

Death is Swallowed Up in Victory

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[0 : 00] 15, 50 through 58. At the conclusion of the reading, I will declare, this is the word of the Lord, and the church, in joyful response to his revelation given to us, will together say, thanks be to God.

I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 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 imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. 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. But thanks be to God, who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 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.

[1 : 22] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Heavenly Father, what a glorious, glorious passage we have before us today. God, we know that we are not capable of even skimming the surface of the glory of this text, Lord.

We have your Spirit, though, and so, Lord, we invite your Holy Spirit to lead us into the depths and the richness of what is before us. Lord, would you let faith and hope arise in this place today among the saints?

Would you breathe life to the dead this morning among this body? God, as we give our undivided attention to what God has spoken to us, we pray this all for your glory.

In Jesus' name, amen. Well, good morning, church. Good morning. My name's Mike. I'm one of the pastors here at Shoreline. It's just so good to be with you all this morning in worship.

You know, I say that every week, and I mean it every single week. And it's such a joy to gather here with the saints, with our siblings in Christ, and to lift up praises to our King, to revel in gospel truths that we're singing and proclaiming to one another, and to do that with people that we get to walk through life with.

[2 : 38] God has really sovereignly arranged this body of believers, and he's doing it all the time. As people come and people go, he's fitting us together to be the body of Christ.

And it is truly an honor and a privilege to be your pastor and to get to bring God's word to you week in and week out. And I want to ask this morning, I like to often start sermons with the question, Do you remember the first time that you were faced with the reality of death?

First time that you had to face the reality of death? Now, I don't know how old I was, but I still remember my dad was mowing the lawn and almost ran over a baby bunny.

Now, we ended up taking that baby bunny in. We gave it a home inside of our garage and fed him and took care of him for all of like three days until he died. And, you know, we were crushed that this little baby bunny had died.

You know, death's finality, it was a painful reality to bear as a small child. But that was just a bunny, right? That was a bunny. The crushing pain and the grief of death and its finality is exponentially greater when it's a beloved family member or a friend.

[3 : 58] You know, in those moments, even if we've previously been able to ignore death's reality, which we're really good at, in those moments, we must face up to it. And where do we turn to for hope?

You know, death's dark shadow looms larger than that still, for even if we're not in a season of grieving a loved one's death, maybe death isn't that near to our door, yet constantly we're reminded of death's power over humanity, simply by turning on the news.

All over this world, all the time, Rob had opened our service a few weeks ago, talking about like 20 different events that had happened over the world, including the same week where Charlie Kirk was killed, and there's been shootings in different places of worship all the time.

Our own community not too far away, the Groton-Stonington area, has been mourning the loss of a coach and teacher and others before that. Death's inevitable, right?

We know it's coming for us. We don't know when. And this fear, this fear of death, it holds humanity captive. Where do we turn to for hope?

[5 : 11] Well, if you've been with us recently, if you sang the songs that we were just singing, then you know the answer to that question, because we've had the awesome privilege for the last four weeks in this chapter of 1 Corinthians of reveling in the resurrection hope that we have in Christ Jesus.

Because he died on the cross for our sins, according to the scriptures, and he rose again on the third day, according to scriptures, and one day he's coming again, and when he does, we have seen, he will subject every evil power, including death.

And God will be all in all, and he will make all things new, including these shabby old bodies, which will be transformed into his glorious likeness.

That's where we've been for the last four weeks. And this week, in these final nine verses of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul provides the rousing finale to this resurrection crescendo.

So if you haven't, please turn to your Bibles. 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verses 50 to 58. We have Bibles on the back table if anybody needs one of those or bookmarked today's passage, and you're welcome to keep one of those.

[6 : 22] After this week, we have only two more weeks left in this letter of 1 Corinthians. We've been considering the church's call to display Christ in all things.

So we have two more weeks in 1 Corinthians 16, where that reality becomes even more clear. As Paul shows, the gospel transforms the church culture. And then after that, I mentioned this last week, if you were at the congregational meeting, we're going to have a guest preacher up here. His name is Marcus Wilson. He's an administrator of the Connecticut Baptist Association, an elder at a church up in Windsor, and we're excited to have him preach. And then after that, we're going to be doing a topical series to lay out our vision for Shoreline.

And I'm really excited about that. But right now, let's give our attention to this word here, that in Christ, I'm going to give you some advance warning.

This is a good spot for an amen. In Christ, death is swallowed up in victory. That's the title of today's sermon, taken right out of verse 45.

