

# “Is Life Over for Me?” // 1 Corinthians 15

## // *Cutting Through the Noise* # 16

[\(VIDEO: Easter Promo\)](#)

In case you missed the last part of that video, YES, it did say that *tickets are available NOW* for Easter at Walnut Creek!

- You can hop on our website to sign-up for your **seat** (or the awesome lawn section, of course): I’ve told you, but we would love to see 20k people to attend and are asking God for that.
- You can also sign-up there to **serve**: which, you may not know this, but when we did Ballpark back in 2013 it took *one thousand* volunteers to pull that off. So we need you to VOLUNTEER... EVERYONE turn to your neighbor and say, “Are you going to volunteer?” If they don’t give an immediate and emphatic yes, if there’s even the slightest hesitation, say, “Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, you can your lazy self out of bed and volunteer.” And, the best part, is that we’ve figured out a way for you to volunteer and still be able to attend the service.
- When we did this at the Ballpark, we had 554 people baptized. That takes a lot of volunteers. It’s awesome volunteer work, but we need you.
- Bottom line hop on our website (see what I did there? Hop, like the Easter bunny? No bunny loves you like Jesus). Hop on our website for more info about tickets, serving, and helping with—or getting—go ahead and sign up to get baptized at Easter if you never have.

1 Corinthians 15: this is another of the **most significant chapters** in the whole Bible.<sup>1</sup>

As you turn there, let me say that I love how we are a church who celebrates and gets excited about what God is doing—we love worshiping loud with a smile on our faces—but I am also acutely aware that every week there are a number of people at TSC who are hurting. Some of you are struggling with chronic pain or incurable diseases. Cancer. COVID was devastating for some of you. Some struggle with emotional and mental health issues: Anxiety, depression, PTSD, the effects of trauma—you’ve seen the therapists and taken the medicines, but it never seems to fully go away. Some of you feel trapped in a bad marriage—you’ve prayed, and tried to make things better, but your situation is just not changing. You’re trying to prepare yourself for the reality that it may never change. Some of you are frustrated that you are still single—not every single person is this way, of course, but some of you want to be married and you are wondering if that door is ever going to open. Some of you are pretty sure that door has closed.

We have others who feel like they are suffering because of dumb decisions they made years ago—you’ve asked forgiveness and feel assured that God has given it to you, but—bottom line—you can’t

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<sup>1</sup> Resources consulted: David Platt, “Living In Light Of Eternity, Part 2: How Do You Press On In Difficult Days,” sermon preached at McLean Bible Church on August 15, 2021; John Mark Comer, “Resurrection: The Defeat of Death (And All His Friends)” sermon preached at Bridgetown Church on August 14, 2011; Wilson, Andrew. 1 Corinthians For You: Thrilling You With

rewrite the past: that decision cost you your job; or your marriage and family; maybe it landed you in jail. And so now there is like a cloud of despair that hangs over your life: **“Is this as good as it is ever gonna get?” Or, “Is life over for me?”**

### **1 Corinthians 15 is for you.**

As we’ve seen, **Paul writes the letter of 1 Corinthians to answer questions the Corinthians have asked of him or to address problems he’s heard that they’re having. Here’s the question he’s dealing with in chapter 15:** Vs. 12 **“How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?”** Paul wants to show them that belief in our bodily resurrection is as core a Christian concept as you can get. It is not a secondary or peripheral belief; it is foundational to the Christian hope.

Evidently, you see, there were some in Corinth denying the physical resurrection of our bodies. **Here’s why:** *The religious environment in Corinth had been shaped by philosophers like Plato and Plutarch, who taught that all of us consist of body and soul, with body being bad and your soul being good, so when your body dies, your good soul leaves this old piece of trash behind and goes on up to heaven where it enters a blessed experience. Most Greek and Roman philosophers believed in an afterlife, it just wasn’t a physical afterlife. And that’s*

How Grace Changes Lives, The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition. Michael Horton, “[Risen Indeed](#),” WhiteHorseInn.org. Joni Eareckson Tada, “Wheelchairs and Heaven,” [joniandfriends.org](#)

because the spirit is good and material things are secondary, lesser, even bad.

