

# The blessings of the resurrection of Jesus Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] What we're going to do is reflect on the blessings and the implications of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.! Amen.

So we're going to think about the resurrection. We're going to think about this in terms of 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 15.

And I'd like to say that in so doing, it's not simply an exercise in information. To think about this is a counter-cultural act because the world around us does not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And it's not interested in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And for us to take this seriously, to say we're going to think about this not as a subject for us to make fun of, but as something we take seriously and embrace is a counter-cultural act.

It is a corporate act. So we are hearing God's word together as a group. It's saying this is something we are all in on together.

[ 1 : 35 ] It's different to if we all read the chapter at home. If we're reading it and hearing it and receiving it and believing it together, that is a different thing and it is a special thing.

So hearing God's word together is a corporate act. You can't do that if you're not here. If you are here, you're doing something particular. It is a military act.

In other words, we're talking about truth that is held in the context of conflict. To believe this is to set ourselves against the culture that we're in and the course that we're in, that the world around us is in, and to say we have a different agenda and a different set of loyalties.

And to do so, although we're not aiming to be objectionable about it, yet there are things that people might take objection to. And it's part of the fight, which in the book of Revelation is the fight against the beast and the devil and the flesh and the world.

So for us to do this this evening is a military act. It is a vital act because this truth we're told, if you don't believe it, you can't be saved.

[ 2 : 59 ] So this is something that we're not saying, well, this is sort of, we'll toss this around here and there. It's a little bit like discussing whether you have double glazed windows or triple glazed windows or what sort of vehicle you have, you know, everybody to each to his own.

It's not like that. It is vital that we believe it. Paul says, if you don't believe this, you can't be saved. And it's a decisive act because once we've heard this and mentally agreed to it, it sets us on a certain course of action.

So if you are planning to go home this evening and commit adultery, then having heard this address and received it, you would be putting yourself in a decisively hypocritical position if you went home and did something completely contrary.

So to hear this and receive it is putting ourselves in a decisive position, in the position of having decided something and committed ourselves to something. Now, if you were to go home and say, what did he say tonight?

What did he say? It would be, yeah, it's a possible question. I don't know what he said. What did he say? Well, I'll tell you what I was going to say. I'm going to give you nine adjectives.

[ 4 : 11 ] Okay, nine, an adjective is a describing word. So nine descriptions, if you like, of 1 Corinthians 15. So we're going to go through it and I'll give you nine adjectives.

And if you care to memorize them, you'll be able to tell somebody exactly what he said this evening. Or if you were to write them down, try to bring them to mind later, you wouldn't have lost what was said because here we go with these nine adjectives.

It's a big subject. I'm not going to solve all the problems. You might say, well, I don't quite understand what that bit meant in Corinthians. I'm afraid I haven't either done enough homework

nor have enough time to solve all the problems.

But we'll look at the main features of it. And the first feature is that Paul says the resurrection is fundamental. So that's the first adjective. It's fundamental. And he says in those first verses, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

By this gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise you have believed in vain. Interesting, isn't it, that being a Christian is not, as he puts it here, it's not a question of being a good person and keeping certain rules.

[ 5 : 27 ] It's not that. Although that is a sort of byproduct or a result of it. But what being a Christian is, believing certain things. Taking your stand on certain things.

Leaning the weight of your soul on certain things. By this gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise you have believed in vain. And what are these certain things?

Well you can boil it down in various ways. But Paul boils it down here. Verse 3. I received this. I haven't made this up he says. And I pass it on to you as of number one importance.

Here are the truths. Christ died for our sins. According to the scriptures. He was buried. He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures and seen by lots of people.

This is fundamental. At different times in the church's history people have objected in various ways to not only the interpretation of the death of Jesus.

[ 6 : 33 ] But this matter of the resurrection of Jesus. People have spiritualized it and said well it doesn't really matter whether he really rose again from the dead.

And somebody whose name I can't remember said well it wasn't just a conjuring trick with a bag of bones. As if it didn't really matter whether Jesus' body lay in the grave or not.

The Bible is saying it does matter whether his body is still in the grave or not. If there is a grave somewhere with Jesus' body in it.