[7 : 27] Now, in the first four verses, Paul talks about the trumpet and the transformation. The trumpet and the transformation, verses 50 to 53. In last week's passage, Paul had answered that the Corinthians had raised a couple of objections, or we assume they were probably real objections that Paul brings to the table.

And the second one, with what kind of body do they come? That's verse 35. Paul had answered that question in last week's text. He answered by first appealing to nature.

He provided those three illustrations that highlight the unmatched power and creativity of God. And the implication there was that if God is able to create such a vast diversity of living things, each in its own glory, then surely he's able to clothe us with the resurrected bodies that are fit for heaven.

He then applied those analogies to the future resurrection of the dead explicitly, and he showed how those realities are seen in comparing the first man, the man of dust, Adam, to the second and last man, the man of heaven, Christ.

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, he concluded, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. And now here, Paul transitions to answering that first objection from verse 35.

[8 : 48] How are the dead raised? How are the dead raised? Well, he begins in more of a negative sense in verse 50. Look at verse 50. I tell you this, brothers.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Now, flesh and blood, it's not referring to merely what is physical, but rather to what is, I'm sorry, it's not referring to what is physical, but to what is natural.

Now, we looked at, this is the verbiage that Paul had used last week. What is not spiritual, what is not of the spirit, it's that which has been corrupted by sin and therefore has become, because of sin, perishable, subject to death's decay.

What is fallen because of sin cannot possibly continue to exist in the blazing glory and holiness of God's almighty presence.

Sinful humanity cannot become a partaker of the divine nature. Now, listen to this. Andrew Murray writes this in his book, Holy in Christ. Of the elements of nature, there is none of such spiritual and mighty energy as fire.

[10:04] Think about fire. I was just around a bonfire last night. Picture fire in your minds. Maybe a blazing house fire that consumes everything. He says that there's nothing of such spiritual and mighty energy as fire.

What it consumes, it takes and changes into its own spiritual nature, rejecting as smoke and ashes what cannot be assimilated. And so, the holiness of God is that infinite perfection by which he keeps himself free from all that is not divine.

and yet has fellowship with the creature and takes it up into union with himself, destroying and casting out all that will not yield itself to him. An amazing image.

So God shall destroy that which is unholy, right, which has not yielded itself to him. That will be a terrible day for those who have not yielded themselves to God through faith in Christ.

For there will be nothing for God to take up into union with himself only to destroy in eternal judgment. But for those who have yielded themselves to God by faith in Christ, Paul says, verse 51, he says, behold, I tell you a mystery.

[11:16] In other words, get this, listen up. I'm about to tell you a divine truth that was formerly hidden but it's now been revealed. And what is that divine truth?

He says, 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 imperishable and we shall be changed.

The second coming of Christ, there's going to be a generation of Christ followers that is still alive. And I hope that is us, saints. I hope that's us.

And that generation will not have to experience death. Then the dead in Christ will be raised and both the resurrected dead and those who are still alive as Paul declares twice here shall all be changed, transformed, right?

From that seed to the plant that Paul talked about last week, from earthly glory to heavenly glory. And this awesome resurrection and transformation will take place, Paul says, at the last trumpet.

[12:24] At the last trumpet. Throughout Scripture, the blast of the trumpet signifies, and this will be on the screen here, the blast of the trumpet signifies that great and final victory of God and his anointed one over his enemies and then the gathering of all those who belong to him into his presence forevermore.

And we see this trumpet blast throughout Scripture. Hear these words from Isaiah 27. In that day, the Lord, with his hard and great and strong sword, will punish Leviathan, the fleeing serpent.

This is a picture of Satan. Leviathan, the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea. In that day, further in the chapter, it says, In that day, from the river Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, the Lord will thresh out the grain and you will be gleaned one by one, O people of Israel.

And in that day, a great trumpet will be blown and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

Do you see those aspects of the trumpet? Victory of God over his enemies, the gathering of those who belong to him. Pictured in Isaiah 27 is what we find again straight from the mouth of Jesus in Matthew 24.

[13:43] And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other.

And again, we find the trumpet blast in the book of Revelation. Then, this is Revelation 11, verse 15, Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever.

And the 24 elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God saying, We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

The nations raged, but your wrath came and the time for the dead to be judged and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints and those who fear your name, both small and great and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.

In each of these passages, we see the trumpet blast signaling the defeat of God's enemies, the establishment of Christ's eternal reign and the gathering in of the saints into the presence of God.

