

# The Mystery of the Resurrection

By Jeff Noblit

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**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

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## **Anchored in Truth Ministries**

1915 Avalon Ave.

Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

**Website:** [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org)

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Grab your Bibles and let's go to 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians 15, we'll look at verses 50-58. 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. Paul writing to unfold and teach the church at Corinth about the resurrection from the dead says,

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will 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 imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power 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 toil is not in vain in the Lord.

I've entitled this "The Mystery of the Resurrection." Now, in a biblical sense, the word "mystery" does not mean something that's unknowable, it simply means something that has for long ages been hidden and now it is being revealed. So the apostle is saying the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead throughout the Old Testament era was largely hidden. There were glimpses of it but not very much but the apostle is saying now in God's providence God is unfolding the truth of the resurrection. Now, not in every part and every detail because we can't fathom all of it but much of it is now being unfolded and laid before us and that's what he's talking about here in 1 Corinthians 15.

Now, as we look at this, I want you to see several things, if you would. First of all, I. Let's talk about the necessity of the resurrection. It was essential that there be a resurrection. It was necessary. He begins in verse 50 and he says, "Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Here's what he means: he's saying, "You're God's children. You belong to him but you cannot go to be with him

in the glorified eternal kingdom because you're flesh and blood. There's a problem here. Your mortal state cannot fit into the immortal state of heaven." His point is that, "You just won't fit up there in your present condition." In other words, you're not dressed for the occasion.

Now, the Bible says that there are 3 ways we are being corrupted or we are perishable. Now, when you see the word "perishable" here, I'm going to most of the time use the word "corruptible" or "corruption." It's the same thing. I think the King James translators are a little bit better here by using the word "corruptible" and "corruption" rather than "perishable" or "perish." So when we see the word "perish," we're going to say "corrupted" because there is inherent within all of us a corruptible seed. Corruption means subject to decay. All of us possess a decaying element and nothing that is decaying can go into the eternal kingdom of God. We're decaying. We're corruptible or we are perishable. Listen: right now you have a disposable body and a disposal body is not going to work in heaven. Everything there lasts forever so if you're going to get there, you're going to have to have a change and that's what the resurrection is.

Now, when we talk about corruption, we first of all think about moral corruption. There is a proneness, an absolute devolution, if you will, of the human soul morally where left to ourselves we become more and more morally corrupt. We continue in this downward spiral into corruption. And we see this corruption occurring in our souls and we certainly see it happening in our culture and it's amazing to me that as we see our American culture and Western culture in general spirally downward into moral corruption there are many who are telling us this is actually a good development. There are many who would look at the moral corruption of our present culture and say we're finally advancing. Well, Paul addressed that in Roman 1 as he talked about how sexually and morally corrupt men would get when they turned their backs on God and he said that in the midst of this moral corruption and downward spiral, Romans 1:22, they will "profess to be wise but they'll become fools." They'll say, "Look how good this is. We're advancing. We're going forward." They give all these sophisticated names and titles for these new movements that are supposed to be wonderful but look, friends, the new morality is just really more of the old immorality. Mankind is on a plunging slope into moral corruption and as men begin to say this moral corruption is actually positive development, that's only proof of man's decline into even further moral corruption. Listen: it is only the restraining power of God that prevents us from suddenly plunging into total ruin.

There is moral corruption. Secondly, not only are we corruptible in our present state because of moral corruption but, secondly, there's physical corruption. Physically, we're on a downward spiral. Our physical bodies, you see, are in nowise fit for a glorious heaven. I mean, these mortal, failing, decaying bodies cannot fit in a moral, beautified, glorified, eternal kingdom. You see, our physical corruption is seen in our limited strength. Even the strongest among us grows weary and grows tired. All of us know somebody that when they got in their 70s or 80s or maybe 90s said something like this, "You know, I'm just getting tired. I'm ready to go home." That's because physically we're corruptible. We wear out. We begin to decay and waste away. And there are clear indications of our limited mortality and corruption even in young, strong people. Young

strong people can go out and be involved in a strenuous event and they come in and they fall on the couch and they say, "I'm tired." Have you ever asked, "Why do we get tired?" Because we're weak. Because we're not God. We're made of corruptible seed in this present life.