Then this is all nonsense. The affirmation is there is no such place in the entire cosmos where the body of the dead Jesus is.

Jesus Christ is alive and risen from the dead. And it's fundamental that we believe this. I suppose the other way to reduce its importance would be just to omit it.

[ 7 : 32 ] And say well it doesn't really matter. It doesn't really have much part in my faith you might say. In which case I'd say again well hold on. This is fundamental. I quote it is of first importance.

It is of first importance. That's my first adjective. It is fundamental. Second adjective. It is historical. And Paul is at pains to point this out.

Verse 5. He says he appeared to Peter. Then to the 12. He was seen. He showed himself to Peter. And we looked at all that last Sunday didn't we?

It was last Sunday. Time moves in such a strange way. It was only last Sunday wasn't it? We looked at it. Yes. And Peter saw the risen Christ.

The apostles saw the risen Christ. Mary Magdalene saw the risen Christ. And Paul itemizes. He appeared to Peter. Then to the 12. 500 of the brothers at the same time.

[ 8 : 33 ] James and including myself. And he says it was historical. It's not a fable. It is historical.

There were eyewitnesses. And if it isn't that. Then it's nonsense. If it isn't historical. Then Christianity has no basis. It's a very strong statement to make.

It's not a moral code. Or a timeless philosophy. As some religions are. It's based on a historical deed. And there were eyewitnesses to it.

And for all Richard Dawkins tries to tell us that Christianity is a religion where people believe in things that they know aren't true. And that faith is making yourself believe something that you know isn't true.

That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says that faith is a response to evidence. And faith is a response to the testimony of eyewitnesses.

[ 9 : 33 ] Now historical evidence is not the same as scientific evidence in the sense that with a scientific experiment you can repeat it. And then somebody else can say really.

And they can go to their laboratory in Tokyo and repeat it again. And somebody else in Philadelphia can repeat it in their laboratory. Scientific evidence is repeatable. Historical evidence by its nature is not.

So it's not quite the same as scientific evidence in that sort of simple sense. But it is evidence. And it is based on believing the testimony of eyewitnesses.

So my second adjective was historical. The third adjective is scriptural. And Paul says in verse 3, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

He was buried. He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures. So he's saying that what happened isn't just an isolated incident that doesn't connect to anything else.

[10:39] It's not like a rock in the sky, unconnected. You know, what on earth is that doing there? But it's all connected up to this book. It's all connected up to this book. And it's actually connected in a multitude of layered and interconnecting ways.

But Paul doesn't stop to say that. He just says it's according to the scriptures. And the scriptures, for example, foretell and give us patterns and show us interpretations and all sorts of things like that. Please turn to Luke 24, verses 25 to 27. Luke 24, 25 to 27. Where there isn't Jesus speaks to his disciples.

And obviously Luke isn't recording absolutely everything that Jesus says in Luke 24, 25 to 27. But he does record this. He said to them, how foolish you are.

He's talking to his disciples. How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Luke 24, verse 25.

[11:53] Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

So in other words, the risen Jesus says, if you take this book, you might not at first sight have thought it was about Jesus and his resurrection and so on.

But if you look back with hindsight, if you interpret it the right way, the Jesus way, it is actually all about Christ.

And he died according to the scriptures. And he was raised according to the scriptures. So as I say, there's patterns in the scripture which Christ fulfills.

There's prophecies that he fulfills. And there are things that you might have interpreted one way. But now, with hindsight, as it were, you interpret with a whole fresh vision.

[12:58] And things slot into place that you would otherwise be puzzling to slot into place. The third adjective, scriptural. Fourth adjective, am I going fairly fast?

Are you still there? Yeah. Number four, it's apostolic. Apostolic. So the apostles, like Peter and James and John, apostolic is the adjective.

It means to do with apostles. So let's go back to 1 Corinthians 15. And the, it certainly wasn't only the apostles who saw the risen Jesus.

But there was a special role for the apostles. Peter and John and James and other people like that. A foundational role as witnesses of the resurrection.

And they had that particular place in the historical unfolding of the purposes of God. And Paul says that he was seen. And he said he was, he appeared to Peter.

