

Death Loses the Game

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning again. It's been a couple of weeks since we celebrated Resurrection Sunday. And this morning, I would like for us to look at the hope that we have because of the resurrection.

There are a lot of things that we experience today being in Christ that are results of the resurrection. And I would like for us to be looking this morning, if you have your Bibles, let's be turning to the book of 1 Corinthians and chapter number 15.

1 Corinthians 15. We will be looking at verses throughout the chapter, but we will begin with verse 51 this morning, verses 51 through 57.

And we read, 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 incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Isn't that an awesome thing to think about, that we will undergo the similar resurrection that Jesus had? God will, those who have died in Christ, when that time comes, our bodies will be resurrected, and people have all types of conjecture.

[1 : 2 0] Well, what will happen to the bodies that were burned? What will happen to the bodies that were cremated? What will happen to the bodies that were created? Well, you know what? That's not a problem for God. God can do whatever He wants to. And so, we will be resurrected.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible, these corruptible bodies of ours, have put on incorruption, we'll have a similar, we believe, a similar body as the resurrected body of Christ, and this mortal has put on immortality, then we then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

And the Apostle Paul says, O death, where is your sting? Or Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin.

It is because of sin that we experience death, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, what we see here is that death stalks all of us. Every single one of us who, if Jesus Christ waits long enough before He comes to receive us, death is following hard after all of us.

[2 : 4 6] And all of us, apart from the rapture, what we call the rapture, where the Bible says that Jesus will come in the air, and the trumpet will sound, and the Bible says those who have died before will be caught up, will be raised up, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up in the air with them, and we shall be changed.

And so, death stalks all of us. Let's look at Hebrews 9, 27. The Bible says it's appointed for man and woman and boys and girls, it's appointed for all of us to die once.

But after this, the judgment. There are going to be two judgments for those who are in Christ. It's not necessarily the whole point of this message this morning, but just a little bit of background for those who may be unfamiliar.

Those who are in Christ, we will stand before the Bema seat or the reward seat of God, and Christ is going to hand out those rewards for what we have done in this life.

And for those who choose to reject, or those who do not choose Christ as their Savior, will have to stand before the great white throne judgment that we see in the book of the Revelation.

[4 : 06] And all who stand before God at that judgment are going to be cast into the lake of fire. It is appointed to man once to die, but after this, the judgment. So we ask, well, why do people die?

Why do we have to worry about dying? Why do we taste death? Well, the reason we see, among other reasons, is in the book of Romans.

And so when someone asks, well, why would God cause us to die? He created us as eternal beings. Well, the Bible says in Romans chapter 3, verse 23, for all have sinned.

And all of us have fallen short. All of us come short of the glory of God. And what he says in Romans chapter 5, verse 12, therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, Adam acted as the representative of the entire human race.

There was man and woman. And when man, when God gave mankind the choice of eating of every tree in the garden, when there was one tree, the knowledge, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God said, you can't eat of that tree.

[5 : 13] So he only had one prohibition. And man chose to disobey God because Satan through the serpent came and beguiled them and twisted God's words.

And they chose to disobey God. So just as through one man sin entered into the world, and here is the progression, and death through sin.

We are all born sinners because Adam chose to sin in the Garden of Eden. Adam died spiritually. Adam was separated, and Eve were separated from God spiritually at that moment and began to die.

And one day was going to have to breathe their final breath on planet Earth. And because of that, death has now passed on to everyone since then. And thus, death spread to all men.

Why? Because we're all sinners. So that's why we die. Cemeteries, funerals, all of these remind us that we, one day, are going to die.

[6 : 20] We have a universal appointment. And that universal appointment is with death. So, the question is, how then, could Paul taunt death? How could he say, oh death, where's your victory?

Oh death, where's your sting? It's like, Paul is taunting death. Well, why could he do that? Well, because of, we'll be looking at some reasons that we see here and ask the question, what gives us hope in the face of death?

First of all, the thing we see, as we look back at the Old Testament, there are a couple of guys who, for whatever reason, God chose to not allow them to see death in their lifetime on Earth.

the receiving up of Enoch and Elijah gives us hope. Enoch, Enoch was the first man to escape death. We see that in Genesis chapter 5, verses 21 through 24.

The Bible says, Enoch lived 65 years and begot Methuselah. Some of you will recognize that name. After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had sons and daughters.

[7 : 34] So all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Again, and Enoch walked with God. And I love the way God puts this as he spoke through the writer.

And Enoch walked with God and then he was not. He just disappeared. for God took him. Enoch was the father of the Earth's oldest man.

