

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 PM

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[0 : 00] Well, let's pray as we spend a little time in this next section in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we've just declared in the creed how central it is that we understand the resurrection and the difference that it makes in our lives.

So we pray that you'll help us tonight to understand a little more of all that you've done and why it matters. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, I can't say that I'm a really big hockey fan, but I have been getting into the Stanley Cup.

It's kind of like rugby, but with sticks and zooming around on ice with ice skates. There's a strange thing called icing that I'm not quite worked out, but actually I quite like the game and it's really engaging.

It's fun, especially because when people fall down in ice hockey, it's because they've been taken down. Not like soccer, where they just fall down because they want to penalty.

Anyway. So, well, Paul's letter to the church in Corinth is a bit like an end of game hockey analysis. It's a bit like the coach, Coach Paul, getting his team together, analyzing the infringements, those times whereby people were put in the penalty box.

[1 : 24] It's an analysis of how the team is not working together. They're hurting and harming one another. It's those things that make a team a team.

And Paul's helping them to see that in Corinth, in the church, they were not the team that they should be. Well, Paul shifts.

In chapter 15, I don't know whether you've spotted it, but Paul shifts. He's been going through four different situations. Situations where they were arguing who was the captain.

Situations where they were arguing about how they should live their lives and their freedom. I'm free to live. But it ended up with sexual license. They've gone through issues of food and how they're also able to eat food.

But how confusing it was and some of their team didn't really know what they should be doing, what they could be doing, and what will they be doing. And you've got these four issues that will be highlighted.

[2 : 33] The last one was how to play together as a team when they gather together. But it shifts in this fifth one. I don't know whether you've spotted the fifth one. It's chapter 15.

It's as if the other four issues, important as they were, are not the most important thing to do. Now, read with me how chapter 15 starts.

If you've got a Bible, do open the Bible and open up at chapter 15, verse 1. And you'll see at the beginning of the chapter, as this whole section talks about the resurrection, it shifts.

It shifts. Chapter 15 starts with this. Now, I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you've received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved.

If you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. Paul is setting out at the beginning of chapter 15, this is how you're saved. Quite simply, if you miss this, you will have listened in vain.

[3 : 38] Corinthian church, pay attention. Church, St. John's in Vancouver, pay attention. And what does he focus on? He focuses on this, quite simply.

This is not an issue that there's disputable or debatable issues over. He shifts our focus to Jesus. Did you spot that? He shifts. You see, the gospel is all about Jesus.

It's about what Jesus has done and not what we do. It's about what Jesus has done. And the truth is, as a team, we will forever fall and fail.

Penalties and power plays will come our way. But come with me and have a little look at this Corinthian church and realize that Jesus' resurrection, his death and resurrection is the focal point

of our victory.

That's what makes the difference. He'll spell it out at the end of the chapter. In a memory verse that we learned when we went to Victoria.

[4 : 45] Thanks be to God who gives us the victory. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the truth is this. Is that as we think about being a church, a team, encouraging and building one another up. Paul wants us at the end of this to actually understand that it's not going to be how we deal with even those four issues that we looked at earlier on.

The difference is when we focus on Jesus, we see what he has done. It is in him that we are saved. And it's in him that we have resurrection and our faith is not in vain.

Jesus has won the victory. The victory is assured. The season has been won. The victory, his victory is our victory. His prize is our prize. His team is our team.

And if we stand firm and don't transfer from his team, we will enjoy all that God in Christ has won for us.

[5 : 55] In a little while, in a short while, we're going to get some of our grade 12s. You saw some of them earlier on in the video. But there's some of them tonight.

We're going to talk to them about this next step. This is sadly the last together service, youth service, that they're going to be with us. And in a few weeks, the summertime hits.

Many of them are going off to camp and serving. But many of them are then moving on to other places. And one of the challenges that we have for them is for them to think about what is it going to be like in these places that you go to.

And I want to encourage them, the grade 12s and indeed all of us, who at some point, we're in a transient city. Lots of people move from here. I want you to remember what's of most importance.