Isaiah 40:28 tell us there's a big difference between us and God and even the godly state we'll inherit one day. "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable." He doesn't get tired because he's not of corruption. We're of corruption and we wear out and get tired all the time. Every night when you go to sleep, it's a reminder you are limited and weak. God, the one who keeps Israel, the psalmist said in Psalm 121:4, "He never sleeps nor does he ever slumber." God is awake all night. Don't worry about anything. He's got it under control.

Isaiah 40:30-31, "Though youths," those who are young and strong, they "grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary." When is that going to be? That's going to be after the resurrection when we have new incorruptible bodies. You know, our bodies are just perishable. Our minds slow. Our memories fade. Our reasoning powers diminish over time. Our skin thins and then it sags. Our eyes dim. Our hearing diminishes. Our reflexes fade. Our hair turns gray and then falls out. Our joints stiffen. Our bones become brittle. Our step slows. Plus our bodies are subject to unnumbered legions of diseases and infirmities that afflict us. Well, we fight back. We try diet. We try exercise. We exhaust medicine and medical science. We even look sometimes to natural cures and therapies. And we should do these things but, friend, in the end, these things are no match for the corruption that is inherent in these bodies. They do wear out and they do die and these corruptible, decaying, weary bodies are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. There must be a change if we're going to fit there.

Thirdly, not only moral and physical corruption but spiritual corruption reigns in our present bodies. Spiritual corruption. The Bible says we came forth from the womb cursed. We came forth from the womb with the curse of Adam's sin in our blood and the lies of our father, Satan, on our lips. The psalmist said in Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me." He's not saying his mother was in an immoral affair when she conceived him. He's saying, "When I was a one-celled human being in the womb of my mother I inherited a depraved sin nature. Spiritually corrupt from the beginning of my being."

Psalm 58:3 says, "These who speak lies go astray from birth." From the moment a child is born that little baby learns to think for itself and about itself. Have you ever noticed children don't come into the world wanting to honor God and serve others? You have to teach children to do that. Children do not come into the world telling the truth. The first chance they get, they'll lie their little whatevers off to get their way. You have to teach a child to tell the truth because we're born of corruptible seed, spiritually our hearts are black.

Romans 3:10-11, "as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one.'" Did you hear that? None, not even one. "There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God." No one on their own will even turn to find God. Why? Because we're of corruptible seed and, friend, there is no way this spiritually bankrupt, corrupt man can inherit God's glorious eternal kingdom. If left in this corruptible, sinful position, we will continue to live without God, we will die without God and we will spend eternity apart from God. We are from the core of our moral, physical and spiritual being perishable and corruptible. We are indeed partakers of a disposable body. There is a tag on the back of you that says, "Use once then dispose." This body is not eternal.

If you're saved, if you know Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have started right. You have a reborn spirit but there's incorruption still all over you. You see, you may have the beginnings of a kingdom heart but right now your eyes don't always look like kingdom eyes ought to look. Your ears do not always listen the way kingdom ears ought to listen. Your feet do not always take you where kingdom feet ought to be going. Your hands do not always touch what kingdom hands ought to be touching. Your mind does not always think the way a kingdom mind ought to be thinking. You're a mess. You're of corruptible seed and the only way you're going to get into heaven is if God makes you anew and that's why the resurrection is essential. You can't go to heaven like you are, of corruption.

Verse 50 says the perishable, the corruptible cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Well, he says in verse 53, he's more emphatic here. In verse 53 he says, "For this perishable," or corruptible, "must put on the incorruptible, and this mortal must put on immortality." Now, where corrupt means subject to decay, of course, mortal means subject to death. He says, "You can't take these bodies that are going to decay and rot in ruin and you can't take these bodies that are going to die and put them in God's eternal kingdom. They must be changed from corruption to incorruption. They must be changed from mortal to immortal." Now, why must they be changed? Now, here's why, listen, the primary foundational reason is this, let me just give you this preliminary note: God's not obligated to take any of you to heaven. Look, God doesn't need anything. He doesn't need you. He doesn't need me. He was fine like he was. But in his infinite wisdom, for his own purposes, he has decided and decreed that he is going to resurrect his children. Now, the resurrection of the dead will occur so that God's people would obtain the incorruptible, immortal, eternal bodies that will enable us to be with God. It was God's desire to do this. It was his decree to do this so it must, that's the word in verse 53, it must be done because God decided to do it.