Think about that. He was the father of the Earth's oldest man. But consider this. Enoch outdid the record of his son. Because the Bible says he's still alive.

He was not for God took him up. God took him up from that from that place and he went to be with God.

Enoch walked with God verse 24 says and God took him. Next we have Elijah. Elijah was caught up to heaven while Elisha watched.

[8 : 44] We see that in 2nd Kings 2 9 through 12. And so it was when they had crossed over that Elijah said to Elisha ask now this was near the end of Elijah's life.

He says ask what I may do for you before I am taken away from you. Elisha said please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.

So he said you have asked a hard thing nevertheless if you see me when I am taken from you it shall be so for you but if not it shall not be so.

Then it happened as they continued on and talked that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire and separated the two of them.

Now that was a little bit more dramatic than Enoch. Enoch was there Enoch was not there. Well Elijah says fiery chariot separated the two of them and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven and Elisha saw it and he cried out my father my father the chariot of Israel and its horsemen so he saw him no more and he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into pieces.

[10 : 07] So we have Enoch and Elijah who in the Old Testament didn't taste death didn't see death. So we have these two and there are many many commentators who believe that these two these two men will return during the tribulation and will spread the gospel during the time of the great tribulation.

So if that is the case and Elijah and Enoch come back well it just means their appointment with death was postponed because they're going to end up the two witnesses will end up dying.

But here's the thing I believe that with what God did with Enoch and Elijah I think that just tells us that life and death are in the hands of God.

No matter when is our time our time may be early in life our time may be late in life whatever the case is our life and our death are in the hands of God see we should not fear death neither should we we should hurry up death and I think I don't think anyone who is enjoying life and who's enjoying family and who's enjoying being with our family and with our friends want to hasten death but there's no reason for the believer in Christ to fear death it will come when it comes and consider the alternative it means that we will be with God in heaven rejoicing for eternity so the first thing I believe that what gives us hope is the resurrection or the not the resurrection the taking up of Enoch and Elijah life and death are in the hands of

God secondly and here's the big thing here's the biggie the resurrection of Christ the resurrection of Christ gives us hope now we hear we hear a lot about death just look in the obituary every day those of you who one of the first things you do you open up a newspaper and you read the obituary I've not been one that's ever been prone to read obituaries no no reason one way or the other I just don't most of the time I don't know anybody in there anyway so so what's the point and so obituaries we hear word we hear word of family members passing away so we're always we're always faced with death death of loved ones we're always faced with death of friends that is something that is going to happen until God takes us home but the resurrection of

[13 : 01] Christ gives us hope that we too can live forever and will live forever and here's also the hope that it brings for any of us who've lost loved ones through death we will see them and there will be I believe a glorious reunion one day now people ask well Bible says that you know there'll be no marriage no giving in marriage in heaven and we won't know one another as we knew each other on earth and and on and on and on and on well you know what we will know everyone as we are known we will know him as we are known and I don't know how God's going to do it but I just know that heaven is going to be a wonderful place there won't be any tears in heaven so take that for what it's worth that's what the Bible says and so we have that proof or we have that hope as well because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead let's look at first Corinthians 15 again let's start at the beginning of the chapter with verse number one Paul says moreover brethren

I declare to you what is he declaring the good news the gospel the good news the gospel is Jesus Christ died on the cross he died for our sin and he rose again from the dead which I preached to you which I also received and in which you stand by which also you are saved you are delivered from the penalty of sin if you hold fast that word which I preached to you unless he says you believed in vain for I deliver to you first of all that which I also received that Christ died for our sins that was the purpose of Christ's death he died for our sin the Bible also goes on to say that he was buried that was proof that he died and then the Bible says he rose again the third day according to the scriptures and that he was seen not only did he die there was a lot of conjecture as to did he die was he in a swoon did he just revive in the cool tomb Bible says he died he was buried as proof that he died he rose again and as proof of his resurrection he was seen by many by

Cephas then by the twelve 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 or some have died I've read papers or read of attorneys who have said okay let's try this case because people will say well you know what there's no proof how can you prove that Jesus Christ rose from the dead so they said okay let's let's take it from from a legal standard then they look at the go all the way from the soldier the soldier was very trained in to know who was dead before they took them off of the cross so if the soldiers said yep he's dead you know they checked for signs of life and on and on and on and then then you go and you look at the forensic record or you look at the record of the eyewitnesses how many things or how many crimes or how many do you believe that we have six to seven hundred people that are eyewitnesses and have the same story doesn't happen often right and so we have so much proof that

