Corruptible to Incorruptible

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[0:00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Take your Bibles, if you would, and open them with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

Death is all too common, and if you have any age at all, you have been to the graveyard, you have been to the funeral home, and you've probably lost someone you love.

I preached my sister's funeral. I preached my dad's funeral. I had something to do in my father-in-law and mother-in-law's funeral. I have preached many, many funerals.

They are never a happy time, no matter even if you know they're saved and going to heaven. It's never a happy time. But the story today, the Bible lesson today is that death has lost its victory.

And I'm going to show you that from the Word of God, and we're just going to praise Jesus and worship God and thank Him for how good He is and all the great things that He's done.

Go with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Neither doth things that rot inherit things that don't rot. Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

We will not all die, but all of us that are born again will be changed and given that new body. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised whole, complete, incorruptible, not rotted, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible, this dying, corrupt body that's going to just decay, this decaying body will put on not decaying, put on living forever.

This mortal, this dying one will put on immortality, never dying. So when this dying one has put on not dying, when this rotting one has put on not rotting, and the mortal shall have put on mortality, then shall be brought to pass a saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin. The strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives us a victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Father, I pray that you would open your word today and make it clear. I pray, Lord, that you would help those who know you to be so grateful to you, to worship you, to rejoice in you, to magnify you, to go home excited and thankful that we have your word, that you have victory over death.

And I pray, dear God, for those that have come today that are not believers, they're not followers of you. They know about you, but they have never committed their lives to you. I pray you would convince them of the need, show them their sin, show them the penalty of their sin, and that today they would trust you.

And I'll give you praise and honor for all you do. In Jesus' name, amen. First thing I want you to know before I ever get started is God never intended for men to die. In the Garden of Eden, when he got through making man, he put two trees in there that were extremely special trees that aren't available to us today.

One was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and he told them not to eat that one, and that's the first place they go, really. Well, I don't know how quick they got, how long it took them to get there. But he also put a tree of life in there, a tree of life.

Eat that tree, and you'll go to heaven, you'll live forever. By the way, that tree's in heaven today, and we're going to eat it. I want to show you what the Bible says about death. What does God have to say about death?

Death is the greatest enemy any man has ever had. Let me name several truths about death and living forever for us to consider. Today is simply a day we think of all that God has done to give us what sin stole from us.

We're going to talk about what God's done to give us what sin stole. You can have the forgiveness of sins now. You can have life forever after this.

Death is not final. It is actually only the beginning of forever. Death is not final. It is actually the beginning of forever.

[4:59] Everyone will live somewhere forever. Everyone will live somewhere forever. If you go back in your Bible with me to Mark chapter 15 and verse 37, I want to show you Jesus won the victory over death.

Jesus won the victory over death. The Bible says in Mark 15, 37, And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and he gave up the ghost. He died. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain, was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

And when the centurion which stood over against him saw that he cried out and gave up the ghost. He said, truly, this was the Son of God.

First thing I want you to see is this. When he died, the veil was torn in two. You see, there was no access to God. When you got into the temple, when you got into the temple, first off, if you were a Gentile, you could get up to this court of the Gentiles on the outside edge and way on in there is where the real worship takes place.

And the majority of us in this room, we would have gotten to this place. And then if you'd go a little bit further, you'd have gotten to the court of the women. And if you'd go a little bit further, you could have gotten to the court of the men. And you'd go a little bit further, you got where the real men of God did their work.

And if you'd go a little bit further, you got to where the real stuff's going on. And there was a veil there. That's where real direct access to God was. And everybody else is way over there.

And there was no direct access. But when Jesus died, he ripped that veil from the top to the bottom and said, Open access, boys. Come one, come all. I have paid the price.

You can be saved. You can have forgiveness of sins. I have won the victory. The Bible is very clear. Jesus died on purpose. The Bible says in John chapter 10 and verse 17.

Mark that down. Look it up later on if you would. The Bible said, Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me.

I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it again. That's the commandment I got from my Father. Now look here just a second. He's not died. When this is being written, he's still alive.

[7:11] He hasn't gone to the cross yet. And he looks at his guys and he says, Guys, I'm about to go to Jerusalem. I'm about to be crucified. I'm going to be dead. I'm going to be buried. But I'm coming back to life. Let me explain something to you.

Nobody's going to kill me. Now you guys are going to get all freaked out. You're all going to be wondering what's going on. But when we get to Jerusalem and they take me, I need you to understand something. I don't have to let them take me, but I'm going to. I don't have to die, but I'm going to.

