

1 Corinthians 15

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Tape #8150
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Shall we turn now in our Bibles to 1 Corinthians, the fifteenth chapter.

1 Corinthians, chapter fifteen, Paul declares, *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,* I preached it! You received it! And you are standing in it! The gospel means good news. I preached to you the good news. You received the good news and you are standing in that good news.

The gospel ²*by which* (Paul said) *also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain.* Now there in the church in Corinth, there had developed some spurious practices, but there had also developed some spurious beliefs. So Paul is encouraging them to continue in the basic gospel, which he had preached.

Here in chapter fifteen he is going to deal with some of the spurious beliefs that had crept in, those that were denying the resurrection. So this is why Paul is encouraging them to continue to hold in memory, the basic simple gospel that he preached. It's sad and tragic that people try to make things so complicated. It's sad that people get so enthralled or immeshed in semantics and fine, little points, that they become so critical of everything that they soon, the only fruit that they bear in their life is the fruit of criticism of finding fault. When a person gets to that place where all they can do is to find fault, they really have no value in the body of Christ.

Here we find that in the church of Corinth, there were those who had sort of just been carried away with these notions, with these ideas and they were no longer of real value in the body of Christ. So hold in memory or keep in memory of what I've preached unto you, the simple gospel, unless you have believed in vain. Paul warns about being removed from the simplicity that is in Christ, the vain philosophies and all that people get into, the hairsplitting of the theologians, what a sterilizing kind of a thing. What happens is that a person no longer bears fruit. It's easy to get caught up in sterilizing kind of issues, where you still are a Christian. You are still a part of the body, but yet, you are no longer fruitful. You bear no fruit or if it is fruit, it is bad fruit. The fruit of criticism, because criticism begets criticism. And it begets and engenders strife within the body. It begins to create fighting and bickering within the body of Christ.

³*For I delivered to you first of all* (And this is the gospel, now, that Paul is referring to. This is the gospel that you are to continue in.)

First of all, *that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,* As Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:23), as he brings up the subject of crucifixion of Jesus. He declares that it was according to the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, that Jesus was crucified and slain. It's something that God had planned in advance. He died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Isaiah 53, all of we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone of us to our own way. God has laid on Him, the iniquity of us all. That is, He died for our sins. There in Isaiah 53, for the transgression of My people, was He smitten. And so Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

⁴*and that He was buried,* (According to the Scriptures, there in Isaiah 53, He made his grave with the rich. He was buried.)

and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, It is difficult to find any passage in the Old Testament that declared that He would rise the third day. You have to go into what are known as the types in the Old Testament, which were the shadows of things to come. The

story of God saying to Abraham (Genesis 22), take now your son, your only son, Isaac, and offer him as a sacrifice on a mount that I will show you. How that Abraham journeyed with Isaac for three days, until they came to Mount Moriah. There they left the servants at the base of the mountain, as the two of them went up the mountain together. Then Isaac said, Dad, we've got the wood. We've got the fire, but we don't have the sacrifice. But Abraham answered, son, God will provide Himself, a sacrifice. And how that Abraham bound Isaac, placed him on the altar. Then God spoke and said Abraham, that's enough! Behold a ram is caught by its horns in the thicket. Abraham called the name of the place, Jehovah Jireh. He prophesied in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

So as in the mind of Abraham, his son Isaac was dead three days. Abraham was, a type of God, "thy son, thine only son". Abraham's prophecy, God will provide Himself a sacrifice. "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen", the future. So, Jesus there on Mount Moriah, two thousand years, God gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins. But that three days, probably in the types and shadows is where He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

⁵*and that He was seen by Cephas*, On the morning of the resurrection at some time. The gospels don't tell us just when, Jesus manifested Himself to Peter.

then by the twelve. ⁶*After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.* So the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, then of the twelve and then by more than five hundred.

⁷*After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.* ⁸*Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.* Paul, talking about being born out of due time, that is, he wasn't really born into the kingdom with the others. He wasn't an immediate disciple of Christ. But Jesus appeared to him there on the road to Damascus. Paul saw the risen Christ. So Paul bears witness of having seen the risen Christ.