**Do people still think this way today?** Yeah. Ask yourself: Have you ever thought of Heaven as some far away, disembodied place--a “celestial shore” that your spirit “flies away” to? That makes for good bluegrass but bad theology. Or have you thought about heaven as a colorless world where we sit around on clouds, wearing loincloths, strumming our harps and shooting nerf bows and arrows at each other all day? Or wondered what in the world we’re going to do and how we’re not all going to be bored out of our minds?

In 1 Cor 15 Paul says that the whole point of Christ’s saving work was to redeem the physical body and usher in God’s Kingdom on earth--a physical, tangible kingdom, that’s actually similar to this one, just much more glorious, and without the curse.

#### **Here’s what Paul does in this chapter:**

- First, he asks: Did the resurrection of Jesus actually happen?
- Second: How does physical resurrection even work?
- And then, finally,: How important is the resurrection? What difference does it make for how we see life today?

**That’s a tall order, so let’s get to work:** 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, (the way Paul writes this indicates that this was either a confession, or creed, or some say a hymn, in the early church--he’s quoting something they all know, like the lyrics to a song) 5 and that he appeared to Cephas

(who is that? Anybody know? Cephas is the nickname of ‘Peter’), then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

In these verses Paul basically says two things about the resurrection: it happened, and it is foundational to everything else we believe.

In establishing that it happened, Paul points to two pieces of evidence crucial to early Christian testimony: the empty tomb and living eyewitnesses--several hundred of us who saw him alive after the resurrection--in different times and at different places--including more than 500 of us at one time.

**N.T. Wright, an Oxford scholar,** says that both of these things--the empty tomb and the eyewitnesses--are crucial parts of the testimony: *If we only had an empty tomb, he said, but no eyewitnesses, critics would have concluded that the body was stolen. If there were only eyewitnesses, but no empty tomb, they would have concluded that the witnesses were deluded, or hallucinating. But the two together make for convincing evidence.*

Sometimes people say, “Oh, well, this belief in a physical resurrection of Jesus was a legend that grew up over time. It wasn’t part of the original message, but over the years as Christians felt the need to beef up their message, they added in these myths about him resurrecting--**the idea is that Jesus started out as a regular, Jewish holy man**--a little radical, who taught some insightful and revolutionary things that got him killed. But after he died, his disciples

wanted to keep his body of teaching alive, and so these legends started to grow up about his miracles and eventually about his resurrection. As things got repeated from generation to generation, they got exaggerated. For example, what started out as, “His teachings live on in us,” turned into “He lives in our hearts,” which turned into, “He was raised from the dead and his disciples saw the empty tomb.”

Here’s the problem with that: Paul’s letter to the Corinthians was written in 53 A.D. (no one really disputes that--it’s one of the few facts that both liberal and conservative NT scholars agree on), and already Paul, in this letter, points to a hymn sung commonly in the church that celebrated Christ’s resurrection. Even the very liberal NT scholar Gerd Lüdemann, who is basically an atheist, says that the hymn Paul is quoting in vs. 3, “Christ died, was buried, and was raised on the 3rd day according to the Scriptures” dates to within two years after the crucifixion.<sup>2</sup>

That’s way too early for a legend to grow up. Think of it like this: Many of you remember when Dale Earnhardt Sr. died at the Daytona 500 a few years ago. That was 20 years ago. Some of you were watching it when it happened. Even me saying it makes you want to (salute). Well, if someone today started saying, “Dale resurrected. Right there on the track! He got out of the car, walked a few laps around the track, and then drove the #3 straight up into heaven.” You’d say, “No.” Even if we didn’t have video footage, you’d say, “Well, I know so and so who was watching it live and that didn’t happen.” Paul is like, “Look, if you doubt my claim, ask all these

people who saw him alive.” And all these people were still alive who could validate the claim.

