



(For access to all available commentaries and sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

1 Corinthians

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:53

Paul continues with his explanation of the words of verse 50. In this verse now, he states two truths concerning our resurrection body -

- 1) It must be suited to the spiritual nature of heaven, and
- 2) It must be suited to the eternal nature of heaven

Both of these are requirements concerning the body we will be given. The word for "put on" here concerning both the incorrupt and the immortal aspects of this body is *enduo*. According to Strong's, this comes from two words, "*en* and *duno* (in the sense of sinking into a garment); to invest with clothing (literally or figuratively) -- array, clothe (with), endue, have (put) on."

This is elsewhere explained in greater detail by Paul -

"For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

In this, we can see the use of two separate metaphors for what our heavenly bodies will be like. The first is a garment, and the second is a tent. These will be garments that never wear out and a home which is from everlasting to everlasting, given by God for the glories which lie ahead.

Life application: What discomfort do you feel right now? You won't be feeling it ever again when you get your resurrection body.

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." 1 Corinthians 15:54

The thought of the previous verse is repeated by beginning it with "So when..." At the time that these things occur, what was written by Isaiah the prophet will come to pass. In chapter 28 of his book, he writes about the work of the Lord which Paul cites -

"He will swallow up death forever,
And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken." Isaiah 25:8

Paul's citation is not a direct quote, but the intent remains. In the Old Testament, the word "forever" in Hebrew is elsewhere translated as "in victory" in Greek because the intent of the words is ultimately the same. That which is rendered forever has been accomplished by a victor.

The word for "swallowed" is katapinó which means to drink down, swallow, devour, destroy, consume. Paul uses the same word in the same way in 2 Corinthians 5 when speaking about our resurrection bodies -

"For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life." 2 Corinthians 5:4

As there is a definite article in front of "Death" in both Isaiah's and Paul's words, there is in this the idea that "Death the swallower is swallowed up." The final realization of this is found in Revelation 20:14 -

"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire."

However, for the believer, we don't have to wait until the final destruction of death, but only for that time when we receive our eternal, glorified bodies. Therefore, Paul's words are directed at individuals who make up the collective whole. When each person who is glorified receives their body, for them it is the start of an eternal walk. For some, it will be at the rapture, at others it will be at the first resurrection which follows the tribulation period. And for others, it will be at the end of the millennium. For all, it will be glorious!

Life application: Because of the resurrection of Christ, we have the absolute sure proof of the fulfillment of the words of the Bible. God's word cannot fail. What He has promised will be realized. Be of good cheer, Christ has overcome!

**"O Death, where *is* your sting?
O Hades, where *is* your victory?"** 1 Corinthians 15:55

Paul, in a sense of jubilation over what he is considering, now adapts the words of Hosea 13:14 to his comments on the work of the Lord. Cited from the Hebrew, that passage reads -

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave;
I will redeem them from death.

O Death, I will be your plagues!
O Grave, I will be your destruction!
Pity is hidden from My eyes." Hosea 13:14

The work of the Lord is the destroyer of Death and Hades (the grave) and so in his exuberance at the thought of Christ fulfilling that passage, he adapts the words for his audience to consider with him. We have all experienced the effects of Death, and we all know the seeming finality of it. What Death claims is beyond our power to restore and so all we are left with is hopelessness at the eternal separation he has brought to us. Paul likens that to a "sting." The word in Greek is *kentron* and means a sting or goad. In this it specifically indicates one which ends in death.

The word is used in Revelation 9:10 in the sense of a tormentor from scorpions -

"They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months."

This "sting" is removed through the work of Jesus and so Paul poetically asks Death, "Where is your sting." In Christ it is no longer the great destroyer it once was. His sting is gone and Death has been rendered impotent. And as the sting of Death once filled the abyss of Hades, it appeared that its consuming pit was the final victor. But Christ Himself unlocked the gates of Hades and paved the way for the souls of men to be revived to eternal life.

Because of this Paul asks, "O Hades, where *is* your victory?" Hell stood open, welcoming all who came its way. It reveled in its ability to hold more and more souls as the ages passed. It felt smug, as if its power was unstoppable, but Christ prevailed over it and purchased release for the captive souls. This is why Revelation 20 says that someday these two foes will be forever banished from their once exalted position. They will be cast into the Lake of Fire, never to consume another. The victory belongs to the Lord!

"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."
Revelation 20:14

Life application: Nothing is impossible for the Lord. What we feel is the most hopeless of all situations is completely under His control. Stand fast in your faith in Him and in His ability to handle every detail of every promise His word provides.

The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. 1 Corinthians 15:56

In the previous verse, Paul cited Scripture which said, "O Death, where *is* your sting?" He now takes time to explain what this is telling us. "The sting of death *is* sin." Again, Death is personified, as if he was a serpent or a scorpion with a powerful sting; a sting called sin. When sin is found in man, then Death has prevailed. This is seen explicitly in Romans 6:23 -

"For the wages of sin *is* death..."