⁹*For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.* ¹⁰*But by the grace of God I am what I am,* Hey, I love that! I'm not worthy. I'm not deserving to be what I am, but by the grace of God I am what I am. Were it not for the grace of God, who knows what I would be, but by the grace of God I am what I am.

and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Jesus said they that are forgiven much, love much. Paul persecuted the church. He wasted the church. He forced people to blaspheme the name of Jesus. When Paul met Jesus, his past persecution of the church weighed heavily upon him. To think that he could have been an enemy of Christ! That bothered him. That troubled him. He said, really, I'm not worthy to be called an apostle. I persecuted the church. He speaks of himself as being the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), but yet having experienced the grace of God and having been forgiven much, Paul loves much. Thus he speaks of his own labors even more abundant than the other apostles.

¹¹*Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach* (That is whether I am telling you about the resurrection or they are telling you about the resurrection, we're preaching the resurrection.) *and so you believed.* The gospel, which I preached, which you received, and by which you stand. So I preached it. You've believed it.

¹²*Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?* Now this is a false teaching that had crept into the church of Corinth. Where it came from, we don't know. There were some of the early Gnostics, Marthian, and others who denied the resurrection from the dead. It was a teaching that had crept into the early church.

Paul declares, ¹³*But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.* ¹⁴*And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.* ¹⁵*Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead do not rise.* ¹⁶*For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.* So, the powerful argument that Paul begins to give now against this teaching that there is no resurrection. If there is no resurrection, then Jesus isn't risen. That means that our preaching is vain, that your faith is vain and that we actually are false witnesses of God. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

¹⁷*And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!* There is no forgiveness. There is no redemption.

¹⁸*Then also (a further problem) those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.* (There is no hope for the future! There is no hope of the resurrection.)

¹⁹*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.* If our hopes are just only in this life, then that would be a very pitiful state to be in.

But Paul then affirms, ²⁰*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* Jesus, the firstfruits. Now, Paul is going to, again here in his letter to the Corinthians, contrast the natural man, which is after Adam and the spiritual man which is after Jesus. The natural man, after Adam, came first. The spiritual man, after Jesus, came later. Adam by his sin brought death upon humanity. By one man's sin, all were made sinners, so that by one man's righteousness, all have been made righteous. All of us inherited the sinful nature of Adam. We were born with a sinful nature. We received that from Adam. So in Adam all die because all sin.

But in Christ, we are now born again, a new nature, a life of the Spirit, and so we live through Christ Jesus! And so a man today is either after Adam or he is after Christ. There are two categories of people, the natural man who is that way by nature, born with his sinful nature, or the new man who is after Jesus Christ, born again by the Spirit of God. So Jesus has become the first fruits of those who rise from the dead.

²¹*For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.* Jesus, the first fruits.

²²*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.* Are you in Adam or are you in Christ? If any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation. The old things are passed away, behold all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). It's interesting to me how that so many times people excuse their bad temper. They have certain characteristics of their old nature to the fact that they are from a particular ethnic group, where they have red hair, or something like that you know, and they try to excuse some of the aspects of the old nature by just an admission. Well, you know, that's just the way I was born. But if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature! And thus we relate to a new federal head. We don't relate to Adam. I don't say that's my old Adamic nature. That was crucified with Christ, and now a new nature after Christ Jesus.

²³*But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.* The glorious hope that we have of the resurrection, Christ the firstfruits. Then they who are Christ's at His coming.

²⁴*Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.* ²⁵*For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.* ²⁶*The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.* So each one in their order, Christ, the firstfruits of those that are raised from the dead. And He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet or in subjection to Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews (Hebrews 2:5-18), we are told that God put all things in subjection unto Him. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, but He is crowned now with glory and honor, all things being made subject unto Him. But, in Hebrews, it says, we do not yet see all things in subjection to Him, but we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels. Not yet, is everything, but He will reign until He has brought all things in subjection.

Now Jesus Christ is going to return to the earth with His church to reign over the earth. There will be people who will be living on the earth at that time, who have survived the great tribulation, who have not taken the mark of the beast or worshipped his image, or received his number. And under the ideal conditions that will exist when Jesus reigns during the kingdom, again those who have lived through will experience longevity of life as they did back in Adam's time. During that one-thousand year reign of Christ, there no doubt will be a tremendous population explosion here on the earth, under these ideal conditions as righteousness shall reign.