That's what Paul says. What is most important? And you'll be surprised, or at least you shouldn't be surprised. It's not most important that you go to a church that has a great band.

[6 : 56] It's not most important that you go to a church that even has great liturgy. It's not most important that you go to a place. But these things, important as they are, help us to see that there is no perfect church.

Because there is only a perfect Jesus, who is making his church perfect. Remember that a healthy church stands firm on the things of first importance.

Jesus lived, Jesus died, and then he rose again. So winning the victory over death is not a license to sin. We have been saved from sin and its consequences.

And so, as you go to churches, as you travel from here, look for a place that preaches Jesus. Look for a place that stands firm on the gospel.

Look for a place where there is love, as we've heard from 1 Corinthians. Love is behind everything that they do. Don't get distracted by things that often people get distracted by.

[8 : 01] The Corinthian church, well, I prefer this preacher. I prefer this preacher. I like the sound of him. I like the sound. That's how to distract you from the things of first importance. So chapter 15 starts with Paul arguing that the resurrection is real.

It was testified by over 500 people. And it's on this which you need to stand. He then goes on to help the Corinthians to understand the resurrection change.

The change that this brings. It's a shocking transformation. You go to a church and people's lives are no different from everybody else's. Then the question is, is the Holy Spirit at work in people?

It's not a church of perfect people. But it is a perfect Jesus who is transforming a people. Paul uses the picture of a seed.

He says, in the same way that a seed grows into a tree, you will be transformed. He then says, in the same way that there are fish and there are human bodies, but there are also birds and they're different kind of bodies.

[9 : 05] In the same way, there's going to be transformation. Again, as we think about the resurrection from the dead and all that Jesus has on offer for us. He speaks about glory.

And he says, as the sun and the moon and the stars, there is different glory. Again, there's going to be transformation. You're going to go from weakness to glory. And these are all the upgrades, if you want to think about it.

All the transformations that are going to happen. Perishable to imperishable. Dishonour to honour. Weakness to power. Natural to spiritual.

People of the dust to people of heaven. We're upgrading. From living beings being in Adam. Living beings to being children of Jesus.

The second Adam. Jesus, the life-giving spirits. And so it's why the reading that we read kind of took us at the beginning. Look, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

[10:05] Flesh and blood represents decay and death. It reminds us of our sin and our rebellion. It reminds us we're in Adam. He says, you're not taking that with you.

You're going to swap it. The corruptible and perishable have no place in the kingdom of God.

Where's Adi? Adi said earlier on today, helpfully. She said, it's a bit like rotten food.

Has no place in your fridge. And the reality is this. Is that our perishable, our nature that is corruptible, is not going to inherit heaven.

Now I know you've probably watched some Disney movies like I do. And you'll see some kind of spiritual ghosts rising to heaven. Floating away in the distance.

The Bible wants to help us to see that actually no. We don't detach from our bodies. Our bodies are part and parcel of who we are. And yet there is an upgrade. There is a difference.

[11:05] Notice that Paul used not a, you once were human beings, then you will be ghosts. He didn't do that. He gave us physical, tangible pictures of seed to tree, of different kinds of bodies, to help us to see that we're going to have a heavenly body.

A new body. And if you want to go somewhere to see what it looks like, then look to Jesus. His resurrected body. Similar but different. Recognisable but not exactly the same as he was before.

You could see his nails and his hands. And yet people thought he was a ghost and yet he ate food. Different and changed. What comfort that brings to us.

But I don't want to focus on that. Because very shortly. The trumpet sounds. And what's the trumpet all about?

We're in a game of hockey. Isn't it the end of a period? Isn't it the end of the game? That's what happens at the very end. And that's exactly what you're going to get here.

[12:12] 1 Corinthians tells us in chapter 15. In the twinkling of an eye. Which means really, really quickly. At the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable.

And we shall be changed. This is no zombie movie. We will be transformed and changed. We won't be like rotten apples and rotten fruit.

We will be perfected. Imperishable. Glorious. They're the pictures that God gives us. For this, verse 53. Perishable body must put on the imperishable.

This mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable parts put on the imperishable. And the mortal parts put on immortality. Then, the question will be.

Where's death? Where's the sting? Where is what death used to decay and destroy and dominate?

[13:10] We now see as victory. Those things have been swallowed up. The Bible often speaks. It often speaks of putting on Christ's righteousness.

And the picture they give you is like putting on his brilliant white coat. All that he's done. It's as if his white cloak. His coat reminds us.

Of his perfection. I used to. When we went to. Many years ago. At the age of 21. My wife and I went to Jamaica. And when we were in Jamaica. We used to do a skit. A little drama.

And it was called. The jacket of sin. We would wear this jacket. And on the jacket. We would talk about life and living. And we would act it out. And then what would happen is.

Over time. The jacket would feel heavier and heavier. And heavier and heavier. And basically on the back of the jacket. Was all the sins. That laid upon us. As the jacket started to weigh us down.

[14:10] And cramp us. And basically constrict us. And kill us. In this picture of death. And Christ came. That was the picture. Christ came. Took the coat. And took it away from us.

Took our coat away. With all the sin. And then he gave us his coat. And on the back of his coat.

Was perfection. Was righteousness. Was holiness.

So actually what we get is. Christ's righteousness. His life. His reward. His victory. His hope. That's what we get. With the resurrection.

Of the dead. Transformation. Death is no longer. The great curse. And when resurrection is real.

The disaster. The devastation.

The immortal. Perishable. Body of dust. Dies. But is clothed. Immortal. Imperishable. Life giving. Spiritual body. This transformation.

[15 : 07] Destroys death. And it's called. Temporary sleep. That's how it's then labeled. They talk of death as sleep. There are not many people.

Who are frightened of sleep. Why? Because we pretty much. After a night. After a rest. We wake up. And we start again. That's the picture that God wants to give you.

The picture that actually death is no longer scary. Death is like sleeping. Because you're going to be resurrected. And you'll continue. That's the picture.

That he gives us. And so. Jesus. All that he has done. By his death and his resurrection. Changes everything.

It means that we win. It means that all the hardships. All the pain. All the bruises. All the knocks. The battle has been worth it. The sting of death is sin.

[16 : 05] And the power of sin is the law. One of the things that I realized when I was younger. It took me a while to grasp this. But why was the Old Testament given? Why was all this stuff?

Why didn't God just send Jesus? Skip the Old Testament. Send us Jesus. Genesis chapter 4. Jesus arrived. Ta-da!

Why don't we have that? And then as you read the Bible. You keep going. Ah. What a mess. How awful. Even the good people end up being baddies to some extent.

They don't know how to live righteously. And differently. And distinctly. Sin grabs hold of the Old Testament. And drags us down. Until the point where we realize we need a savior.

A serpent crusher. One who is going to come and take our place. The picture is this. Is that the Old Testament was only ever there to show us that we can't do it on our own.

[17 : 07] Did you spot that? Romans chapter 5. If you get a chance. Read Romans chapter 5. It tells you that all the Old Testament. The laws. If you read through them. What they're supposed to do is remind you that you're not good enough.

That's what they're supposed to do. They're supposed to highlight your sin and a need of a savior. Not. They're not supposed to tell you how to get to heaven. Because you're never good enough. Only Jesus is.

And so that's why the sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law. Without the law you don't know how you've broken and infringed. And deserve to go to the penalty box.

That's why we have the law. Christ has come as the second Adam. To fulfill the law. And to replace it with grace and forgiveness.

Through his victory. So thanks be to God who gives us the victory. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory.

[18 : 09] Through our Lord. And so the victory comes through Jesus. The victory doesn't come through you doing the Ten Commandments. The victory doesn't come through you.

And why I think this letter to the church in Corinth has to finish on this fifth one. Resurrection and on Jesus Christ. We end up with transformation. It's a mystery that's revealed.

I want to leave you just with one kind of big picture. Friday nights I've gone a bit retro. Those of you who know. There's a game called Pac-Man.