[14:05] And then to the twelve. Well, that's the twelve disciples. I suppose they're called the twelve, even though Judas, by this time, was no longer one of them. And then the five hundred of the brothers all at the same time.

And James. Then to all the apostles. And Paul even includes himself in that. But he includes himself in an interesting way.

He says, I'm a special case. He says, I'm not the first of a new sequence. He says, I'm the last of this particular sequence.

And he appeared to James. Then to all the apostles. And last of all. He appeared to me also. As to one abnormally born.

I'm interested in that phrase, last of all. He could certainly have said. Couldn't he have said. And as an example to all the rest of you. Because you're all going to see the saviour.

[15:04] He says, no. It's the end of a sequence. Last of all. To me. So it is apostolic. And I point out that in that way of looking at things.

Whatever wonderful ministries people have in this day and age. You can't properly call anyone an apostle nowadays.

Now I know there's a banner of truth book called. So and so, so and so, apostle of the peaks. Which is about a wonderful missionary work.

And yeah. There are wonderful missionary people and pioneers and so on. But I would say on the basis of this scripture. That we couldn't properly call them apostles.

So it is number four, apostolic. Number five. The resurrection is sequential. Well I debated in my mind whether to use a word like sequential.

[16:13] But if I explain it, that will be alright. I mean in a definite order. That's what I mean by sequential. So if you were washing up. You would do it in a definite order, wouldn't you?

Number one, you'd get the dirty plates. Number two, you'd wash them. Number three, you'd dry them up. That's a definite order. You wouldn't dry them up first. Then wash them.

Would you? That would be out of sequence. You'd do it in a definite order. And there's a definite order about the resurrection. So I'm going to move on into verse 20.

Where Paul has said, well I'll come and look at a little bit of what he says in there. But I'm moving on to verse 20. Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.

The first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. It's interesting. He talks about first fruits. First fruits was a Jewish ceremonial thing.

[17:19] Where at the beginning of the harvest. The first fruits you would do something special with. And then there would be later additions to the harvest. And he says, Christ has been raised.

The first fruits. The beginning of a harvest, if you like. Of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. A human being.

A male human being in fact. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn. That's the sequence part of it.

So I did a little picture. So here's Adam and the people belonging to him. In a little bubble together. Grouped up together.

And those who belong to Adam share in what he brought, which was death. So all in Adam die.

[18:16] And he says there's a similar blobbing together. A similar, yeah. Blobbing together.

Of Christ and his people. And the people who belong to Christ, who are linked up with Christ, share in what he achieved, which is being made alive.

As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But he says it is sequential. It doesn't just happen all in one go.

It happens in an order. There's a sort of one, two, three to it. And what is the sequence? Well, the first sequence is that, well, the first sequence is that people are dead in their sins.

But in terms of the resurrection, the first thing is that Christ is raised. Each in his own turn. So this is number one. Christ, the first fruits.

[19:22] And I'm going to make a little diagram here of moving from the realm of sin and death to the realm of deathlessness. The realm which we are in, where there's sin and death and mortality.

And the realm that Christ has now burst through into. The realm where there is no death. Where death is defeated. And sin has been defeated.

The realm of deathlessness. And the first thing is that Christ is raised. And then he says, So the sequence is something like this.

That Christ is raised. And then there is a period where Christ reigns. Sorry about the, I started to put Christ rules. But Christ reigns, which is what it says.

And he reigns over his people, even though they die. And he reigns over his enemies, with their spears and swords, and even death itself.

[20:49] And he reigns so as and until, and with the termination, that all his enemies are finally put under his feet.

And as Paul says it, this is when Christ, I put, returns. It doesn't say return. It says when he comes. When there is the royal coming of Christ.

Verse 23, each in his own turn. Christ the firstfruits. Then when he comes, those who belong to him. And when he comes, there is the resurrection of all his people.

And God reorders everything. I squashed a lot into that diagram. But it says in verse 26, the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

For he has put everything under his feet. Now when it says everything has been put under him, it's clear this does not include God himself who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the son himself will be subject to him who put everything under him.

[ 21 : 59 ] So that God may be all in all. So he says that the ultimate configuration is that Christ is as he would long to be under the son, under the will and sovereignty of his father.