Y'all just settle there some and get your minds off being so man-centered and really realize that Christianity is God-centered, not man-centered. The resurrection is more about God than it is about you. That's wonderful for us, amen? But it's because God decreed to do so. Psalm 149:4 says, "For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the afflicted ones with salvation." Here's what he means: to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live for God in God's kingdom in this world means that often you're going to be an afflicted one. Often the world will not understand. Often the guys at the plant will ridicule you. Often the ladies in the office or in the neighborhood will mock

you and laugh at you for being too devout, too devoted, too committed to Jesus Christ. Often young people, the other kids at school will say, "Well, be like our church youth group. We do this that and whatever but you're trying to serve Christ." Often, if you're really true to God, you'll be afflicted but listen, the verse says, God takes pleasure in taking his children and beautifying them with salvation. That means the finished work of salvation glorifying you in heaven with him forever. It's because God chose to do so. He decreed it at, he decided it and it's going to happen.

Ephesians 1:5, "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will." Now, that phrase "kind intention" just means he was well pleased. God says, "I decided," now there are some big words predestined there and adoption. We're not going to go into that today, I'll do that next Sunday maybe, alright? But what he's saying is, "I'm saving my children because I'm well pleased with my desire and my plan to do so." In other words, God says, "I'm God and I've decided to do it. I'm not taking a vote. I'm not discussing it with anybody." The writer of Ephesians says God was just super well pleased to decide to do it so he's going to do it. That's why we teach and preach the perseverance of the saints. Another phrase which I don't think is quite as accurate is "the eternal security of the believer." Why do we believe in the eternal security of the believer? Because God decided those he saves he will keep and have with him forever. It's his decree. He has decided to radically transform these people that are his so that they will be fit and able to dwell with him forever and he wants them with him forever that he will receive the glory from their praises for all eternity and that they might receive the infinite pleasures for being with him in heaven for all eternity.

So God has decreed to do this so it must take place and there is no one nor anything that can thwart or deter his power to do this and his plan to do this. It's going to happen. That's why the writer to the Corinthians says in verse 53 here, "It must," the corruptible, "must put on incorruption." Well, that's the necessity. If God's going to fulfill his sovereign decree to have his people with him forever, there must be a radical resurrection and transformation to them because they're not fit for heaven the way they are. Now, some of you look real nice. You dressed up real good for Easter and I'm glad you did. My wife dresses me. This is not new. Now, she comes from a very wealthy family and so they dress real nice and so she's teaching me to dress real nice and it's okay to dress real nice on Easter but listen to me, just that thin veneer of nice-looking clothes does nothing to change the reality of your corruptible being. There is going to have to be a real radical change to get into heaven. Now, you may be saved already but the Lord's change has got to come. That's the necessity of the resurrection.

Hurrying along, II. The nature of the resurrection. The nature of the resurrection. First of all, let's note A: that it is radical and it's miraculous in its span. In its span. Look at what he says in verse 51 here, "Behold, I tell you a mystery," that's something that has been hidden in the Old Testament but now in New Testament truth it's being unfolded and shown, that is, "we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Now, we're not all going to be sleeping, we're all going to be changed. So basically he says there are going to be 2 types of people resurrected: there are going to be those who are dead who will be resurrected to new life; there will be those

who are on the earth still alive but they will also receive resurrected bodies. Now listen: he's pointing out here that when Jesus returns not everybody is going to be dead. There will be people who know Christ as Lord and Savior living on the earth when he returns but whether or not you are resurrected from the dead or living on the earth, you must be changed. That's his point. It's essential that you experience that radical and miraculous change.

Now B: not only does it span the living and the dead who will have these resurrected bodies, B. the radical and miraculous nature of the speed of this resurrection. In verse 52, the last part should be, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Now, the word "moment" is a Greek word that represents a span of time too small to discern. It's so quick it's indivisible. You can't divide it. Then he says, "in the twinkling of an eye." Now, the twinkling of an eye is used for a lot of things in ancient Greek language. It means the flapping of a gnat's wing. Literally here, he says "in the twinkling of an eye," that means the time it takes your eye to discern a light ray. It's too fast to discern. It's too quick to see. It's a miracle. It's an absolute miracle.