Now the rule of Christ will be enforced righteousness. We will be the enforcers. He will rule as with an ironfisted rule over the earth. Men will be forced to live righteously. We will see the earth as God intended it, men living together in righteousness. But there will still be rebellion in the hearts of some, but the inability to express that rebellion in action. But towards the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be released for a short time. Men will rise in rebellion against the reign of Christ. Then shall Satan be put down. Michael and his angels will be fighting with Satan and his angels. Satan will be cast into Gehenna. Then will be the great white throne judgment of God and the second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous dead, who will stand before God and will be consigned also to Gehenna. This is the second death. When that is destroyed, then all things will be in subjection unto God.

It is interesting when you look at the cycle. In the beginning God, Sovereign, Ruler, Creator, all things were made by Him. God created the angelic beings, but creating them with a self-will, Satan exercised that will against God and created a rebellion against the authority of God. God allowed that rebellion to take place.

God created the earth and placed man upon it. He allowed Satan the freedom to exploit the tree that was in the garden. And by one man, Adam, who disobeyed the command of God and ate of that tree, sin entered the world. Now, no longer is there one kingdom in the universe. There are two kingdoms. The kingdom of God--the kingdom of light and life, and the kingdom of Satan, which is a kingdom of death and darkness. When God created Adam, He created him in the kingdom of God. He lived and communed with God. He was in fellowship with God, but through his sin and disobedience, his spirit died and he was alienated from God. He became a part of Satan's kingdom of death and darkness.

Now having transferred from the kingdom of God, light and life, into the kingdom of Satan, death and darkness, man found that there was no way back into the kingdom of God. God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son who made the way back into the kingdom of God.

So by the one man sin entered the world and death by sin, but by the second Adam, Jesus Christ, He brought righteousness and through faith in Christ, we, who were dead in trespasses and sins, have been made righteous through Him! So ultimately, though, He will bring all things into subjection and then there will be one kingdom in the universe again, the kingdom of light and life! God's glorious, eternal kingdom! We shall live and reign with Him forever and ever, world without end!

Now the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Death and hell will be cast into the lake burning with fire. This is the second death. ²⁷*For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is*

excepted. That is, God put all things under Him. So it is accepted that God the Father wasn't put under Him.

²⁸*Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.* Jesus emptied Himself. Though He was with God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, He stepped down. He emptied Himself in order that He might come as a man to this earth and accomplish the divine purposes of redemption. So He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering and death as He emptied Himself and became a servant and obedient, even unto death, wherefore God has also highly exalted Him, given Him a name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father. And God has put all things in subjection unto Him. Of course that the exception is that He that did put things in subjection was not put into subjection. The Father was not put into subjection to the Son but the Son, willingly to the Father. Now when this purpose is accomplished, Jesus will once again take His place in the triune Godhead. No longer will there be that position of, a little lower than the angels, but now return in the glory.

As He prayed (John 17:5), Father, glorify Me with the glory that I had with You before the world ever was!

When God said, let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness (Genesis 1:26). So that's the way the things are going to progress until there is just one God, the triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, ruling over the universe. All things then will be in subjection, then, unto to Him. And God may be all and in all.

Now Paul inserts here a very interesting passage that is confusing at best. He makes mention, ²⁹*Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead,* He is arguing, you know, there is no resurrection, then you know, then Christ is not risen and our faith is vain and all of this. But he now brings up, otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, *if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?* Now, we don't have, anywhere in Scripture, where there is any teaching at all, of baptism for the dead. We don't have any passage outside of this that even makes mention of the subject. We do know that there are many passages of Scripture that indicate that once a person has died, their eternal destiny is sealed. There is not a Scripture at all that gives even the slightest inkling that a person can be saved after they have died.

Now, I cannot be baptized for you. Saturday as we are baptizing, you say well I don't want to be baptized, I'll say, well I'll be baptized for you. I can't just go under and be baptized for you. That won't do you any good at all. You may come and say, I want to be baptized. The pastor may say well, have you accepted Jesus Christ? Well, no. Do you want to accept Him? No, but I want to be baptized. Well you may insist and he might just, you know, get sort of upset. And say well if you want to be baptized? I'll drown you, you know. But that won't save you! If it's not something in your heart, if it's not a work that God has wrought in your heart, baptism won't save you. The ritual will not save you. The ritual of baptism cannot save. It can only bear witness of what we trust God has done within your heart, but it doesn't save you.

In the same token, I cannot believe in Jesus Christ for you. I cannot believe in Jesus Christ for my own children. Each man must believe for himself. Salvation is a very individual thing. Each man must believe for himself. Thus, to be baptized for someone else, baptized by proxy, just doesn't work. Much more, baptizing for those that are dead.