And the whole world is under the will and sovereignty of Jesus Christ. And that world is a new world of resurrection where those who were previously in the realm of sin and death have been raised with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a fantastic thought, isn't it? It's sequential. It doesn't all happen at once. First Christ is raised. That's now. And he is now currently raised. And then in the future, at his return, the dead will then be raised. That's what we're looking forward to.

I know we say we're looking forward to being in heaven. And he does talk about heaven and heavenly man. But to be quite particular about it, what we're looking forward to is having new bodies in a new heaven and a new earth.

[ 23 : 24 ] So as a believer, there will be a new you. You won't have the aches and pains that you might be having now.

If you're a young person, of course, you don't have aches and pains. But all of those things will be renewed. So when somebody says to you, how are you? You can rightly say, nothing that a new body won't cure.

And that is what we are here looking forward to. I just point that out. That is what we are here looking forward to.

And that means that our faith needs to grasp and grapple with this. I think every day, really. That Christian faith involves trusting God for the unseen future.

And making all our decisions and all our commitments and all our priorities in the light of that. All of them in the light of that.

[ 24 : 29 ] It might not mean that some decisions get changed very much. So somebody who has no hope for the future will drive on the left-hand side of the road on an English road system.

This is right, isn't it? Left-hand side. Yeah. And a Christian would drive on the left-hand side of the road as well. There's no particular difference there. But when you begin to put those decisions and pile them up and put them together and see what shape of life this all adds up to, it's the Christian who is living on the basis that one day the Lord will come, the dead will be raised, we shall see him as he is, and we shall be like him.

That was number five, sequential. Number six, unfathomable. Unfathomable. And I'm looking now into verse 35, where someone may ask, how are the dead raised?

With what kind of body will they come? NIV says the next bit, how foolish. Greek says, a little bit more rudely, you fool. So what can we fathom?

Can we answer the questions? We might think, you might think that problems with the resurrection is a very modern thing. But in those days, they had problems with the resurrection.

[ 25 : 56 ] So, in the little that I know about Greek philosophy of that time, I think it would be true to say that the Greek philosophy of that time was quite clear.

That to be spiritual was leaving behind this stuff, this physical stuff, this material stuff. And to make spiritual progress was to leave this behind.

So if Christians were to say that the progress that Christ had made, breaking through the barriers of sin and death, was a physical resurrection.

Your average Greek philosopher would say, no, no, no, that can't be possible. That just doesn't make sense. So they would have said that the resurrection is not only impossible, but for clever people, unthinkable.

And I think that makes sense as the background to this. Because even some of the Corinthians, who perhaps thought they were very wise, were saying the same thing. Well, of course, you can't possibly believe in the physical resurrection.

[ 27 : 02 ] It is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead. How can some of you say? You're sitting there in your pews or in your chairs or wherever you're sitting. And you're saying in your...

There is no resurrection from the dead. It's unthinkable, impossible, scientifically out of the question, philosophically ridiculous. And he says, well, that's...

You may think that, but tough, because Christ has indeed been raised. And you're going to have to move over in your philosophy.

How does it happen? Verse 35. How are the dead raised? Excuse me. Well, he says, you're a bit of a twit.

It might be a very clever twit, but you're a bit of a twit if you think that because you can't imagine how it happens, it can't happen. And the way that he's going to take it is to say, well, actually, if you think about it, there are lots of examples, even in our own limited experience, where something changes from what it was to what it becomes in a most remarkable way.

[ 28 : 15 ] So if you saw an acorn, I've tried to draw an acorn there. When you looked at the acorn, and all you'd ever experienced was acorns, and somebody said, if you put that in the ground, it turns into a great big tree, you'd say, ridiculous.

What do they take me for? It's an acorn, it's that big. Trees are huge. And acorns are sort of roundish. And trees are long and thin.

I mean, it's ridiculous. But Paul says, well, everybody knows. If you take an acorn and put it into the ground, and you wait long enough, it does. The miracle happens. And so he says, verse 36, what you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or something else. Well, he says wheat. I think acorns come under the same principle.