[15:02] And what Paul, through the Spirit, contributes to this vision of heaven is that when this happens, we shall all be changed. We shall all be changed. Verse 53, For this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality.

This is the transformation. The transformation from perishable to imperishable, from mortal to immortality. And this transformation, Paul says, must happen.

It must happen. Why? Because, he said, mere flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. It must happen. And surely also, because this is God's will, this is God's plan, it must happen, because God has ordained it to happen.

We shall shed these perishable, mortal bodies subjected to death and death's decay, and we will be clothed in glorious new bodies, animated, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and his life-giving power is going to course through our bodies forever.

This transformation, Paul says, shall take place in a moment, in a flash, in the twinkling or in the blink of an eye. And we're reminded here that this is not going to be some difficult, time-consuming process for the God who spoke all of creation into existence.

[16:28] We're also reminded, though, of what Jesus warned his disciples in Matthew 24, which Paul picks up on in 1 Thessalonians 5, that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

While people are saying there is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief, for you are all children of light, children of the day. Brothers and sisters, we do not know when Christ will return.

Only the Father knows, not even the Son. And it could be as Tyler was exhorting us. It could be any moment. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7 that the appointed time has grown very short.

Grown very short. Now, if you think, man, that was 2,000 years ago, well, you need to remember what Peter told us, that a day with the Lord is like 1,000 years, and 1,000 years are like a day. His timetable is not ours.

[17:36] But the appointed time has grown short, for the present form of this world is passing away. Saints all around us every single day, living with us, living beside us, driving next to us on the road, working with us, going to school with us, playing sports with us, are people in darkness.

People for whom the day of the Lord will be as a thief in the night. They desperately, urgently need to believe in Christ and the gospel. And how are they to believe in what they have not heard?

We, church, we desperately, urgently need to share with them the saving gospel of grace in Christ, that they might hear and believe and themselves become children of light.

We're going to sing this song at the end of this service, The King is Coming. And that chorus says, prepare the way the King is coming. How do we do that?

How do we prepare the way? In many ways, but in part, we do that by testifying, by testifying to the world. In reliance on the Spirit, we prepare the way for Christ's coming by spreading, proclaiming the gospel that salvation is found in no other name but in Jesus Christ the Lord.

[18:59] His name alone. That's the trumpet and the transformation. And now we turn to the triumph. The triumph, verses 54 through 57.

Look there in your Bibles at verses 54. When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, death, where is your sting? Paul is quoting here from two different passages in the Old Testament. In the first line, death is swallowed up in victory, Paul is quoting from Isaiah chapter 25.

So go ahead and actually flip there in your Bibles. I want you to see this for yourself. Isaiah chapter 25. I want to hear some pages turning. I don't really hear any. If you're on your phone, I get it.

That's quiet. I got I'm listening Bibles out there. If you go to the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Isaiah 25. In this portion of Isaiah's prophecy, a set of judgment oracles have been pronounced against all the surrounding pagan nations of Israel and then against Israel herself.

[20 : 19] But those judgment oracles give way to three chapters of promised restoration and glory, not only for Israel but also for the nations.

And it's there, that section of this beautiful prophecy that Isaiah says, look at verse 8 of chapter 25. He will swallow up death forever. And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces and the reproach of his people he will take away from the earth.

For the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Behold, this is our God. We have waited for him that he might save us. This is the Lord. We have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

This beautiful Old Testament prophecy. Paul is declaring here in 1 Corinthians 15, this will finally come to pass when Christ returns, crushes his enemies including death, and raises up the saints to everlasting life.

This is amazing. Now similarly, in the next two lines, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is quoting from Hosea chapter 13.

[21 : 32] So I want to ask you to turn to Hosea chapter 13. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, if that helps. Hosea chapter 13.

And this is a beautiful book about God's love for his people. If you haven't read Hosea, read Hosea. Here in Hosea 13, God is once again declaring judgment against Israel.

He refers to Israel as Ephraim. declaring judgment against her wife for her idolatry over and over and over again. And right in the midst of this judgment, God declares, look at verse 14, I shall ransom them from the power of Sheol.

I shall redeem them from death. And then he says, O death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting?

Death's plagues, death's sting are no mats for Almighty God. He is able, if he wills, to ransom and redeem Israel from death.

[22 : 45] But then comes the sad reality for Israel. God says to her, compassion is hidden from my eyes. There in Hosea 13, Israel's iniquity has risen too high.

She has forsaken time and again the one person with the power to redeem her from death. So instead, she will be punished. She will not experience his rescuing, life-giving power.