Maybe, you say, they were hallucinating. Paul says “It was 500 people at once. 500 people don’t typically hallucinate all together.” And, if it was just a hallucination, Jesus’ enemies, the Romans or Jews, would have produced the body and nipped this fantasy in the bud, right?

Now, you have the alternative explanation that the Apostles were lying and knew they were lying. The problem with that is I can’t think of a plausible motivation for them to lie. When you propagate something you know it’s a lie, it’s usually to gain some monetary or political power. But like Paul says in this chapter, the Apostles’ confession that they had seen the risen Jesus brought none of those things--in fact, the opposite: persecution and poverty and death, and yet they kept right on claiming they’d seen him anyway.

All that to say, I agree with N.T. Wright, who says that all other explanations for how Christianity got started--for the truly remarkable and unlikely birth of the church and its incredibly rapid spread in the face of all odds--all those other alternative theories are far less compelling than the one the early Christians themselves provided: Jesus rose from the dead.

I like the German historian/theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg hits the nail on the head: “The evidence for Jesus’ resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to

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<sup>2</sup><https://whitehorseinn.org/bloghttps://modernreformation.org/resource-library/web-exclusive-articles/23/risen-indeed-3/#Footnote9>

**change the way you live.”** It may be unusual, miraculous--but that doesn't mean it didn't happen. Paul says, *it did happen*. It changed my life. I went, vs. 9, from being a persecutor of the church to being its proclaimer.

**And far from being a secondary Christian truth**, Paul says, this truth is the foundation of just about everything else in the Christian life. In vs. 3 he says the truth of the resurrection is of “first” importance. “First” importance implies that there are other genuinely important things, too, but only this is of FIRST importance. This is everything. Everything rises or falls on this. Without this, we have nothing.

**Paul says, vs. 15, if you say Christ didn't rise, you have a number of problems. First, it makes all of us Apostles liars.** This wasn't a tangential part of our message, he says, it is the core. **vs. 15, “We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ.”** If Christ didn't rise, we're not just off on a few details, or misguided religious zealots. We're frauds and phonies, because we've staked everything on this claim.

**Second, he says, (vs. 17) “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.”** The resurrection was the validation that God accomplished our salvation on the cross; so if Christ didn't rise, his death didn't accomplish anything. It was just the random martyr of a good man. And so your faith in Christ as Savior is misplaced.

**Third, vs. 18, if Christ is not raised, Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.** If Christ didn't rise from the dead, those saints in the Bible who died believing the promises of God are

no better off than those who paid no attention. Faithful believers in the Old Testament looked forward to some future earthly hop--Job, for example, said, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the end he will stand upon the earth (and I will stand with him.)” If Christ didn't rise from the dead, that hope was wrong. There was no earthly future for Job or Abraham or David or anyone else who hoped in it.

**Fourth, (vs. 19) If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.** If the benefits of Christianity are only what comes in this life, that stinks. Christianity is hard. It involves a lot of difficult decisions and dying to yourself and personal sacrifice. Church is kind of a difficult hobby, isn't it? You gotta get up on a perfectly good Sunday morning, get dressed, do battle with your kids, come try to find a parking space, where the parking guy makes you park in this far-away parking spot when you can SEE a much closer one right up there. Then you have to sit in a room with a bunch of people and some of them are weird. They carry huge Bibles and say things like, “Bless you, brother.” And sometimes, the service leaders make you pray out loud and that feels completely weird since you don't know the people beside you. It's a terrible hobby. If Jesus didn't raise from the dead, why aren't we all sleeping in today?

And that's not to mention all those people who sacrificed their fortunes or gave up their lives to take the message of Jesus' death and resurrection to others. If Christ didn't rise from the dead, all these sacrifices we are making for the gospel, all this persecution--it's all wasted--and we are most to be pitied.

**Fifth, vs. 24, if Christ did not rise from the dead, the whole point of salvation, which was to bring all of Creation back under the rule of**

Jesus, has failed. From the very beginning, God's purpose has been to redeem what sin cursed. When God created the heavens and the earth, he said, "It is good!" Contrary to Plato, God didn't look at creation and say, 'Meh. It's ok.' He said, it's GOOD!" And **it's still good**, even though it is temporarily under the curse of sin. Jesus wants it back. Jesus didn't go through all he went through just so he could throw away creation. He died to redeem it, to cleanse it, to remove the curse from it.