Jesus Christ died and that he rose again from the dead so they've seen about over five hundred brethren at once of whom the greater part remained go on to verse the next verse after that he was seen by James then by all the apostles then last of all he was seen by me also so the very writer of the book of Corinthians he was seen by me also as by one born out of due time so here's the thing the defeat of death by Christ is part of the gospel see Paul says here is the gospel that I'm presenting to you Jesus died he was buried he rose again and he was seen by so many witnesses and the resurrection is part of the gospel but also we see that God's word teaches that his resurrection proves his deity let's go to the gospel of John the gospel of John chapter 2 verses 19 through 21 this is Jesus when he was speaking when he was still on earth during his ministry excuse me

Jesus answered and said to them they were questioning the leaders were questioning him and he says destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up and they were thinking do you know how long it took us to build this thing they were thinking of the physical temple then the Jews said it has taken 46 years to build this temple and you think you will raise it up in three days I'm sure they were asking sarcastically they were asking with that biting tone it took us 46 years to build this temple and you think you're going to raise it up in three days but here's the catch he was speaking of the temple of his body he said you kill this body three days it's going to be raised up so he was speaking of his own resurrection and so the deity of Christ that that Jesus is

[19 : 04] God in the flesh was proven by his resurrection and there were many witnesses as well to the resurrection we see that again he was seen he rose the third day according to scripture as we saw just a moment ago seen by Cephas then by the twelve five hundred people some who were still living some who had died he was seen by James all the apostles seen by the apostle Paul as well and he was declared also to be the son of God by the resurrection look at verse look at Romans chapter one and verse number four Romans chapter one and verse number four the Bible says and Jesus was declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead if Christ hadn't risen there wouldn't be any victory over death if Christ hadn't been raised from the dead by God as the apostle Paul says in another another section we would be as we would be of all men most miserable meaning what would be the point if we died and that's all there was you know that would be bad enough but the the kicker was here was a group of people that were risking their life and they were proclaiming a very unpopular message

Jesus is God he came to die on the cross for our sin and he rose again from the dead and we are looking forward to be reunited with him one day in heaven that was not a very popular message and so what we're told is if the resurrection didn't happen we would all be fools we would all be touting a foolish message that is not real it's not true and we're wasting our time and so Paul says if the gospel of the resurrection were not true there would be no point in all of this and he said it would be a miserable life for us but the resurrection did happen if the resurrection wouldn't have happened there would be no victory over death let's look back at 1st Corinthians chapter 15 now let's look at verses 12 through 19 verse 12 of chapter 15 says now if Christ is preached that he has been raised from the dead how do some among you say that there is no resurrection from the dead but if there is no resurrection of the dead so if resurrection is a is a truth that it or is something that is not true if that doctrine is not true then it would stand to reason that

Jesus didn't rise again from the dead he goes on to say and if Christ is not risen then what would be the result of that he said our preaching is vain our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty there are a lot of people today who are placing their faith in empty religions there are a lot of people today who are placing their faith in empty things they believe them with their whole heart but it is there is no validity there is nothing true about what they are following and so Paul says if this were the case Jesus didn't rise again from the dead our preaching would be empty your faith would also be empty verse 15 yes and we are found false witnesses even worse than that he said we would be liars we would be false witnesses 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 so what Paul was doing was he was working this argument he was saying that you don't believe there's a resurrection well

Jesus was seen he was raised again from the dead if the resurrection weren't true Christ wouldn't be raised from the dead if Christ weren't raised from the dead we would all be fools and we would be liars if in fact the dead do not rise for if the dead do not rise then Christ is not risen and if Christ is not risen what does he say about our faith our faith is futile and you are still in your sins then also those who have fallen asleep and it gets even worse those who have died before you you'll never see them again they've perished they're gone forever if in this life only we have hope in Christ meaning if there's no life after and we're not going to spend eternity with God and there is no resurrection our body is going to be simply eaten up by the worms and that's it he says we are of all men most pitiable no hope whatsoever

Paul if it had not been for the resurrection Paul would not have been able to mock death like he did and say oh death where is your victory oh death where is your sting all those who have died would be gone forever all preaching all faith all witnessing would be in vain if the resurrection were not true and here's the thing the resurrection of Jesus guarantees God's promise of eternal life God gave us a promise Jesus Christ rose from the dead he gave us his Holy Spirit as a seal of his promise because of that our resurrection will be similar to that of Christ God will raise us up again in Adam all die we read about that but in Christ every one of us who are trusting Christ as our