And Paul is saying here in 1 Corinthians 15 that even though in Hosea's time, Israel forfeited God's power to redeem, God's declaration will surely still come to pass.

Then, at the last trumpet, we shall find the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel for all of those who belong to Christ. Christ, at his second coming, will swallow up death in eternal victory.

And then we see Paul goes on to give the Corinthians an ultra-condensed version of what he spends chapters on in the book of Romans. to show how death is swallowed up in victory.

[23 : 52] Look at verse 56. The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. Just stop there. The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law.

Paul's language conjures up the image of a certain hideous, venomous, prey-stinging creature. What is that creature? What do you guys think?

What's Paul talking about here? Scorpion? Yeah. That's what I think it is. He's picturing a scorpion. Now, I was going to show a picture and then decided not to because I don't want to cause nightmares because those things, man, they're creepy.

They're creepy. One time, thankfully only one time, I encountered a scorpion and out behind some cage. I was inside a house in Juarez, Mexico on a missions trip and getting ready for the day and behind the curtain, I could see through the curtain the shadow of this horrifying creature and I could see its eight legs, its pinchers, its stinger and in that moment, fear and adrenaline took over my body.

Okay? And with a loud battle cry, I flung that thing off the curtain and then struck that thing over and over again with my shoe and I'm really glad that nobody else was in the house at the time.

[25 : 11] But man, that thing had no clue what was coming. Now, that scorpion represents death. That's what Paul's saying here. Picture that scorpion as the image of death.

Death is the final enemy to be destroyed by Christ and death, Paul is teaching, it only holds power because of sin. No sin, no death.

But Adam sinned. Right? And so Paul writes in Romans 5.12 that sin came into the world through one man and death through sin. Now, we've talked about this for the past couple weeks.

We've talked about how scripture makes abundantly clear that we have a sin nature that we cannot escape and we also sin. And you say, well, why does sin lead to death?

And it's because of two reasons. Because God is holy and God is the source of life. God is holy and God is the source of life. This is what I mean. God is infinitely holy.

[26 : 11] He's perfect. He's righteous. He dwells, Paul says in 1 Timothy, in unapproachable light. We saw the image of a fire. God is a consuming fire. And because of this, God cannot tolerate sin.

sin. So sin, Isaiah 59.2, it separates us from God. And I said, God is the source of life.

If we're separated from the source of life, then sin leads to death. To be separated from God is to be separated from life itself. So sin is the reason death has power.

Sin is the sting of death. death. And what makes sin, then, so potent? Paul says the power of sin is the law.

That is, the commandments of God. For example, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. It's a commandment from God. The power of sin is the law.

[27 : 13] But we object to that, right? That doesn't make sense. The law is from God, is it not? And yes, it is. The law is from God. And so Paul says in Romans 7, verse 12, the law itself is holy and righteous and good.

The problem is not with the law. The problem is with the corrupt human heart stained with sin which seizes as an opportunity through the law to disobey God.

Now this analogy is not mine. It's been used before. It's kind of like this. If I say to you, don't think about a pink elephant. Are you going to think about a pink elephant?

Would you have thought about a pink elephant before I told you not to? Probably not. I mean, maybe. So our sinful hearts, they multiply sin through the holy commandments of God.

None of us is perfectly able to obey God. We have all missed the mark. We have all transgressed his law. And therefore, Paul writes in Galatians 3.10, for all who rely on works of the law are under a curse.

[28 : 20] For it is written, cursed by everyone who does not abide by all... Did I write that wrong? For it is written, cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them.

All things written in the book of the law and do them. James talks about how if we break one commandment, we have transgressed the law. One commandment. Has anybody here broken one commandment before?

Go ahead and raise your hands. Lawbreakers, all of us. Lawbreakers. Power of sin is the law. The sting of death is sin. What a formidable foe this scorpion of death is to the race of Adam, to humanity.

We cannot escape the reach of its venomous sting. We are utterly helpless. We are utterly defenseless in and of ourselves. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen? Church, we could never meet the law's demands, but Christ has by living a perfect life in perfect obedience to the Father.

[29 : 28] and now those who trust in Christ have his spotless record, his merit, his righteousness is imputed to us. It's given to us. Come behold the wondrous mystery.

He the perfect son of man in his living, in his suffering, never trace nor stain of sin. See the true and better Adam come to save the hell-bound man.

Christ, the great and sure fulfillment of the law in him we stand. Church, we could never atone for sin, but Christ has.