**Finally, vs. 29**, if Christ didn't rise from the dead, saying that you stand in the faith of your fathers is useless. In vs. 29, Paul says something very confusing, that's caused a lot of people a lot of difficulty : "(If Christ is not raised)... what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?" Baptized for the DEAD, what's that all about? Well, it can't mean what the Mormons say it means, where you get baptized on behalf of an ancient relative--you dig through your family history and try to find people who weren't saved and get baptized on their behalf, "Well, Uncle Peter, who came over on the Mayflower in 1620, he was a hellion. I'm going to get baptized this morning on his behalf." That would make our baptism services a lot more interesting--and a lot longer. But nowhere does the Bible teach we can get saved or baptized on behalf of someone else. The only way any of us can be saved is by putting our own faith in Christ. So, what does this phrase mean? Well, there are a variety of options, and if you look at a good study Bible, it will lay those out for you, but I personally think the most compelling one is to translate "on behalf of" as "in regards to," which is one of the ways this Greek phrase can be translated. So the verse would read like this: **If Christ is not raised, what do people mean by being baptized with regards to the dead (i.e.**

**those former saints whose faith you are aligning yourself with when you are baptized)?"** When we get baptized, we are joining ourselves to the faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the saints who have gone before us, and we are saying, "Their hope is our hope." But if they are all dead and gone, why be baptized into their faith? It didn't do them any good. The whole point of saying, "I am joining in the hope of Abraham, David, and Isaiah" is that you'll get to experience that hope together with them one day.

Let's keep moving forward. After establishing the fact of the resurrection, Paul **hears in his head an objection** from all the disciples of Plato: **35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"** I mean, we got these bodies, and they got all these problems, who wants to live with this thing forever? And what about people who got cremated or died in a nuclear reactor meltdown--and there is nothing left of their bodies? How are they going to get resurrected? Be honest, how many have ever had these questions? (I remember hearing one time about a believer who was buried under an apple tree, and years later when they were digging up his body to move it, they couldn't find the body, but where his body was was a tree root, which was now sort of in the shape of the guy's body. So, evidently, this tree root had sucked up this guy's body, processed it for nutrients and turned them into apples. The best part was this was a popular apple tree everybody in the town ate apples from. So the question was, when the resurrection happens, do people who have eaten from this apple tree have parts of their bodies fly off them because his body was part of theirs? How does all this work?

In the following verses, Paul doesn't fully answer every question, but he gives us the basic parameters for how to think about it. **In vs. 36,**

he uses a seed analogy to describe resurrection life. Check it out, I love this: 36 What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. Our physical bodies are like a seed of what we'll later become. A seed is made out of the same stuff as the full grown plant, but the full grown thing is much more complex and awesome. A watermelon seed and a watermelon are made of the same stuff, but the watermelon is awesome and complex and rich and colorful. The watermelon seed is just a boring little black teardrop. Or, think of a tadpole compared to a frog. Or like a tiny human embryo in the womb compared to a full grown adult. It's all the same stuff, just the adult version is so much more complex. If you, as an embryo, could see yourself as an adult, it would be hard to believe all that you would become! Just imagine zygote J.D. seeing me now.

That's similar to the change we go through in the resurrection.

If you're taking notes, here's your first answer to Paul's question:

"What are our resurrection bodies like?" **Write down:**

- **AWESOME (vs. 37):** This (body), compared to my resurrection body, is like a watermelon seed compared to the full grown watermelon. I can't even get my mind around that. I'm going to be athletic, good-looking, limber, I'll have no more aches and pains, I won't gain unwanted weight--I suspect I'll be able to fly. I'll be able to walk through walls. I say that because Jesus did those things with his resurrected body. It's like I'll be like a better version of Neo from the Matrix. How fantastic will that be? To wake up in the morning and just feel awesome, immediately. I'm

not that way now. I wake up in the morning sore, and all I did the night before was *sleep*. Somehow rolling from this position was enough to throw me off for the rest of the day.