But Paul also provided another truth in Romans. Adam sinned and that sin became an infection in him which spread to all of his descendants. In Romans 5:12, he explained this -

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." Romans 5:12

But Paul, being thorough and methodical goes further in his explanation by saying that "the strength of sin *is* the law." Adam had a law, albeit one commandment, but a law nonetheless. When he broke that law, even though it was done in innocence, wrath ensued. Paul explains the reason for this as well in Romans 4:15

-

"...because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

If there were no command given to Adam, there would have been no transgression. But there was a command and it was violated. Thus wrath, resulting in death, was the consequence. However, there was even a reason for this. In God's wisdom, He gave a law that He knew Adam would break. But in order to show man his utter dependence on the Lord, this took place. If not, then Adam would never have truly understood his relationship to his Creator. Paul shows us this in Romans 7 and in particular Romans 7:7 -

"What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law."

Adam realized what sin was because a law was given which he then broke. By that, sin entered the world and along with that came Death. This is what Paul is showing us in 1 Corinthians 15. But it must be remembered that he is doing it in relation to the work of Christ, work which is greater than the failing of Adam. Thus in Adam all die, but in Christ all will be made alive! Every person who trusts that God's provision in Christ is sufficient will be rewarded with eternal life.

Life application: In Christ sin is dead because the law is nailed to the cross. We have prevailed over the law, not by our own actions, but through the work of Jesus. Our faith in this act is what brings us reconciliation with God. Have faith that even your present failings can never separate you again from the love of God in Him.

But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:57

Paul's pen now rejoices as the ink flows to the paper. You can almost hear his heart pounding with joy as he pens these words. An entire chapter of instruction and information concerning the resurrection of Christ, and what it means to us,

has been written and as he closes in on the end of his thoughts, he bursts into an ode of thanks, "But thanks be to God...!" It was God who sent His Son into the world on our behalf. It was God who allowed His Son to die on the cross, thus paying man's sin debt. And it was God who raised Him from the dead, having accepted His work. All of this came from the mind of God and from His eternal counsel for the sake of His wayward creatures.

And so Paul gives thanks to God "who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." In this, the word "gives" is a present participle. His words are so sure of the future victory that he states them as being accomplished in us already. In essence, "He is giving us the victory..." We can think of a battle between warring parties and one side is not only winning, but assured of winning. The leader of the army could say, "God is giving us the victory" as an encouragement to the men still fighting. This is comparable to what Paul is saying here. We have no need to worry if we slip or fall along the way. Instead, we have absolute assurance of the victory which is being accomplished!

Life application: Everything we do during the day, even if it seems a hindrance to our walk with the Lord, can be included in our mental thoughts of the victory which lies ahead. If things get difficult, we can still say to ourselves, "God is giving me the victory despite this." What a reassuring thought as we trudge through the muck and mire of this earthly existence. Let us be unwavering in our faith of the good end which Christ's work has already achieved for us!

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:58

In this last verse of chapter 15, Paul sums up the entire discourse with a word of exhortation. "Therefore" is given as a result of the entire chapter, but more specifically based on the note of victory seen in verses 54-57. Because Death is defeated in Christ and because we are in Christ, Death is defeated in us. What fear should we possess? What attack against us can prevail?

"My beloved brethren" means that Paul is speaking to saved believers. The hope which is found in Jesus Christ is not a universal hope of man. Those not in Christ will not be included in the glories of which he has written. There is no such thing as universal salvation, there is no fellowship with Belial, and there is no hope in Paul's words for the non-believer.

"Be steadfast." This comes from the Greek *hedraios*. This word comes from a root word meaning "seat" and thus it means "sitting" or "immovable." It is used only three times; twice in 1 Corinthians and once in Colossians 1. This is speaking of being firm and fixed in the doctrine which he has presented; the truth of the gospel of Christ and the knowledge which that truth leads to in the believer.

Be "immovable." This is from the Greek *ametakinétos*. It is its only use in the New Testament. This comes from two words - the negative *a*, and *metakineó* which means to "move away" or "dislodge." Hence, it means to not be moved. Whereas the last word was given concerning established doctrine, this one is given concerning perseverance in that doctrine. Whether persecution or temptation comes along, we should be set in our faith so that neither can cause us to falter.

Paul parallels these thoughts in his letter to the Galatians. In his words to them, he said -

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." Galatians 6:9

Next we are instructed to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." How easy it is to get distracted in this life! And yet Paul asks us to have our priorities right. We have the Bible to study, we have church to attend, we have a ministry we have been called to, we have people to speak to about Christ, we have devotionals to read and ponder, we have thanks and praise to be offered continuously, etc. Paul is asking us to set aside the temporary things of this world in order to direct our lives to the work which has eternal meaning.

Finally he tells us that in these efforts, we are to know that our "labor is not in vain in the Lord." He has meticulously defended the truth of the gospel and he has given answers to those who questioned the truth of the resurrection. As he did, he provided examples of known things (such as a seed sprouting to new life) to show that even in creation there is a suitable precedent for us to comprehend and trust. And in his words, he used Scripture itself as proof of what he stated.

The surety of the word of God stands as a testament to the guarantee of the fact that we who are "in the Lord" will participate in His resurrection and the eternal life which stems from it. Therefore, we are to be unmovable in our faith and practice, knowing that a better reward awaits us in our heavenly life to come!

Life application: In those moments of life when doubt, anxiety, weariness, or confusion come into our minds, all we need to do is return to 1 Corinthians 15 and ponder its truths. When we do, we can refresh our souls and reengage the battle around us with confidence in the hope we possess.