[25 : 52] Savior will be made alive we look again at first Corinthians 15 22 for as in Adam all die even so in Christ we shall all be made alive our resurrection is secure because of Christ so death loses the game because in the end death has already been defeated we will live forever even though we die on this earth we will be resurrected we will be reunited with our families who have gone on our loved ones who have gone on before in Christ and we too will see him then the promise of the rapture gives us hope we read about this in the New Testament it's in it's been talked about in the book of Revelation we see it in 1st

Corinthians chapter 15 we just read about it it's in 1st Thessalonians the promise that we will be caught up the word rapture does not occur in scripture but the term that is used for the taking away or the catching up is that Greek term so we will all be taken up to be with him we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed we just read in 1st Corinthians 15 and think about this not all followers of Christ will die because if you and I happen to be alive when Jesus Christ returns we will immediately go from whatever we're doing whether it's driving a vehicle flying an airplane whatever it is that we're doing we will be like Enoch here we are now we're not because we caught up together and how quick will it take place

Bible says in the twinkling of an eye we will be caught up and it's almost as if for those who are still here who aren't following Christ is like we will simply disappear what will that look like I don't know because if we're still alive we won't we won't still be here to know what it was like and and we won't care because we will be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ those living at the time of the rapture the time where Bible says that Jesus will come in the clouds and the dead in Christ will rise first then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together to be with them we will be part of that great resurrection that great take gathering away and we will escape death that will be pretty nice no wonder Paul could talk about death with confidence and you see so so can we we can talk about death with confidence confidence now it doesn't mean we have to taunt death but it means we can look at death and say you have no hold over me even at the way that was the reason why Paul that was the reason why the apostles that's the reason why all the followers of Christ during the first century could say to those who were wanting to kill them because of their faith do whatever you will to this body it doesn't matter because you can hurt this body but you can't take my spirit you can't take my life away from

Christ so we have that hope no wonder Paul could talk about death the way that he did death has lost its sting for those of us who are in Christ death has no victory over those of us who belong to him so ultimately death loses the game in conclusion first question is and I'm sure most or if not all of you hear under the sound of my voice have question is have you have you placed your faith and trust in Christ as your savior completely not trusting in yourself not trusting in your good works but trusting in him completely then realize that the living Lord transforms us from victims into victors we have victory in Christ just as the song says there's victory in Jesus do we belong to him let's live like it let's not live in fear of death but let's redeem the time buy up every moment live life to its fullest you know we can enjoy life sometimes life hurts sometimes life is not all that easy but we can still rejoice and know that we belong to him we'll spend eternity with him one day share that gospel with others because it's a gospel that's sure resurrection is witnessed by so many that hard to refute death has lost the game

Jesus wins let's pray father this morning as human beings I know it's difficult for for us to to talk about death it's difficult for us to even consider the possibility but we know that when we look at who we are and when we look at what we have in Christ that we can face it with confidence because life and death are in your hands we know that the resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us hope and the promise of one day in the rapture Christ will return as well gives us hope that you will not leave us here but that you will you have because you have redeemed us you've left us with your Holy Spirit the seal of your promise that you will ultimately complete that redemption and will forever be with you in heaven father pray this in Jesus name amen amen let's all stand this morning and one of our next steps is that we thank God for the promise of the resurrection how often do we thank him do we thank Jesus for what he has done on the cross and when we have the opportunity when either we are dealing with the death of our own loved one or helping others who are grieving when the opportunity arises and we talk about death you know we can help others have hope by sharing the gospel and saying you know there is hope this is what the bible says about death this is what the bible says about how we can live forever with God in heaven and offer those who are still alive offer them hope today so this week take the opportunity to share Christ with someone even if it's just simply handing them a gospel tract even if it's just quoting a bible verse to them the holy spirit can do the rest because God's promised that his word will not return into him void it will not come back without accomplishing its purpose

[34 : 25] God can use just about anything to convict someone of their need for Christ also this morning as we prepare to receive our offering pray that God would use this offering this morning to accomplish his purpose as we give to missions as we give to our help fund we've had the opportunity to help someone else just this past week as we give our regular tithes and offerings to continue the life of this body as we continue we trust doing God's will we give as God has provided us Lord God this morning we are so thankful we're so thankful for life we're thankful for eternal life we pray that you would comfort those who are grieving pray Lord that you would comfort brother Dennis's family and the loss of his aunt we pray that you would be with the family this week as they are gathering together and grieving the loss of this family member here on earth we pray that you would your loving arms would be wrapped about them they consent to your presence

Lord we pray that you would lead us and guide us throughout this week help us to be an encouragement to others help us to be life to others Lord we thank you for this offering that we're about to receive Lord we pray that it would honor you that it would glorify you Father we thank you for what you're going to do in our lives this week teach us train us help us as we disciple others Father we pray this in Jesus name Amen