Contrary to all the Easter films of a poor, humble, sweet little defenseless weakling named Jesus who got dragged and to be crucified, Jesus said up front before he ever got to Jerusalem, before he ever got to Calvary, before he ever got judged, Jesus said this, Boys, I'm going there and I'm going to die because I want to.

I will lay down my life. They will not take it. No man takes it from me. I lay down my life of myself and I will take it back up. I will live again.

I will live again. That's what he told them. Look, if you would, in Mark chapter 16 and verse 6. It's amazing. When you read the Bible and see it, it's so beautiful. He told them where to meet him after he got through with the cross.

[8:18] Before he ever died, he said, Now boys, I'm going to go to Jerusalem and they're going to kill me. But after it's all over, after I've been dead and been buried and I've been in the ground for three days and I rise again, I'll meet you guys over here.

There's the spot. We'll meet you after 7-11. I'll see you there. Look at this. Look what the Bible says in Mark 16, 6. And he said unto them, Be not afraid. Don't be afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified.

He definitely was dead. By the way, being crucified is like the most horrific death you could ever imagine. You bleed out. You bleed out. They've nailed him to a cross. They've beaten him before.

They've placed a crown of thorns on his head. He has gone through horrendous mistreatment. And he was crucified. But this angel said, He's risen. He is not here.

He's alive. He was dead. They crucified him. But he's alive. He's not here. Look here. That's where y'all laid his body. Verse 7. But go your way and tell the disciples of Peter that he goes before you into Galilee.

[9:21] Look what he says. And there shall you see him. Just like he told you. Underline that. As he said to you. Underline that in your Bible. The angel goes, guys, y'all know he's not here.

He died. And this is where they laid him. And he was really dead. And they laid him here. But you know, he told you he's going to meet you there. So y'all go where he told you. Remember what he said? Go there. Jesus overcame the grave.

But his disciples had a hard time believing. All the world has a hard time believing. The Bible says in Mark 16, 11. And they, when they had heard that he was alive. And she'd seen him.

Look what it says. They didn't believe. They believed not. They believed not. Now, it's like. Now, come on. We know he was a great teacher. We know he did a lot of miracles.

We even saw him raise the dead himself. We saw him walk on water. We saw him feed all those people. We saw him do great stuff. And we know he said he was going to die. And we know he told us where to go. And we've heard that story.

[10:18] And now you're claiming you've seen him. But come on. But come on. Could it be real? Could it be possible that he that was alive and was dead and as brutally murdered as Jesus was, could he be alive?

We're having a hard time believing that. But here's the Bible truth. Go with me if you would to Revelation chapter 1 and verse 18. Jesus has the keys of death and hell.

He has the keys. In Revelation chapter 1 and verse 18, the Bible says, and this is Jesus talking to him. And John the apostle is writing this. And God's let him see Jesus. And Jesus is dressed in all of his resurrected majesty and power.

And he's coming down through there. And the Bible says, Jesus says, I am he. I'm the one that lives and was dead. And I am alive forevermore.

I'm the one that was alive and that died. And I'm alive forevermore. You're looking at the guy. You are looking at the guy that you knew when I was on earth. You saw me dead. You saw me buried.

You weeped and wept for me for three days. And I am alive. But then he doesn't end there. He says, and I've got the keys. Look at that. I have the keys of death and hell.

That means I've got the power over it. I can open the door. I can close the door. History testifies to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There were over 500 witnesses at one time that saw him.

They watched him eat. They touched him. He was alive in a physical body. We're not talking about some TV ghost. We're not talking about the wind blowing through the air.

And you think that must have been Jesus here. They saw him. They touched him. He was alive. He lived and walked among them for 40 days. He literally divided history.

If you'd like to know, this is the year 2017, since the birth of Christ. He was so real, so powerful, they changed the calendar because of Jesus. His resurrection, his power over death is how we know that we can have victory.

[12:21] The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 19, without faith, there's more, there's, without the faith that we have, there's more to life.

Without having the faith we have, we'd be miserable. Look at 1 Corinthians 15, 19, if you would. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we're of all men most miserable.

Paul said, listen to me, guys. And by the way, some of you might have accepted the fact that just being a Christian makes us have such a better life than everybody else. And so it'd be worth it if Jesus didn't really rise from the dead.

Well, the apostle Paul would disagree with you. Paul would say, are you crazy? If he's not really God, if he didn't really die, and if he didn't really get buried, and if he didn't really rise again, we're like lunatics, buddy.

We're like crazy people here. We're like crazy people. We'd have all men be most miserable if that were the case. Look at 1 Corinthians 15, 22. You see, you die or live based on who your daddy is.