- Second quality to write down: **ETERNAL (vs. 42): What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.** No more deterioration. I guess our bodies will have the power of self-regeneration. No deterioration. No getting old. No slow decline where gravity pulls everything the wrong direction.
- **Write down: BEAUTIFUL (vs. 43): It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.** Our bodies will be raised in indescribable beauty. I don't just mean vain beauty, though I'm sure it includes that. We're talking about real beauty, the sinless beauty of a soul united to God now reflected in a body.
  - I've told you before about Joni Eareckson Tada, a woman who had a diving accident when she was a teenager. She was beautiful, popular, athletic, brilliant; she had it all; but had a diving **accident that has left her as a quadriplegic for more than 50 years**. Her autobiography is one of the most powerful things you can read. She says, "*I can hardly believe it. I, with shriveled, bent fingers; atrophied muscles; and no feeling from the shoulders down will one day have a new body—light, bright, and clothed in righteousness – powerful and dazzling. Can you imagine the hope this gives someone with a spinal cord injury like me? Or someone who is cerebral palsied, brain injured, or who has multiple sclerosis imagine the hope this gives someone who is manic depressive. No other religion, no other philosophy promises new bodies, hearts and minds. Only*

*in the gospel of Jesus Christ do hurting people find such incredible hope.”*

- **Write down: POWERFUL (vs. 43):** It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. Again, I don't even know what all this means. It's spiritual power, physical power. The Bible says that we'll be like Jesus, and in his resurrected body he could go fishing, eat meat, and, like I already said, walk through walls and fly. Whatever it is, I'm in for it. We're not going to need things like walkers or wheelchairs or reading glasses. Joni Eareckson Tada, whom I quoted just a second ago--in probably my favorite thing she's ever said:

*I hope I can take my wheelchair to heaven with me. Now I know that is not biblically correct, but I hope to push my wheelchair to the throne of Jesus.*

*Notice, I'll. Be. Walking.*

*And I'm gonna say, "Jesus, do you see that wheelchair right there? Well, you were right when you said that in this world we would have trouble, because that wheelchair was a lot of trouble!. But Jesus, the weaker I was in that thing, the harder I leaned on you. And the harder I leaned on you, the stronger I discovered you to be. So thank you for what you did in my life through that wheelchair.*

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<sup>3</sup> My paraphrase. "I hope I can take my wheelchair to heaven with me. Now I know that is not biblically correct, but if I were able, I would have my wheelchair up in heaven right next to me when God gives me my brand-new, glorified body. And I will then turn to Jesus and say, "Lord, do you see that wheelchair right there? Well, you were right when you said that in this world we

*And now, if you will, please send that wheelchair to hell.<sup>3</sup>*

- **Fifth, write down: SPIRIT-FILLED (vs. 44):** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. We will know the perfect fullness of the Spirit, perfect communion with God. The book of Revelation says that we won't even need the light of the sun anymore because the Lord our God will be our lamp and our constant, indwelling light.
- **Lastly, vs. 49: PERFECTLY CHRISTLIKE (vs. 49):** Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. No more will we need to be commanded in the ways of God. You won't have to come listen to me each week. No more will we have to urge each other, "Know the Lord. Press into him." Knowledge of him will fill our hearts like the waters cover the sea. The love of God will be poured out in our hearts, and we'll be just like him, John says, because we'll see him just as he is.
- Church: what's it like to wake up one day perfectly in Christ's image? To not feel jealousy or hatred or anxiety or worry or dread or suspicion or self-centeredness or impatience which flood my heart almost immediately when my feet hit the floor? Instead, to be filled--consumed with--love? Perfect love? To know joy unspeakable at every moment? Ps 16:11, In your presence is the fullness of joy... What's it like to have the eternal joy of the Trinity

would have trouble, because that wheelchair was a lot of trouble! But Jesus the weaker I was in that thing, the harder I leaned on you. And the harder I leaned on you, the stronger I discovered you to be. So thank you for what you did in my life through that wheelchair. And now, you can send that wheelchair to hell, if you want." <https://www.joniandfriends.org/wheelchairs-in-heaven/>



pulsating inside of my heart? I can't wait. The Bible promises that in the resurrection, this is what we'll experience. Paul says, in Philippians 3:21, that in the resurrection, "Our lowly body will be like his glorious body."