You know, these present bodies may be fallen and polluted and corrupted and decaying but they're still a miracle. Think about this: I read just recently where the blood vessels in your body have an inner lining that's a corkscrew effect and scientists have figured out that you don't have straight pipes and there's a corkscrew, kind of like a gun barrel. And they found out that that's essential for the blood not to overstress the veins when it comes to t-joints and to elbows and also the swirling of the blood helps produce substances that protects the blood vessels and protects your body. That's just one of countless millions of unique things God designed into our bodies. Did you know the human brain contains more electrical circuitry than all the computers in the world combined? It's amazing. Did you know your heart pumps enough blood in one day to fill 40 50-gallon drums full of blood? You know, every part of your body, scientists tell us, is made from components or chemical compounds found in the dust of the earth. By the way, man was formed, the Bible says, of the dust of the earth. But then man has no power to collect that dust and create it into cell tissue and organs and functioning systems. Also, the entire body functions as a most complex information processing system. Bits of information, scientists tell us, processed by your body in one day is a million times greater than all the information bits stored in all the world's libraries combined. God did that. Modern science has discovered much about how God put together the human body but yet modern science is still a million galaxies away from comprehending it all, much less reproducing it. To do that would take the mind and the power of God.

Now, let's go to the resurrection. That's the way our bodies are now, amazing miracles of God but listen, in the resurrection, God will gather from the graves from the land and from the sea all the atoms and molecules that were once a part of a son of Adam and he will call them all back to their original form. And for the saved, after he calls every grain, molecule, atom of what was once a man and brings it back into human form, he will cleanse every atom and every molecule of its moral, physical and spiritual corruption. Then he will breathe new life into it and he's going to do all this so quickly it's impossible to see the change, it's instantly to be done. That's the resurrection. That's what he's saying.

Men, so much for bowing at the altar of atheistic evolution which astoundingly states that out of nowhere some primordial slime, poof, came into existence and somehow in that slime there were some living cells, and somehow those living cells began to mutate, and somehow they mutated into more advanced organisms until today, poof, here we are. But God, we know, created man out of the dust of the earth by his power and by his wisdom. But now listen: in the resurrection, God will do even more than he did in the first creation. He's going to remake man out of the dust of the earth wherever man's bodies may be and furthermore, he's going to remake him and then cleanse him to be spiritually, morally and physically fit for his eternal kingdom. That's what's coming for the child of God. That's the nature of the resurrection.

3. He says something here about the agent of the resurrection. Now, the key is in verse 57. He says, "but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." How is all of this going to happen? God procured his agent to carry out his plan to have with him a people that would love him and praise him for all eternity and a people that would have the unspeakable pleasures of being with him for all eternity. His agent, his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the one who gets this done.

Now, look at verse 56, it says, "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." So there was this problem, God wanted these people to be with him for all eternity, his children, his blessed once, the ones he came to save, the ones who believe on his Son. He wants them to be with him but they have a problem, they have this sin disease. This sin pollution. And it has corrupted every fiber of every man's spirit, soul and body.

Then he talks about the law of God here. The law of God is that standard of God's holy character. It's his very character on display when God says, "Thou shalt not," or "Thou shalt." And every time we look at the law of God, we all see that we are guilty and we deserve condemnation. What a place we find ourselves in. Then because sin has thoroughly saturated us, the law indisputably shows our guilt and condemnation, then death is the natural consequence of that. Death was the unavoidable consequence of sin and being a law transgressor and we as mankind had no capacity to change the condition. We can't fix it. But since God desired and decreed to have a people to be with him forever so that they might praise him and glorify him forever, he sent his Son Jesus to rescue us.

Now, the question is: was Jesus up to the task? Could Jesus perform it? Could he get it done? Jesus comes. He rescues us from sin's infection. He rescues us consequently therefore from the law's condemnation and he rescues us from death's hold. That's why the verse says here in verse 55, "O Death, where is your sting?" Then verse 56, "The sting of death is sin." Here's the point: death shouldn't be all that big a deal except the moment you enter death, you answer to a holy God in your sin and as a lawbreaker. So the sting of going through death is not death, it's not hell, it's not Satan, it's God. Now face the moment I go through death's door. That's a sting to know I carry that. Now listen, here is why the stinger is so painful: I am a sinful being morally, spiritually, physically corrupted to my core. I'm under the law's condemnation. I am going to go through death and face a

God who is holy and just and I'm accountable and I have no power, no capacity to fix this problem.