[13:23] Look at you, what? For as in Adam all die. As in Adam all die. Even so in Christ shall all be made alive. If you're of Adam, if you're of the human race, if you were born a human being, you're going to die.

Scientists and rich people right now are trying to figure out how to keep us alive. Not going to happen. Fact is, if they're going to keep us alive, I hope they do it before we get my age, because when you get this age, you've got all the creaks and the gray hair and all the junk going on and all the wrinkles.

I hope they get you fixed where you stay about 25 or 30, you know, good looking and strong. Like some of you people, not old and like me. Anyway. And that's out of place, amen. It's totally out of place.

If you want to know when to amen, watch the little light comes on and says amen. Amen. In Adam all die. In Christ all shall be made alive.

For those who trust God and are born again, God has life. Like he planned it. For you, forever. The most wonderful place. Heaven. Paradise.

[14:29] God has it all. You know God, when he made man, he put him in the Garden of Eden. And buddy, it was like, what? Can you imagine being in that Garden of Eden? You read that story and you're like, wow. How in the world do we give that up to living in this slum we live in now?

I'll tell you, he says, I never meant for you to do that. You disobeyed me and you as a human race have fallen into sin. But I've done everything to bring you back to me. I'm going to put you back where I had you to begin with. And I'm going to soup it up some.

That's what the Bible says. So here's what we know about death. It's inevitable, but it's not natural. Death is inevitable, but it's not natural.

Look at Hebrews 9, 27 with me, if you would. Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 27. You see, the Bible is clear. It is appointed unto man once to die, but at the judgment.

You see, death's real. It's not natural. It's not what God intended. It's not the plan God had. There were no graveyards in the Garden of Eden. There were no plans for people to die.

[15:32] You chose. I chose. Adam chose. Our great granddaddy, he chose to die. And when he chose to die, he did something that went against nature. Now, because of sin, it's appointed to die.

My day's coming. Your day's coming. Death is real. Not natural. It's inevitable, but it's not natural. It's the most common event in human history.

You ever think about it? Man, there are people, if you get in a burying business, you got a for sure clientele. You know? People are going to die.

And you can just do business. Everybody doesn't get married. Everybody doesn't become a parent. But everybody dies. Death was never a part of God's original plan for man.

Man was created to live, not die. God's a giver of life, not death. Everything God touches brings forth life.

[16:36] When Jesus was on earth, he gives you a picture of who God is. Because when you've seen Jesus, you've seen the Father. He couldn't go to a funeral without fixing everything. They come walking down the street.

He said, what's going on? He said, that's a widow being buried there. He walks over and says, all right, get up. Time to get up. He goes over to somebody else and says, well, my kid does that. I said, get up. People are hungry. Fix it.

Hey, he's the fixer. He's the guy that fixes life. He's life itself. That's who he is. He wants to give life. But sin became, sin came into the world and death became common.

Romans 5.12. Look at it. Romans 5.12. The Bible says, wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world and death by sin.

And so death passed upon all men. You see, he made the world, set it up beautiful and wonderful. I mean, you ought to talk about, well, you wouldn't need a zoo.

You'd be playing with a kitty cat like a lion or a tiger. You wouldn't need to have them little miniature jobs. You could have the big thing. Amen. Amen. Hey, he fixed it all right.

And guess what ends up happening? The man chose to not do what God wanted him to do. And when he did that, death came into the earth. And ever since he died, we've all been dying. Wasn't what God intended.

But it's a consequence of sin. We want to understand death. We want to avoid death. We want to find a way to live on. We want to leave a legacy because we know we're only here for a short time.

We want some sort of memorial. We want to control even our own deaths. But the truth is there's no cure for death. Death scares us.

It worries us. It causes paralyzing fear. I think it's always funny how we come up with ways to say words that mean dead, but don't say dead.

[18:37] Just don't say dead. Austin, is your dad okay? No, he's dead. Don't say that. Say he's deceased.

Say something. Don't say dead. We don't like that word. Death scares us. Death came because of sin. And we continue to die because of sin.

But in Jesus, there's victory over death. He gives us what we do not deserve. Look what the Bible says with me, if you would, in Romans chapter 6 and verse 23.

In Romans chapter 6 and verse 23. The Bible says the wages of sin is death. So sin has a price that has to be paid.

And I have sinned against the Holy God and you've sinned against the Holy God. And our sin brings about death. Our sin brings about the end of this life as we know it. And the fact is, you will live forever somewhere.

[19:34] And the Bible even calls the next life that you'll have second death. Because when you sin, when you sin, you are separated from God and you are brought into a place of punishment.

The wages of sin is death. But even as the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans. And man, these first like three or four chapters of Romans, first three chapters at least. I mean, they are harsh, buddy.