### **And what difference does this all make to me right now?**

Well, BECAUSE of the resurrection, Paul says, 54 "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O grave, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 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 brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

### **Here's Paul's summary of the difference the truth of the resurrection should make in our lives:**

#### **1. Because of the resurrection, death has no more sting for you**

Death--whether our own, or of a loved one--is life's hardest experience because it feels so permanent. But if the resurrection is true, it's not permanent. It's temporary. It's just a temporary change of address, because Jesus took the sting out of death. The sting of death is its permanence. That's what Jesus took into himself on the cross, so that when we went through death, it would just be a temporary change of passage.

- Sometimes we say, 'I lost my dad to cancer.' 'I lost my wife.' 'I lost my baby.' You haven't lost them, you've only lost contact with them for a while.
- That's why we don't say things like "I'll never hold my baby again" or "I'll never see my wife again" or "I'll never hug my grandmother again." If they were in Christ, you absolutely will hold, see, and hug them again, with your physical arms in the new world.<sup>4</sup>

**You say, "What about if your loved one was unsaved?"** They did experience the sting of death, and because of that, I do too." That's a hard reality, and I don't know exactly how to answer, tbh. I know that in heaven our capacity for love is increased, not decreased. And I also know that Scripture says he'll wipe away every tear from our eyes, and make every sad thing come untrue. Which I assume means that somehow we'll be at peace with the decisions that people made for themselves. I don't know how all that is going to work, but I've learned to trust Jesus in it.

**Ps 131,** "Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quieted myself like a young child with its mother; like a young child I am content." I trust Jesus even with this. And in the meantime, I plead with everyone I know and love to come to Jesus.

#### **2. Because of the resurrection, the worst pain is only light and momentary**

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<sup>4</sup> David Platt

Your situation may feel permanent, but it's not. I had a friend a few years ago--about my age, with kids about my kids' age--who had brain cancer...

Even more, God promises that your pain actually becomes part of--a contributor to--the beautiful thing God is making you. **See how it says in vs. 54, "Death is 'swallowed up' in victory"?** When you swallow something, it becomes part of you. You digest it and it becomes a factor in making you, you. That's what God is going to do with our pain. It's not just that we had pain on earth and now we're at the theme park of heaven and forget all about it. No, there we see how the pain we went through produced in us the incredible beauty and weight of glory we become.

Whatever situation you are in: chronic pain, chronic illness, disappointed dreams, bad marriages, being alone--it's all temporary. Paul calls it light and momentary.

That's not to make light of your pain, and Paul didn't say that because he lived a charmed life free of pain--no, Paul experienced some of the worst pain possible for us to experience. Betrayal. Abandonment. Torture. Loneliness. Chronic illness. "But," he said, "even the worst of the worst is all light and momentary, compared to the weight of glory that's coming to me in the resurrection."

So are you suffering? Does it appear that this suffering might never go away? Hang on, you're almost there. In the blink of an eye this painful life will be behind you, the curse of sin will be removed, and you'll be

in your awesome, eternal, beautiful, powerful, Spirit-filled, Christlike body, in a world with no pain or crying, experiencing the fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore in the presence of your Savior.

I'm not telling you to stop praying for a change in your situation; keep praying, because some things God grants after years of persistent prayer. I'm just saying that even if the answer as you want it never comes this side of the grave, the worst this life has to offer is only light and momentary compared to the weight of the glory and happiness that awaits us in the resurrection. So we can say to the enemy--do your worst, you can't touch the glorious thing I've got coming in the resurrection. I love how **D.A. Carson** says it: "I'm not suffering from anything that a good resurrection can't fix."