Now the only group that I know that practices that is the Mormon church. And this is why genealogies are so important to them. Because they take this one passage of Scripture, though this same passage of Scripture flies in the face of the revealed Word of God, yet they go and they are

baptized by proxy for their dead relatives. Hoping that somehow by their baptism for their dead relative that it's going to save them.

Just what Paul is referring to here, there have been suggestions made. None of them are completely satisfactory. It is an enigma. It's a Scripture that poses some real questions.

Obviously they were in Corinth, baptizing for the dead. But that probably shouldn't surprise us because Corinth was doing a lot of weird things. And the whole letter to the Corinthians was really designed to correct a lot of the false doctrine and a lot of the false practices. So we can assume they were baptizing for the dead. But without affirming that this was a valid practice, Paul just acknowledges it as a practice in the church in Corinth and showed that your teaching or your believing there is no resurrection for the dead and yet you are dumb enough to baptize for the dead. It doesn't make sense. Your practice isn't even in keeping with what you are teaching that there is no resurrection of the dead.

If there is no resurrection of the dead, Paul said, ³⁰*And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? Why do we jeopardize our lives? Why do we put our lives on the line for the gospel if there is no resurrection? Why should I face the beatings and the imprisonments and all of the persecution, if there is no resurrection?*

³¹*I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.* I am facing death every day.

³²*If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me?* Now whether or not Paul actually was fighting with the beasts or whether he was referring to the beastly men in Ephesus, we don't know.

But what advantage is it to me, *If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"* In other words, why not just live it up? Let's party, if there is no resurrection then there is no incentive for righteous living. There is no incentive for sacrificial living. There is no incentive for giving ourselves fully for God, if there is no resurrection.

³³*Do not be deceived:* (These evil communications, that is there is no resurrection, corrupt good manners. They lead to immoral living.) *"Evil company corrupts good habits."* ³⁴*Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.* So dealing with this false teaching in Corinth that there is no resurrection.

³⁵*But someone will say,* (Paul now affirms that there is a resurrection.)

So someone will say, Paul affirms that there is a resurrection, so some will then say, well *"How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"* Now writing to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), they were concerned because some of the believers had died before Jesus had returned. They had a misconception that because they had died before the Lord returned, they were going to miss out on the glorious kingdom age.

So Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, concerning those who are asleep in Christ, I write to you so that you don't sorrow, as those who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus both died and rose again, then those who were asleep with Jesus, will He bring with Him at His coming. So here Paul refers to their coming with what body do they come? When we meet our loved ones again, what kind of a body will they have?

Paul said, ³⁶*Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.* He goes to nature. He goes to the planting of a seed into the ground. It doesn't come forth unto new life until it first of all dies. The process is called germination. A seed germinates or dies. Then out of that seed, there comes the new body, the new life.

³⁷*And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain.* You don't plant the full-blossomed Carnation. All you plant is a bare seed. You

don't plant the Gladiola. All you plant is a bare bulb. It dies. But from that comes a new body, comes the color, the beauty, the fragrance. It comes out of the death of the seed. You don't plant the body that going to be, so I don't expect to have this body in heaven. This seed is going to be planted in the ground. It dies and is planted in the ground. I don't expect to have this body in heaven. I expect to have a new body, a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We will get to that in 2 Corinthians, chapter five. So I think that is an important point to make, you don't plant the body that's going to be. All you plant is the bare grain. It might by chance be wheat or some other grain.

³⁸*But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.* What will my new body be like? I'm not sure. But it's going to please God and it will surely please me. It's got to be an improvement over this model. So I'm looking forward to it. The new body that God has for me!

Now there will be, no doubt, some kind of relationship, a mystic kind of relationship. Just what, I'm not sure. There is a relationship between the Gladiola bulb, the scaly brown thing that dies in the ground and the beautiful pink blossom. There is a relationship. They are both Gladiolas. There is some kind of a mystic tie between the two bodies, yet the one is vastly more beautiful and superior to the seed. So there is some kind of a mystic relationship. I'm not completely sure, but it's not my problem. It's God's problem. There are those who, you see my body is changing all the time. Cells are dying and are being replaced by other cells. So there is this constant change that is going on in my body. And you have a problem, also, with modern technology and science, where people donate their organs.