That's why it says, "thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our," works? Our merit? Our baptism? Our reforming our own lives? No, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." Through him. Through him. You see, the Bible says that when Jesus hung on the cross he became sin. It means that Jesus hanging on the cross, God the Father looked at God the Son Jesus as if he committed all the sins you have ever committed or ever will commit. He fulfilled all the requirements of the law on our behalf and his living here upheld every aspect of the law. In his dying, now listen, in his dying all the just demands of punishment against us as sinners was taken by Christ. He fulfilled the law's condemnation against us as he hung on the cross.

Then he died and he entered death's door and just immediately upon entering death's door he decided, "I'm just going to tear this whole house down," and that's what he did. He tore the right side wall of death's house down and he tore the left side wall of death's house down. He tore the back wall of death's house down and now all that remains is a little bit of the front wall and a door. Death is still there. The door is still there. He'll get that at the very end, by the way. Death's door is still there. The moment you enter death's door, you're immediately in the light and the presence of God's love and God's glory because there's nothing to hold you there. You just pass on through the door to God because Jesus tore the whole house down.

Now, verse 54, he gives a metaphor to amplify this truth. It's a powerful metaphor. He says in verse 54, "But when this corruptible will have put on the incorruption, and this mortal will have put on immortality," here it is, "then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" Now, the ultimate victory will be after the final resurrection that's yet to come, although we walk in that victory now. Let's think about Jesus swallowing up death. It's a powerful picture. As a matter of fact, Hebrews 2:9 says Jesus tasted death for everyone. It's a powerful metaphor here. In effect, Jesus took the swill of death, the entire concoction, every drop of death's stinking contamination, he drank it down and it's now eliminated because, you see, within Jesus Christ are divinely powerful antibodies. The antibody is that part of the human blood system that identifies and kills a foreign virus or bacteria. If you want to immunize people with a vaccine, you've got to find somebody who is immune and get the antibodies from them. Then you make the vaccine and you take that out of their blood and you put it in another person's blood and then they are immune. So Jesus drank down the disease of death, the divine antibodies inherent in him, only him, identified them, eliminated them and now we are partakers of his blood and we receive the same immunization so that death's disease no longer affects us. We're free through Jesus Christ.

One other image here that's quite vivid. In verse 55, the phrase is, "O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?" Jesus Christ drank you all down. His divine antibodies have identified your death virus and killed every bit of it so this is like a courtroom scene, the scholars tell us. Jesus Christ, our advocate, that's biblical, calls Death to the stand. All of us stand out there in front. Death is on the stand and Jesus



Christ says, "Now Death, based on what I have done for my children, is there any just grounds whereby you can hold my elect in your power any longer?" Death will humbly bow his head before the Lord Jesus Christ, "No sir. There are no claims left on them." That's what it means. "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?" They are guilty. They are sinners. They are corruptible morally, spiritually and physically but Jesus has taken their place. He has cured their disease. He has washed them clean. He has made them righteous as Christ is righteous. Death has no power.

Now, 4. What are we to do about this? What is the application of this? Well, look at verse 58, the application for the here and now, "Therefore," that means based on all these glorious truths, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." So the apostle writes to this church and says, "Okay, since this is true, be steadfast." That's the first word he used here. Be steadfast. That means, look, being steadfast means you grab yourself up by the nape of the neck. Have you ever grabbed a kid up by the nape of the neck? It means you grab yourself up by the nape of the neck and say, "This doctrine is true. Jesus is true. Jesus is a victor. He's made me a member of eternity. This life is not my main purpose. I am to live for God. I'm going to grab myself up by the nape of the neck and I'm going to remain steadfast holding to the doctrine because it's true and right. This is worth giving my life to."

Be steadfast. Then he says "be immovable." Immovable means not only are you within yourself resolving not to let yourself drift off into secondary things but to keep serving God as a priority. Immovable means you will not let anyone else get you off track. Here's what he's saying, "Let the liberals roar. Let the scoffers scoff. Let the skeptics be skeptical. Let all the world go to hell, we're staying with the doctrine. Jesus died for me. The resurrection is for me. I'm going to have a new incorruptible body. This is not my home. I live down here. I have to go to work. I have to buy clothes. I have to buy cars. That's good, that's spiritual, but in my heart of hearts, I want to be steadfast and immovable doing all I can for my God in his kingdom because I belong to him not this world."