If you ever see the book of Romans, it just starts off saying, you're a sinner. You say, what's it say next? You're a stinking sinner. What's it say next? You're a stinking dirty sinner. And what's it say next?

It says, you're a stinking, horribly dirty, rotten sinner. And you just keep reading it. My son was just finished preaching through the end of Romans chapter 3 in the church where he pastors. And he said he got to the end of Romans 3.

And he was like, whew, I'm glad to be out of that. He said, every week they came, I just told him, I'll tell you this week you're sinners. He said, I've been preaching it verse by verse. And he said, now we're into Romans 4. Thank the Lord for that.

[20:28] Amen. But see, here's what it says. The wage of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

I deserve to die and go to hell. You deserve to die and go to hell. You've done wrong and you know you've done wrong. And if you were honest and all you've done came to light right now, you'd be humiliated and you'd know you deserve hell.

But the gift of God is eternal life. I want you to know that when we die, God is involved with us as we face the king of terror's death. He understands and fills us in our pain and our loss.

You know, he never wanted you to die to begin with. Go with me to Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 3. He never wanted any of us to die to begin with. He never wanted it. That wasn't part of the program. When he got through creating Adam and Eve, he didn't want that to happen.

He said, don't eat of that tree. If you eat of that tree in that day, you'll surely die. Don't eat that tree. All the rest of the trees, you can eat them. Eat the pineapples all you want. Eat the apples all you want.

[21:30] Eat the peaches all you want. Hey, there's a tree of life over in that corner. Go find that one. But men like to do, I'll do what I want, God. And they did. But look at it.

Even when we die, look at him. Isaiah 53, 3. He is despised and rejected of men. A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him. You know when all that happened? That's when he went to the cross. You know why he went to the cross? Because he wanted to.

You know why he went to the cross? To take your death. You know why he went to the cross? To have your sins placed on him. If you read down just a little bit more, like three more verses in that chapter, you're going to find out that when he died, you remember when he died on the cross, they couldn't figure out what to put on the placard above his head.

Because above his head, they should have written down what his crime was. And they said, we've run him through trial after trial. Keep finding nothing to write. We've been trying our best to figure out something to write up there. They said, so we're right up there as king of the Jews.

[22:37] And the Jews said, well, at least what he said he was the king of the Jews. The guy said, nope, we've proven one thing. We're just going to put king of the Jews. He didn't need to die. And he'd already told us he was going to die. He had made a choice to die.

And he died for me. And he died for you. So you could go to heaven. So you could have eternal life. For the saint of God, the truly born again, death's very special to us.

Especially to God. Because you see, we step out of this world and into the very presence of God. It's a precious time when we're united with the one who loved us so much that he died for us.

He rescues us from a sin-torn world. And this verse right here is probably going to shock you. But look at Psalm 116.15. Psalm 116.15. Look at this verse.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. You know why? Because we die to die no more. Because we leave a world full of sin and sickness and filth.

[23:46] And all the mess this world has to go to his presence and what he originally intended and what he has for us. Precious. In the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Precious. God's like, come on home, Austin. I stood by my dad's bed for two or three weeks. I don't remember how long it seemed. Forever.

And I listened to the death rattle. And I hated every minute of it. I was helpless. There was nothing I could do. Nothing doctors could do. But you know what? That last breath he took that in the middle of the night was precious in the Lord's sight.

Because the Lord said, come on, Charles. Come on home, Charles. You trusted me. This is precious. I'm bringing you home. I'll wipe away the tears. I've got it all fixed.

Precious. In John chapter 14 and verse 2, Jesus said, before he ever died, he said, in my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.

[24:52] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also. Jesus said, hey, guys, this is not where I want you living. This is not where I want you living.

This is not how I want you living. The majority of those Jews living in Jerusalem and Israel, when Jesus came to earth, they lived in slavery and poverty. The Romans ruled over them.

They were under them. And Jesus came and said, I never intended this for you. Trust me. Believe in me. I'm going to go on that cross and I'm going to die and I'm going to pay your sin debt

And I'm going to go fix you a place and I'm coming back to get you. I'm going to take you where I want you to be. That's what he said. And he tasted death for every man. Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 9.

Look at what it says. But we see Jesus, who was a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death and crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.

[25:55] You know what he did? Now you've got to understand, when we use the word death, you might be thinking about a casket in a graveyard. You might be thinking about a place where you just take what's left over and stick it in a box and stick it in the ground and then cover it up and walk away.

But that's not, you can't walk away from it because death doesn't mean you just stick their carcass in the ground. Death means they're alive somewhere. Death means they didn't just, it's not like burying a dog or a cat, folks.

