death comes from sin. Perfect love casts out all fear. 1Jo 4:18 says "*Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully*

*experienced his perfect love.*” Unconfessed and thus unforgiven sin possesses the souls of men, naturally spawning a fear of death and subsequent judgment. This is true whether men will admit it in the light of day or not. For in the quiet of the night, alone in their beds, they are controlled by that fear. It motivates their every earthly action. However, if we know our sins are forgiven, then we can face whatever comes, even death, without fear.