### **3. Because of the resurrection, we can press forward with risk-taking, trial-enduring, death-defying obedience to Jesus<sup>5</sup>**

For every missionary who has walked away from family and fortune and friends to carry the gospel to unreached places--the resurrection says, "It's gonna be worth it. Your sacrifice was only temporary. Jesus is going to repay you 100-fold in the kingdom to come."

That means if you don't get to come home as much as you want, it's ok--soon you'll be home in eternity forever with Jesus and the ones you love. And you'll be glad you gave your life so that other families could be there, too. What's it going to be like when you have been there for 10,000 years, and you have gotten to know so intimately and so well those who came to Christ because of your sacrifice? You

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<sup>5</sup> Wording here owing to David Platt

don't even know who they are now, but you will then, and then you'll know and love them as much as anyone you've ever loved on earth. Don't you think you'll be glad then that you made the sacrifices now to see them there? Don't you think, if anything, you'll wish you'd sacrificed more?

And for our missionaries, if they kill you, it's ok. Soon you'll be in a place where death can't touch you and you'll be glad you gave your life so others could be there with you.

For those of you whose courageous stand for Jesus cost you reputation, or a business opportunity, or your job, Jesus sees your sacrifice and soon it will be over--you will enter your reward where you won't doubt for a second that every sacrifice was worth it.

(MUSIC)

So be bold, and death defying in your obedience. **Only one life to live, 'twill soon be past, only what' done for Christ will last.** My mind here goes to the letter a young Adoniram Judson wrote to his prospective father-in-law, asking for the hand of his daughter Anne in marriage. It was the late 1700's and Judson knew he was called to take the gospel to the far-off regions of Burma: (one of most respectful...)

*I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world? Whether you can consent to her departure to a foreign, hostile land, knowing she will endure the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern*

*climate of South Asia; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps even a violent death?*

*Can you consent to all this, for the sake of him who left his heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of the resurrected Kingdom and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall resound to her Savior from the lost who were saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?*

It's only belief in the resurrection that compels that kind of obedience.

Which leads me to the conclusion:

#### **4. Because of the resurrection, living for Jesus is the only thing that makes sense**

Every one of us has a soul and a body. Each of you. Those of you who die united to Christ, your soul immediately enters the presence and joy of God, awaiting the glorious resurrection of your body. Those of you who die apart from Christ, your soul will immediately enter the judgment of God. There you also will await the resurrection of your body, but it's not a resurrection not unto eternal happiness, but eternal judgment and misery. Scripture says that all of us are going to be resurrected. **Jesus said, John 5: "The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have**

done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.” **John 5:28–29**

**And the book of Revelation:** “And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second (and ultimately eternal) death.” **Revelation 20:13-15**

Friend, I cannot emphasize to you enough the importance of what you do with Jesus. He offers his resurrection to you, if you repent of your sin and submit to him as Lord and Savior. Some of you listening to me right now are going to resurrect to eternal glory, and others of you are going to resurrect to eternal judgment.

**Listen, for some of you--for those of you in Christ, this world is as close to hell as you will ever come; for those of you outside of Christ, this world is as close to heaven as you'll ever get.** Even now, you're tasting some of the good fruits of life. Even with all its pain, life can still be good. But in the 2nd death all that goes away.

But for those in Christ, God is bringing you to a renewed, eternal physical kingdom which includes a glorified and perfected version of every beautiful thing we love about the world down here. I can't wait. I've experienced earthly Hawaii. Earthly ribeye. Earthly Nicolas Cage. I can't wait for the Heavenly ones.

**The question: Which resurrection do you want to be included in?  
The resurrection to judgment or the resurrection to life?**

They have found gravestones of early followers of Jesus in places like Corinth, and when they do, they usually find the word “resurgam” inscribed on it, which means simply, “I shall rise again.” Let's inscribe that on our hearts, because, as Paul said, it will fundamentally reshape how we live.

**BOW HEADS:**

- How could I talk about this and not give you a chance to come to Christ?
- For the believer who is broken/suffering...