They're alive somewhere. And Jesus said, I don't want you to do that. I don't want you to suffer that. I don't want you to be away from God.

I don't want you to suffer in the torments of hell. I don't want you to endure all the filth that sin brought into your life. I want you to enjoy life. I'm the giver of life. And so he came and he tasted death.

He died for me. And he died for you. He didn't leave us to figure out what was going to happen to us. He didn't leave us to fend for ourselves. He became sin.

[26:57] Look at 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 21. 2 Corinthians 5 verse 21 if you would. This is like the most powerful, wonderful verse in the Bible really. You see, the reason you can't go to heaven is because you sinned against the holy God.

How did death get here? It got here by sin. And so what happens is my sin separates me from God. And God knows your real condition. He knows if you're truly saved. He knows if your sins have been forgiven.

And in 2 Corinthians 5 verse 21 he says, For he made him, God made Jesus to be sin for us. That who knew no sin, Jesus had never sinned, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

You know what God did? You know what was going on on the cross? You know what was happening in those three or four days of big transactions? God was dying. God was paying the sin debt.

Jesus was dead and in the ground. And Jesus rose again from the dead. And when Jesus came out of there, he said, I paid your debt. I paid your debt. All you need to do is receive the free gift.

[28:02] I paid your debt. You can be saved. And he doesn't want you to go to hell. The Bible says in 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 9, He is not willing that any should perish.

Nobody should go to hell. Nobody should die and die again. 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 4, he said, He wants all to be saved and all to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Verse 6, he said, He gave himself for all. Death is intimidating, but it does not triumph. Death's intimidating, but it doesn't triumph.

Jesus overcame death and the grave he arose. There's lessons that we can learn there. By the way, let me just tell you, death will scare the devil out of you, buddy. I hope it scares the devil out of you today. I found out I had kidney cancer.

And I'm the preacher. That first 24 hours after, but don't look at the internet when they tell you you got kidney cancer. That first 24 hours, I found out I was dead. That's about five years ago now.

[29:13] That first 24 hours, I didn't talk to, I know I won't talk. I won't talk to my wife. I just totally inside myself. The death's intimidating, buddy. I knew I saved. I knew I was going to go to heaven.

Death's intimidating, but it does not triumph. The lessons in scripture are this. In 1 Corinthians 1550, once we sin, these bodies couldn't go to heaven anyway.

Because in 1 Corinthians 1550, flesh and blood can't go to heaven, can't inherit the kingdom of God. And so in 1 Corinthians 1553, this weak body must put on immortality, another body.

In 1 Corinthians 1554, death is swallowed up in victory. In 1 Corinthians 1555, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is the victory? You see, what makes death horrible is sin.

The sting of death is sin. And Jesus gave the law so you'd understand something today. Listen to me. Your sin is going to take you to eternal punishment and hell.

You need to let that sink in a second. I don't care how pretty you are today. I don't care how nice of clothes you're wearing. You came to church today, and you're like, man, I took a bath, and I shaved, and I put on aftershave.

I mean, I'm looking good today. But God knows what you really look like inside. And He wants you to know you're a sinner because once you know you're a sinner, you know to run to the doctor.

Once you know you're a sinner, you know to get to Jesus. Once you realize you're in trouble, you can trust Jesus. And until you realize you're in trouble and trust Jesus, there will be no help for you.

There is victory over death. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 1557, thanks be to God which gives us victory through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

You listen to me, and I'm finished. Death doesn't have the victory. Jesus carries the keys of death and hell. Jesus paid the price, so no one has to go to hell.

[31:23] No one has to suffer. You may try to deny to me the reality of hell. You may try to deny to me the reality of heaven, but you showed up to hear what the Bible had to say. And you may try to deny that, but you can't deny the reality of death.

It's staring us all in the face. And no matter how pretty we make graveyards, it's still there. And no matter how pretty the box is they make to put you in, it's still a box that's going to be under dirt or in a ditch.

But God never intended death to be what happens to us. He has victory over death. He has life eternal for all. You can be saved.

You can know your sins are forgiven. You can know you're going to go to heaven. He loves you. Every one of you. You may come in here this morning and say, oh, you don't know me. Oh, I don't know you. But He does.

And He loves you. And He paid your sin debt, and you can be forgiven. If you'd simply say, I know I need help. I know I've sinned against the Holy God. I turn to Jesus.

[32:27] I believe Jesus. I trust Jesus. You can be saved today. Today's your day of salvation. Don't go home without it. Don't go home without having turned from your sin and turned to Christ.

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