God gives it a body as he has determined. To each kind of seed, he gives its own body. And there's all sorts of differences. There's things that are changed, and things that are the same. So an acorn, if you plant it, it always produces an oak tree.

[ 29 : 27 ] An acorn doesn't ever produce a pear tree or a pussycat. You plant an acorn, and you end up with a pussycat.

It doesn't happen like that. So there's continuity. Things are the same. It goes from acorn to oak tree, or from grain of wheat to wheat, or whatever it is, apple seed to apple tree.

So there's a line that is the same, and there's a huge difference. And he says, well, you can grasp that, can't you? So why can't God take a Tim Flood, and as and when he passes away, and raise up a new glorious Tim Flood?

And why can't God take an Arsema, and if the Lord doesn't come first, one day she will pass away, and he can raise her a glorious Arsema, and they'll be the same as they were before, but gloriously different.

God can do that. So that was my sixth thing, unfathomable, which sort of moves us on to transforming. Transforming is a rather weak word for what he describes.

[ 30 : 49 ] So if you ever, by accident, turn on daytime television when it isn't broadcasting anything remotely sensible, but it's just showing you how to, I don't know, steam clean your tiles, or, I don't know, what else do they do?

Oh yeah, there's some gymnastic things. And they will always say, this has transformed my life. And you think, it hasn't really transformed your life.

Yeah, I've watched it for ages. The fact that you could steam clean your tiles doesn't really transform your life. But people say that sort of thing.

But this really does transform. This changes our human existence. It's, you might say, beyond recognition, beyond our wildest dreams.

It is transforming. And he gives the list of the way the transformation operates, which is in verse 42. So will it be with the resurrection from the dead. The body that is sown perishable is raised imperishable.

[ 32 : 05 ] The body that is sown, he says, in dishonor is raised in glory. That's a transformation, isn't it? A body that is sown in weakness is raised in, verse 43, in power.

A body that is sown, a natural body. In other words, a body with the forces and powers and capacities that you and I are familiar with because we see these things in one another, the creativity, the energy, the mental abilities, the emotional abilities, all these things in the body will become a spiritual body.

And the spiritual bit doesn't mean that we're made out of smoke. It's a body. And the spiritual is the power and the energy and the capacity that it now has.

In the same way that a steam ship is not made out of steam, it is powered by steam. And a spiritual body is not made out of wafty, wafty stuff, but it is a body empowered by the spirit.

And he says in verse 45, the first man, Adam, became a living being, the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.

[ 33 : 41 ] The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven, as was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth.

And as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so we shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

And he says that the untransformed, the previous state, the state that we are in now, is Adam-ish. We have inherited the sin of Adam, therefore the weaknesses of Adam, therefore all the fallen limitations of Adam.

But if we belong to Jesus Christ, when we are raised, we will bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

[ 34 : 52 ] Isn't that amazing? Isn't that amazing? I think it's amazing. Just look at the list of the transformation. I'd point out what it says about where we're at now, because it's not very flattering about human nature as we are now.

It says that we're perishable. We are. We're frail creatures, aren't we? So I remember one prayer meeting where Steve came along and he nearly severed some part of his anatomy with a rotary disc thing, hadn't you?

Yes, yeah. Well, that sort of thing, I mean, that happens to us, that we're perishable, we're easily damaged. And then he says that our bodies are bodies of dishonor.

We're not particularly glorious. I know that if you were a fashion model, they would take your picture and they would airbrush it so that it wasn't what you really like anyway, and they'd say, look at the glory and the beauty and the splendor of this lady or gentleman.

But in real life, our bodies have got spots and creaks and groans and we're not in the full dignity of what it's meant to be, to be human.

[ 36 : 13 ] This life, we're in dishonor and we're in weakness. And it'd be a foolish conceit of us to say, well, we're strong.

We're only strong in the Lord, in ourselves. We're weak. We're subject to all sorts of weaknesses and that's why we need daily the strength of the Lord.

And Paul says, great preacher, the great apostle. Do you remember when he says, when I came preaching to you? Do you remember what he says? I came to you in weakness.

You know, I didn't sleep very well, perhaps. I felt anxious. I felt intimidated by all you clever people around. I felt, I hope I hadn't made mistakes in the past.