Can I say something to some of you Sunday morning Easter Sunday saints? There's not much evidence that you hold this doctrine because your life most of the time looks like someone who belongs to a corruptible world, not one who belongs to God waiting for your incorruptible body. Where is some of the steadfastness? Where is some of the being immovable? I listened to a sermon this week, just happened to find it, by E. V. Hill. Dr. E. V. Hill is a black preacher, a great preacher. Do you know what the title of the sermon is? "Why I can't quit." He goes on in that sermon and says there's all this quitting going on. You used to sing in the choir, but you quit. He said, you used to sing Sunday school, but you quit. You used to come to the church on Sunday night, but you quit. You used to bring tithes and offerings, but you quit. And he goes through why he couldn't quit and he basically says it's because, "I'm grateful and hadn't got to where I started out for yet." Amen. I haven't gotten to where I started out for yet. He held to this doctrine: I've got a home coming and I'm going to serve that kingdom until I get there.

Be steadfast. Immovable. Then he says "always abounding in the work of the Lord." That means over and above. It means as a pattern of my life, I'm going to say, "O God, I know I have responsibilities and duties. Men have to work and ladies have to do their responsibilities. Those things are good and God-given but in my heart of hearts, help me until the end do all that I can to advance the kingdom of my God because everything else is not going to last and I'm a part of that which is going to last forever and ever and ever."

I'm going to end with this. Look at verse 37, "and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else." Now, he says, he's talking about that which you sow. This body, in effect during this lifetime, is being sown into the earth. It's being planted into the earth. And he said, "It's going to come back forth radically different than the one you planted. There is going to be a radical transformation in the resurrection. You're going to come back different than you went down." You all say amen right there. Have you looked in the mirror lately? You're going to come back very different than when you went down and he said, just like a grain. Here's what he's saying, listen to me, listen to your pastor: this whole life experience right now, you're just like a little seed. Now, seeds aren't much. I eat sunflower seeds but they're not much. You just pop it in there and maybe it gives you a tiny bit of protein or something but it ain't much. Oh, but you plant a seed in the earth and give it a little while, something great comes forth.

I'm clearing some trees around my house right now and one of them is a great big oak tree. I got to thinking about that huge oak tree and I thought, "You know, at one time that was just a little bitty acorn." Now, there's not much to an acorn. It might be a snack for a gray squirrel but there's not much to an acorn but put it in the earth, all it needs is time, moisture and heat, roots come up, a stock comes up. Give it 50, 60, 70 years and you have a mighty oak tree. You know, I have learned something: those things have some value. If you get a large straight oak tree they call it a veneer log. They slice little thin oak veneers. It's worth thousands of dollars, that one tree, that one log. I thought about that. Think about if you have a veneer log and all that oak veneer comes off of that log, think of all the things that could happen with that later on. The oak out of that tree might make a couch where people can sit on and be blessed and have lots of pleasures. It might make a baby's rocker. Think of all the blessings and the pleasures that occur by a little babies' bed. It might make a dinner table where families have countless, sweet, precious moments of fellowship, blessings and pleasures together around the table. Nobody saw any of that when it was just a little acorn and God says, "Listen now." God says, "Look, add up all of your life even if you live to be 100, this life is just a little acorn. But if you'll devote it to Jesus Christ in advancing his kingdom, one day you'll get in heaven and the great fruit of that will flourish before you. The fruit of that will be before you with blessings and pleasures beyond comprehension."

If a man came up to you and said, "What would you rather eat, an acorn or a T-bone steak?" It's not the acorn, I want the steak. That's what God's saying. Don't exhaust yourself on acorns. Plant your life in this world for God's eternal kingdom because the doctrine is true: we are going to be changed and live forever with God and this life is

going to pass away and everything in it is going to pass away but we get to invest in eternal kingdom.

So he gives us the glorious truth of the unfolded mystery of the resurrection all to one end: be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing your toil is not in vain in the Lord. Now, how does that apply? Does that mean you just go out here in the streets and highways and byways and find a ministry? No, God has ordained local churches whereby you anchor your life. And when you join a church, you don't join a worship service, you join a body of believers. You're going to love and care for and look after each other and hold accountable. That's what the church is. A church is not something you join, it's a place you belong. The question is not, "Where do you go to church?" But "Where do you belong?" And then you dive into a biblically healthy local church and you be steadfast, you be immovable and you be always abounding in the work of the Lord and you can know your toil is not in vain in the Lord. That's what the doctrine of the resurrection is meant to inspire and encourage in the saints of God.

Let's stand together in prayer.