

1 Corinthians 15:50–58

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.

Because He Lives ***1 Corinthians 15:50-58***

INTRO:

I had a birthday this week. My father passed away on August 16, 1962. This is probably why I have been thinking about eternity this week. In thinking about eternity, I found myself thinking about **1 Corinthians 15:50-58**. How do we know that we will see our saved loved ones again? How are we sure of eternity? One major reason is the promise of the resurrection here in **1 Corinthians 15**.

- I. THE NEED FOR THE RESURRECTION (v. 50)***
- II. THE PROCESS OF THE RESURRECTION (v. 51-53)***
- III. THE RESULT OF THE RESURRECTION (v. 54-58)***

I. THE NEED FOR THE RESURRECTION (v. 50)

A. **1 Corinthians 15** is all about resurrection. First it is about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Second, it is about what that resurrection means to us.

1. Paul opens the chapter with a defense of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He described in **verses 3-4** how Christ's resurrection is essential to the Gospel message.

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

The Gospel is that Christ died for our sins because we are sinners and the wages of sin is death. Jesus died for our sin so we would not have to die in our sins. The proof of His death is that He was buried. Then on the third day, He rose again from the dead to demonstrate that sin, death, and hell no longer have victory over Him and all those who come to Him by faith!

2. This resurrection is an historical event proven by the independent testimony of a hosts of witnesses (**v. 5-11**). The evidence are these men and women who saw the resurrected Jesus Christ with their own eyes. Not only did they see the risen Christ, seeing Him completely changed their lives.

B. In **verses 12-33** the Apostle Paul wrote about why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is important. It is important because it is our only hope of the forgiveness of sins.

C. Then our Apostle told us how the resurrection will work (**v. 34-49**). Paul illustrated by contrasting earthly bodies with celestial bodies as well as a seed being planted and the transformation into the plant. He wanted us to understand how we will be transformed in the resurrection.

D. Now in **verse 50**, the Apostle told us why this transformation must happen.
“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.”

1. Now we are reading about things in a realm beyond our personal experience. Some of this we will not be able to understand on our own. Why can't flesh and blood inherit the kingdom of God?

2. God will transform us because we must be changed to enter eternity. Listen to what Paul says in another place.

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:20-21).

II. THE PROCESS OF THE RESURRECTION (v. 51-53)

“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. (1 Corinthians 15:51–53).

A. Having stated the necessity of the resurrection, the Apostle proceeded to describe exactly how the resurrection is to happen. First, we are to understand that this is a mystery.

v.51 *“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.”*

A mystery is something that was hidden that is now revealed.

1. This verse is often posted in nurseries. Still, we need to also see the wonderful truth it contains. The truth is we shall not all die. One of the duties and privileges of the ministry that I have never learned to enjoy is the process of funerals. Death is a constant visitor. Where there is life, there will be death.

2. Death is such a common companion to humanity that it has caused many a philosopher to use it as a symbol of inevitability. Benjamin Franklin wrote, *“There are two sure things in life: Death and Taxes.”* The marvelous truth of this verse is that there are some who will never die. Some will be transformed and translated without ever seeing death.

B. How will this transformation take place? **Verses 52 and 53** tell us about the process.

“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.”

1. Three prepositional phrases at the beginning of **verse 52** describe how the resurrection will happen. First, it will be instantaneous, ***“in a moment.”*** Literally it will occur in an indivisible measure of time. In the rapid movement of an eye. ***“The twinkling of an eye.”*** This is not a process that will take any time at all. Our Lord will say it and it shall be done.

2. Second, it will be at the last trumpet of the age, ***“at the last trump.”*** We should put beside this passage the words Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica.

“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. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Some say that this is the seventh trumpet in the book of **Revelation**, but there is no need to see this as the last trump ever sounded. It is probably the last trump of God’s age of Grace. When the Lord returns for His own, that is when this transformation will take place.

3. Two things happen when the trump sounds. First, ***“the dead will be raised incorruptible.”*** Those who died in Christ and were buried in bodies that will decay are raised from the dead in new bodies that will never decay. Second, all that are in Christ and remain until the coming of the Lord will be changed. The long chain of death and decay, which originated with Adam’s sin, will finally end for the believer. What Paul eagerly anticipates in **Philippians 3:20-21** will take place.

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.”

4. Harking back to his opening assertion in **verse 50**, Paul described this transformation in two ways. **(1)** This body which is corruptible must put on incorruption. That which is passing away must be made new and undying. **(2)** This mortal, this physical life which tends toward an end, must put on immortality. It must become a life that will never ever end.

III. THE RESULT OF THE RESURRECTION (v. 54-58)

“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.”

(1 Corinthians 15:54–58).

A. Having stated the need for the resurrection and told us how it will take place, Paul finally tells us what results flow from the fact of the resurrection.

B. Death no longer has victory over us. Because this resurrection and transformation is certain, death no longer has a victory over those who belong to Christ. Paul continues this theme by taunting death as someone who is already victorious.

1. ***“O Death, where is your sting?”*** The fact is that its sting is already taken away. It has lost the battle and it is only a matter of time before the victory is won.

2. ***“O Hades, where is your victory?”*** The victory of the grave is taken away in Christ. It can no longer hold us captive.

C. Why does Death and the grave no longer have victory over us? Because, God provided us the victory over both in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sixteenth Century theologian and poet, John Donne said it well in His little poem, Death be not Proud.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for
thou art not so ; For those, whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow, Die not,
poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me. . .

One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Do you have Him?

Hymn #213 Because He Lives