Through his once-for-all sacrifice on the cross for our sins and now those who confess Jesus as Lord, their sin is nailed, not in part, but the whole, to that cross.

And so we sing, come behold the wondrous mystery, Christ the Lord upon the tree. In the stead of ruined sinners hangs the lamb in victory.

[30 : 29] See the price of our redemption. See the Father's plan unfold, bringing many sons to glory, grace unmeasured, love untold. We could never meet the law's demands.

We could never atone for sin. We could never gain victory over death, but Christ has. By fulfilling the law, atoning for sin, and then burying death in the grave and rising to indestructible life. And now those, church, all those who are united by faith to Christ shall also rise to indestructible life when he comes. Come, behold the wondrous mystery, slain by death, the God of life, but no grave could e'er restrain him.

Praise the Lord, he is alive. What a foretaste of deliverance. How unwavering our hope, Christ in power, resurrected as we will be when he comes.

Hallelujah. As Paul summarizes in 2 Timothy 1 verse 10, our Savior, Jesus Christ, has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

[31 : 46] The scorpion is neutralized. Its sting is removed. And one day it will be crushed along with Satan underneath the feet of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Death will be swallowed up forever in the eternal victory of Christ when he returns and raises the dead to immortal glory. That's the main point, I think, of this whole passage here.

Death will be swallowed up forever in the eternal victory of Christ when he returns and raises the dead to immortal glory. friends, today, this very moment, while you still have time before his return and we don't know how much, trust in Christ and repentance of sin by faith in his name.

Cast yourself upon the one who has fulfilled all the laws demands that you could not do, who has paid the high price of redemption, which is his life, and who's risen again in victory.

you might also rise again if you trust in him. For those of us who belong to Christ, Paul says here, thanks be to God.

[32 : 56] Right? Let us, with every breath, offer up our lives to God in thanksgiving because of the grace that he has shown us in Christ.

Praise and thanks should be the dominant theme of our lives, even in the midst of our pain because of the gospel that does not take away the pain, that does not discount the place of lament.

That's another sermon. But as Christians in Christ for whom the Savior has risen and we're also going to rise, our dominant theme in this life is thanks and praise. So church, let's not be swayed to play the victim.

This world is really good at playing the victim. Our flesh is really good at playing the victim. We have every reason to continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.

Hebrews 13, 15. Make thanksgiving a habit in your home. Make it a habit in your devotional life, in your marriage. This is a reason why we do quarterly open mic times so that we can share with one another reasons that we have for giving thanks and praise to the Lord.

[34 : 09] Our lives should be marked by praise and thanks and also by grace. We owe all to the grace of God. We owe all.

Paul's not using the word grace here but it is streaming off the page in all of this letter. We owe all to God's grace. Paul had said in chapter 4, what do you have that you did not receive?

If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? We owe all to the grace of God. And that grace which has been lavished on us in Christ, we ought to then generously dispense to others.

This becomes more central in chapter 16 which we'll get to next week. There's one more point of application I want to mention before we move on. And it's this.

Probably the central thing here. We no longer need to fear that great and final enemy death, do we? See, death has been forever defanged.

[35 : 14] It might wound us now, it certainly does, but it will not finally defeat us. Nothing in all of creation, not even death itself, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Romans 8, 39.

That means that we are able to face our own death without fear and we are able in the face of the death of friends and loved ones to grieve as those who have hope.

We grieve in hope, not as the world does. Now I want, I'm going to read a quote here from Athanasius from his book On the Incarnation.

He wrote this in the 4th century and I pray that as I do that, that fearlessness and hope and worship to God would arise. Now he wrote these words having seen much persecution against Christians.

So consider that as you hear this. He says this, Before the divine sojourn of the Savior, even the holiest of men were afraid of death and mourned the dead as those who perish.

[36 : 17] But now that the Savior has raised his body, death is no longer terrible. But all those who believe in Christ tread it underfoot as nothing and prefer to die rather than to deny their faith in Christ knowing full well that when they die they do not perish but live indeed and become incorruptible through the resurrection.

But that devil of old who of old wickedly exalted in death, now that the pains of death are loosed, he alone it is who remains truly dead. There is proof of this too.

For men who before they believe in Christ think death horrible and are afraid of it, once they are converted despise it so completely that they go eagerly to meet it and themselves become witnesses of the Savior's resurrection from it.

So weak has death become that even women who used to be taken in by it mock at it now as a dead thing robbed of all its strength. Death has become like a tyrant who has been completely conquered by the legitimate monarch.