It sort of creates some, like the Sadducees came to Jesus (Matthew 22:23-33). They said you know there was a man who took a wife. He died without any children. According to the law, his brother took her as his wife. He died without any children. The next brother took her. And the next brother and the next brother, until all seven brothers had her as a wife. They all died with no kids. So in heaven, who will be her husband? Jesus said, you do error because you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God.

They were trying to make the resurrection look, sort of like an unreasonable thing. They were the Sadducees and they were trying to put down the idea of the resurrection. There are those that have sought to put down the idea of the resurrection of the body because they talk about the body is just made up of chemicals, you know, of dirt, the chemicals. So that the chemicals that make up my body now, let us say that I would get lost out in the desert. I would die. No one would find me. The vultures would come and eat part of my body. The rest of it would dissolve into dirt and the clump of grass would grow. The grass would actually take some of the chemicals that were once a part of my body. Those chemicals would be in the grass. The grass would be eaten by a cow that came by, that would produce milk. This milk would have some of these chemicals that someone else would drink, so some of the chemicals that once made up my body would make up someone else's body. So in the resurrection, who get the chemicals?

If you have a heart transplant, in the resurrection, who gets the new heart? You know, or who gets the heart or the lungs or the body transplants? So they perceived problems with the idea with the literal resurrection of this body. We don't know. As I say, as Paul would seem to indicate that yes, I'll still be me, but not the body. Me, the true me is spirit! The true me isn't this body. This body is just an instrument that God has given to me by which I can express my spirit. The true me is spirit! That remains. Paul would seem to indicate that He is going to give to me a new body. In 2 Corinthians, chapter five, we know that when this earthly tent, this body is dissolved, when it goes back to dust, we have a building of God, not a tent. A building of God, not made with hands, that is eternal in the heavens.

So then we who are in these bodies do often groan as we earnestly desire to be freed from the encumbrances of the body. Paul in Romans eight (Romans 8:22-23) said, we and all of creation, groan and travail together until now, as we wait for the manifestations of the sons of God, to wit, the redemption of our bodies!

We desire this new body, this building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So, we don't know all of the answers, but we do know that God has a body for us, vastly superior, somehow mystically related to the body in which we presently live.

³⁹*All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.* The DNA molecules that make up flesh. The flesh of man is different from the DNA of animals. The animals are different from the fowl. The fowl are different from the fish. There are various types of bodies.

⁴⁰*There are also celestial (heavenly bodies) bodies and terrestrial (earthly bodies) bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.* The glory of the heavenly body differs from the glory of the earthly body.

⁴¹*There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.* There are greater stars, different colors. You put them on the spectroscope, each star seems to have its own distinct color. They differ from each other.

Paul said, ⁴²*So also is the resurrection of the dead.*

Going back to the planting, *The body is sown in corruption (or dishonor), it is raised in incorruption (or glory).* ⁴³*It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.* ⁴⁴*It is sown a natural body (Or we sow a natural body.), it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* ⁴⁵*And so it is written, "The first man Adam (coming back to this first and second) became a living being."* God formed the body out of the dust of the earth. The body wasn't Adam. God breathed into Adam. He became a living soul. So the first Adam was made a living soul.

The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. So the soul of man comes from Adam. But the spirit comes from Jesus Christ! Jesus said, you've got to be born again! That which is born of flesh is flesh. That which is born of the spirit is spirit. Don't marvel when I say, if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven, you've got to be born again. The last Adam, Jesus, was made a quickening spirit.

⁴⁶*However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, (Adam came before Jesus.) and afterward the spiritual.* ⁴⁷*The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.* We've received our bodies from Adam. They are of the earth, earthy, made out of the earth, made for the earth. To dust thou art and to dust, thou shalt return, God said to Adam. He was talking about the body, out of the earth for the earth. Our earthly body is designed for the environment conditions of the earth. The first man of the earth is earthy.

⁴⁸*As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.* ⁴⁹*And as we have borne the image of the man of dust (this body), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.* (I John 3:2) Beloved now we are the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we are going to be but we know that when He shall appear, Jesus our Lord, we will be like Him for we shall see Him as He is! Jesus' resurrected body was vastly different and superior to the body that He was in while here on the earth. A body that was designed for a different dimension. A body that wasn't subject to the laws of nature, such as gravity. The new body, the resurrected body of Jesus was different. So also shall our resurrected bodies be vastly superior and different.