You know it. Waka waka waka waka waka waka waka waka. It's basically it's an orange thing. That just goes around and eats. That graphics aren't great. So basically it just eats yellow dots.

And then there's a special power dot. It's a slightly bigger yellow dot. And what happens is this. The yellow goes around waka waka waka waka waka. Eating these dots.

[19 : 07] But there are ghosts around. And the ghosts come and get you. So you live your life in fear of the ghosts. You run away from the ghosts. And yet waka waka waka waka waka.

Try and eat all the good stuff. And as you run away from the ghosts. And eventually the ghosts move. You go back again and go waka waka waka. Try and eat some more. And then eventually you find this big pill. As soon as you eat this big dot.

Okay. The game changes. It's a game changer. Do you know what you can do then? You chase after the ghosts. You suddenly become invincible. Suddenly you have been transformed.

And you chase the ghosts and you can eat them. Death is swallowed up. And what I want to suggest to you is this. Is that 1 Corinthians 15. You might never have thought of it. Is Pac-Man.

Is. Is basically that picture. Yeah. And so I want to leave you with the thought. This question. Does your life look like the game before you've eaten one of those pills?

[20 : 06] Do you run away from death? Are you fearful of all the things in life? Is your life still riddled with this fear of death?

You still see it as the end. Rather than seeing it as the point at which. You can. Because of Christ's death. Suddenly.

Death has been swallowed up. And we can live our lives. In a very different. Far more positive. Way. The very end of the Bible passage.

Gives us three things. It says. As a result. What does it say? Verse 58. Therefore. Therefore my beloved. Because I love you. Paul says.

Because I love you. Even though you're a naughty church. And there's a whole heap of stuff in your church. That's going on. That really needs to be stopped. He says. But I love you. You are beloved. He says.

[21 : 01] Be steadfast. Be steadfast. Be immovable. Always abound in the work of the Lord. The picture is this.

Is don't blow around like the wind. Grade 12. As you go off to university. Don't start kind of drifting away from Jesus. Be rooted. And built up in him.

Strengthened in the faith as you have been taught. And overflowing with thankfulness. Be rooted in him. Steadfast. Immmovable. Because of what he has done.

And then. Don't just be lazy. Thinking that Christ has done it all for you. We finish with this. Work for the Lord. Labour. Knowing that the labour in the Lord.

Is not in vain. In vain. How do you live differently? Knowing that actually what you do has eternal consequences.

[21 : 58] Consequences. Now. My challenge is this. Is are we investing in the things that are eternal? Are we investing in the things that pass away?

Because that's what Jesus' resurrection does. It helps us to see all the things that are fading away. All the things that are perishable. All the things that are temporary. And it helps us to focus on the things that are immortal.

Things that will be changed. And transformed. I want to ask you the question. As we just finish. Will you.

As Paul did. Focus on Jesus. On the gospel. On the good news. Living your life in the light of the resurrection. That means that it will be different. It will be distinct.

Your life will be changed. And you will be radical. You will be selfless. You will be generous. You will be other person centered. As Christ transforms you.

[22 : 59] Even in the face of death. We will be changed. I was thinking. What would I say to people in Nepal?

That we're going to take a team of 14. To go to Nepal. When I go there. What am I going to tell them about? Am I going to tell them about lovely Vancouver? You go skiing there. Nepal will go.

Our mountains are bigger than your mountains. What am I going to tell them about? Am I going to tell them about the wonderful food? No. I'm going to tell them. Thanks be to God.

Who gives us the victory through Jesus. Do you know Jesus? Because if you don't. You need to get to know him. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

Help us. To be bold. To be brave. To live our lives in the light of the resurrection that Jesus has won for us on that cross. And he leads us.

[23 : 58] So that we can live lightly in the world that we live in today. Knowing that we will get fresh bodies. And that we will have a new season. Give us that boldness.

Give us that focus on Jesus. And guard our hearts. Like the Corinthian church. From being distracted by the things of this world. We need your help to do this. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I agree. Amen. Amen. Thank you.