Bound hand and foot, the passersby sneer at him, no longer afraid of his cruelty and rage, so has death been conquered and branded for what it is by the Savior on the cross.

[37 : 33] It is bound hand and foot. All who are in Christ trample it as they pass and as witnesses to him to write it, scoffing and saying, O death, where is your victory? O grave, where is your sting?

Such is the triumph of Christ over sin and death and therefore saying, such is our triumph as well in Christ. We've talked about the trumpet, transformation, the triumph and Paul concludes finally with a few words of exhortation.

Look at verse 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.

Notice first Paul's tender and familial language here, my beloved brothers. We've seen this over and over again in the letter, how greatly Paul loves his congregation despite all of their many flaws. But notice second what grounds his exhortation. Therefore, therefore, he's connecting these commands, these imperatives to the whole proceeding discussion on what's come.

[38 : 55] And then he says at the end there, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. So why should the Corinthians do what Paul exhorts? Because of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Because of our sure future resurrection with him at his second coming. When he will defeat every evil power including death. And that's why the Corinthians know that their labor is not in vain.

If Christ had not been raised, then their gospel labor would be in vain. It would be futile effort, but in fact, Christ has been raised. And now let's consider the actual exhortations Paul gives here, and these are going to become our closing application for today.

Paul says, be steadfast, immovable. Now this alludes back to verse 2 of this chapter when Paul called the Corinthians to hold fast to the word I preach to you.

Hold fast to the word I preach to you. He says similarly to the Colossians when he urges them to continue in the faith stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven.

[40 : 11] Shoreline, we have every reason to stand firmly upon the word of God, no matter how much culture seeks to move us onto their sinking sand.

Look, we aim to be a church here. We aim to be a church that is submitted to the word and centered on the gospel. We aim to be a church that allows the voice and the truth of God and no one else to shape our identity and our purpose and our beliefs and every facet of our lives individually and corporately.

And this is why we are a confessional church. That is, we adhere to a set of doctrines that are derived from scripture. We have a statement of faith.

Our members must agree to that statement of faith when they come into membership and that's not just some formality. That is the basis and needs to remain the basis of all that we do. It keeps us grounded in the truths, the timeless truths of God's word.

word. This is why the preaching of the word is the centerpiece of our corporate gatherings. It has nothing to do with me. It has everything to do with God and what he says and the fact that his word is life and the thing that we need to hold fast to.

[41 : 24] If I go, somebody else will come up here and take that place. This is why the word and the gospel must be central in all of our discipling and all of our counseling of one another.

Whether in Shoreline Kids or Shoreline Youth or in your family worship or in our community groups or in our one-on-one conversations, the word, the gospel must be central.

As the sands of culture seem to shift faster and faster, we need to remain steadfast, immovable, holding fast to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That is our only hope of salvation. Paul says, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Always abounding in the work of the Lord. Remembering that this life is only a momentary prelude to the majestic symphony that's to come.

[42 : 29] Remembering that Christ has been raised to indestructible life and we will be too.

Remembering that therefore our labors for God's kingdom are not in vain, this empowers us, it motivates us to abound in the work of the Lord.

And what is that work? It's everything in this letter and more. It's the proclamation of the gospel. And that's not just my job, that's all of our jobs.

Proclamation of the gospel, that's the work of the Lord. It's laying down one's rights in order to build up others. That is the work of the Lord. It's exercising each of us the spiritual gifts that God has fit us with in service to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

It's rejoicing with those who rejoice. It's mourning with those who mourn. As we're going to see in the next chapter, it's generosity, it's hospitality, it's the great commission.

It's making disciples of all nations and baptizing them and teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded. That's the work of the Lord. Wives, it's submitting to your husbands as to the Lord.

[43 : 45] Husbands, it's loving your wives as Christ loved the church. Children, it's obeying your parents in the Lord. Parents, fathers especially, it's raising your kids in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Employees, it's working heartily as to the Lord and not to men. Saints, it's living out the gospel in every area of life, bringing into reality in the Spirit's power our undying prayer, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

You know, there's a lot of ways that we can waste our time. And we don't have to go further than these little devices in our pockets, scrolling, scrolling, scrolling, scrolling.

Now listen, some of that time might not be wasted, I will grant you that. But do you want to spend your time and know that it actually counts? Abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The last paragraph in Shoreline's statement of faith reads like this, we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness.

[45 : 04] The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy and fellowship with God in the new creation. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.