He said, all these sorts of things. So I just point that out. He says, this is speaking candidly what we're like and what we will be is imperishable.

[ 37 : 17 ] What we will be is glorious. What we will be is have power. What we will be is a body in a world, as far as we can understand it, inhabited and driven and empowered by the Spirit.

It's almost beyond our imagination, isn't it? But he says, this is what we have a glimpse of. This is what happened to Jesus and we are linked up with him in this. That was the seventh thing.

It is transforming. Number eight. Glorious. So I'm in verse 50.

I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I will tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.

I can't help remembering that Adrian Plass says this about babies. They will not all sleep, but they will all be changed. But he says, we will not all sleep, meaning that there will be some Christians who don't die because Jesus Christ comes before the time of their death.

[ 38 : 32 ] Now, maybe it will be us. Maybe it will be some future generation. Not everybody will sleep the sleep of death. But whether we do or we don't, we will all be changed.

Isn't that a statement? We will all be changed. In a flash, 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.

For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true.

Death has been swallowed up in victory. With written word, you don't know the tone of voice in which it was written, do you? In fact, if it was written, I suppose you didn't have a tone of voice.

But as you read it, you can't help but think there is a sense of glory in that writing. The trumpet will sound. The dead will be raised.

[ 39 : 53 ] We will all be changed. And death will be swallowed up in victory. That's fantastic, isn't it?

Death. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. We're surrounded by death. But death itself will be destroyed.

And death will be swallowed up in victory. And I can't help but think that this eighth adjective is right. It is glorious. There is something that, to one degree or another, we haven't quite understood unless a little tingle ran down the back of your neck thinking, isn't that amazing?

Death will be swallowed up in victory. Ninth adjective.

[ 40 : 51 ] This that we're looking at is glorious and it's practical. And I noticed the last, excuse me again, the last few words.

Verse 58, therefore, brothers. Because of this, brothers, because of this enormously powerful doctrine I've been reminding you of and restating and amplifying and setting out before you, therefore, brothers.

And you wonder what he's going to say with the therefore. He might say, therefore, make sure you always end your service with a really rousing resurrection song. And I suppose he could say that, but that's not what he says.

He says, therefore, brothers, therefore, stand firm. Keep on being a Christian. Don't drift off.

Don't give up. Don't wander away. Therefore, stand firm. let nothing move you. It seems almost an anti-climax, doesn't it?

[ 42 : 04 ] You'd think he'd say something much more rip-roaring than that. But what he actually says is, just hold your ground. Stand firm.

Don't be intimidated by all the clever people saying resurrection is ridiculous. Let nothing move you. And as the winds come and the storms and beat upon that house, hang on.

Let nothing move you. And then, what he says next is really interesting. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord.

It's a great mistake to see the work of the Lord and say, well, maybe I will, maybe I won't. Maybe I will this time, maybe I won't this time.

Maybe I'll do that later. I'll let other people do that. I'll stand back from it a bit. I'll give myself some space. All these sorts of things which do not comply with what he says here.

[ 43 : 13 ] Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord. It's interesting that he says that, isn't it? I think he means to whatever capacity you have.

I don't think he would be inhuman about it, but whatever your full capacity is for the work of the Lord, give yourself to that. And the reason being, the reason being that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Sometimes we are tempted to think, why on earth am I cleaning the floor again when the person who used this part of the church building could have cleaned that and I'm doing it and I could feel quite resentful about it and I could say, why has somebody bent my jack plug like that?

Look at that. Oh dear. I'm in vain. Yes. But, he's saying here, don't let yourself think things like that.

Think my labour in the Lord, whether other people see it or not, whether it seems to be productive or not, whether the results of it will only be seen in the light of the last day.

[ 44 : 41 ] it's not in vain. Our labour in the Lord is not in vain, which makes this a very practical doctrine. It says, if this is what you believe, you will be a church, not a church of people who all sit on the sideline and let one or two people do the running round, but you will be a church of people who are fully engaged engaged in whatever the work of the Lord is that he's put before you.

And it will be different for different people, but you'll be engaged with it. That was my ninth adjective. It's practical. We've finished.