⁵⁰*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; This old body*

just can't do it. It can't make it.

nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

⁵¹*Behold, I tell you a mystery:* (He is entering into another phase.) *We shall not all sleep,* Jesus is going to come one day and rapture His church. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

But take that in context. But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

He is talking about the order of resurrection. The dead in Christ will rise first. And then we, caught up, together with Him.

So I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep. All of us won't die, *but we shall all be changed--*⁵²*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* Again, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the Lord, Himself shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.

In Revelation, chapter four, verse one, John said, and after these things I saw a door open in heaven. The first voice was as of a trumpet, saying unto me, come up hither. I will show you things that will be after these things. So the trump of God, the church raptured at the last trump, here he is declaring.

Now, we do know that after the rapture of the church, during the great tribulation, during this great tribulation, there are seven angels that are given trumpets that are to sounds. As they sound their trumpets, there are corresponding judgments of God that take place upon the earth. When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet will be the final three of the last three woes. The last three trumpets bring, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the three trumpets yet to sound. And there are those who say that the seventh trumpet is the last trumpet; thus the rapture won't take place until after the Tribulation period. However, this trump of God is different from the trumpet of the angels. Notice the trump of God versus the seven angels, which are given the trumpet to sound.

Not only that, this happens in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It's an instantaneous thing. The seventh trumpet of Revelation, the judgment trumpet, and in the days of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, it's over a period of days.

Plus when this trumpet sound, it's not going to be woe, it's going to be glory! Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the three trumpets yet to sound. It's going to be a judgment trumpet. But this is going to be glory, when trump of God shall sound, the last trump! And we, the dead, raised incorruptible. And we shall be changed. A metamorphosis! A change of body. Why? Because flesh and blood can't inherit the kingdom of God, thus this corruption must put on incorruption. This body is in a corrupting state. The catabolic forces have taken their toll. And the body is gradually dying.

⁵³*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality* (the new

body).

⁵⁴*So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."* Glorious! Death, the final foe! Jesus came to bring victory over death.

⁵⁵*"O Death, where is your sting?*

O Hades, where is your victory?"

⁵⁶*The sting of death is sin, (That is what makes death. That's what causes death. Death in trespasses and sin, that's the sting of death.) and the strength of sin is the law.*

⁵⁷*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Victory over death through Him! Victory over sin, the sting of death is sin. He has given us victory over sin.

⁵⁸*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,* Stand firm! Be strong! The Lord is coming soon! Be strong, be steadfast! Always abounding in the work of the Lord, involved in the things of the Lord.

You know that so many of the things that we get involved in are temporal and are wasted time. People devote their entire lives to a project, only to see the thing go down the tube. How frustrating that must be to give your whole life to a project and then watch the whole thing fall apart. It never happens if you give yourself to the work of the Lord.

Because Paul said, for *knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.* Whatever you do for Christ, you will be rewarded eternally. Lay not up for yourself treasures on earth, Jesus said, where moths and rust can corrupt and decay, where thieves can break through and steal. But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there is your heart also. Always abounding in the works of the Lord because whatever you do for Jesus is never in vain!

Jesus said, if you will give a cup of cold water in my name, you will be rewarded. Anything you do for Jesus is never in vain! How glorious it is to be able to give our lives to something that is lasting, something that is permanent, something that will remain. How fulfilling that is!

How empty that is to give yourself over to projects that are going to pass, that are going to just dissipate, projects that have no lasting value. How fulfilling to give yourself to things that are eternal. Your labor for the Lord will never be in vain. Whatever you've done for Christ, is not in vain. You'll be rewarded for it.

But you say, I witnessed to fifty people and none of them accepted the Lord. Don't worry, you're not paid a commission! You're paid a salary. You don't have to close the deal. He only asks you to witness for Him. And having witnessed, you've done all you can do. It's up to the Holy Spirit to take it from there. Your labor for the Lord is not in vain. How glorious!

Thank You, Father, for the privilege of serving You and laboring for You. Thank You, Father, for the hope that we have through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that hope of coming into the kingdom of God, in that new building of God not made with hands but eternal in the heavens. Dwelling with You, Lord, in the glory of Your eternal kingdom, boggles our mind. It stirs our imagination beyond our comprehension. Oh Lord, how glorious to be with You. And, Lord, we just pray that we might be steadfast against the assaults of the enemy. May we stand strong, immovable. Let us abound, Lord, in Your work. In Jesus' name, Amen.