

# 1 Corinthians Chapter 15 v 35 - 58

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[ 0 : 00 ] in our Bibles. And we're going to read the psalm together as we come to worship the Lord and to exalt His name. Let's listen to these words of the psalmist.

Psalm 2. Why do the nations conspire? In other words, plan against the Lord. And the peoples plot in vain. The kings of the earth rise up, the rulers band together, against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.

This is the attitude of the world. This is the attitude of governments and rulers. The attitude may not be blatantly said that way, but certainly it's the attitude that's taken.

We can rule ourselves. We don't need God or His commandments. They are like chains to us and shackles to us. We are able to rule by our own power.

What's God's response to this situation? Verse 4. The one enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them.

[ 1 : 22 ] He rebukes them in His anger and terrifies them in His wrath, saying, I've installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain. God is not daunted by the attitude of the world in general against Him.

He's not afraid or fearful, or in one sense thinks himself to be undervalued. He laughs. It's a foolishness.

It's ridiculous that the world should try to live without God, and ultimately that laughter will turn to God's justice and judgment. Because there is one who rules on high.

As He says, I've installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain. Who is this one? I will proclaim the Lord's decree. He said to me, you are my son.

Today I have become your father. We get a hint at who this is. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron.

[ 2 : 27 ] You will dash them to pieces like pottery. This one who God has set on high, as the ruler of all the nations is the one who has power.

Real power. Not the power of nuclear warfare. Not the power of controlling the markets, or controlling the finances. But this is power, so that to Him, to control the nations, to overcome the nations is as easy as breaking a cup.

How many times have we done that? Dropping it simply to the floor. Therefore, here's what God has to say to the world. You kings, you rulers, be wise, be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear, and celebrate His rule with trembling. Kiss His Son, or He will be angry, and your way will lead to your destruction.

For His wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. What is it that God desires of the nations? What is it that He desires of us?

[ 3 : 33 ] There's that lovely phrase, kiss His Son. Show Him affection. Love Him. Be devoted to Him. Delight in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, if we do not believe, we stand condemned already. But when we put our trust in Him, our refuge in Him, then we find ourselves blessed.

So whatever the turmoil in the world around about us in this past week, and in the weeks to come, we have one who rules on high, who is King of kings, who is crowned with many crowns.

Oh, how we praise You and thank You, our God and Father, that when we put our trust in You, we put our trust in the One who is in control, the One who has all authority and dominion and power.

We thank You that when we look to You, we see One who can never be shaken, never unseated, One who never in one sense has a hung parliament, or has a government which hangs by a thread, or has to call for others for help.

[ 4 : 42 ] We thank You that we have One who has all the help, all the power that He needs. But more than that, oh, how wonderful it is that You have all the help and all the power that we need.

We are the weak ones. We are the ones who hang by a thread. We are the ones who feel our weakness. We are the ones who struggle and find it hard at times when we are up against it, when this world and all of its rulers and authorities, and all of its powers, when all of its, as it were, academics and leaders seem to speak against You, seem to be turned against You, when the laws of our land trample over Your laws and commands.

Lord, we find it hard. There are times when we doubt. Yes, Lord, we fear. We fear for the church. For the future of the church in the UK, the future of the church in the West.

We become fearful for our own fellowship, fearful for the finances, fearful for the number of people. Lord, how foolish we are to be fearful of anything.

For when we look to You, we see, oh Lord, that every rich gift, every treasure is Yours, and You will withhold nothing good from us.

[ 5 : 59 ] Oh Lord, help us and build us up in our faith. Help us as we come to worship You. Help us, oh Lord, to have our eyes lifted up to see Jesus, seated in power and authority at Your right hand.

Yes, He is the Lamb who was slain, who bore our sins and suffered in our place. But now, oh Lord, He is the Lamb, seated, crowned, Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Oh Lord, we do pray that You would keep us in the week ahead focused on You. Keep us, oh Lord, when difficulties come and doubts come, to turn again and see Jesus for who He is and for what He's done, for the promises He's made, and the way, oh Lord, we know that He is bringing them to completion.

We don't know, Lord, how You're going to bring about Your plan, but we know the end. We know the goal. We know the victory is certain and secure. We know that You will continue to build Your church until that day You come again.

We know that You will gather in and save everyone for whom Jesus died before You come again.

We know that all who trust in You and have been born of Your Spirit, You will keep and You will not allow to fall and You will bring into Your presence with great joy and glory and praise.

[ 7 : 18 ] We know, oh Lord, that the promises of our God are yes and amen in Jesus. How You will carry them out is up to You. How You will fulfill them, Lord, that's the secret things of God.

Help us, oh Lord, when we cannot see with the human eye to see with the eye of faith that we have nothing to fear and that, oh Lord, we can trust You for ourselves, for our families, for our town, for our county, for our nation, for our world, for everything, oh Lord, belongs to You and You are working in all things and for all things for the blessing of Your church.

So, Lord, receive our praise. Help us to crown Jesus, the Lord of our lives this evening, the Lord of our hearts, the Lord of our ears, the Lord of our minds, the Lord of every part, that when He speaks to us, that we will be attentive to His voice and follow closely behind.

We ask these things then as we bring You our praise and thanks in Jesus' name. Amen. And chapter 15. We've been in this book the last few weeks, or we've had the last few months, I've been in this chapter for the last few weeks looking at the gospel truth, that was the first part of the chapter, verses 1 to 11, then the gospel hope, that was a fortnight ago, verses 12 through to 34, and now we're going to look together this evening at verses 35 to the end of the chapter, the gospel goal.

It's the gospel truth, the gospel hope, the gospel goal. So we'll read together from verse 35, if you have the church Bible, it's page 1157, page 1157, and 1 Corinthians 15, beginning at verse 35.

[ 9 : 18 ] But someone will ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come? How foolish. What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

Not all flesh is the same. People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds have another, fish another. There are also heavenly bodies, and there are earthly bodies.

But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another, the star's another, star differs from star in splendor.

So it will be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable. It is raised imperishable.

[ 10 : 25 ] It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body.

It is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written, the first man, Adam, became a living being.

The last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man is of heaven.

As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth. And as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly man.

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery.

[11:33] We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed in a flash. In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the trumpet will sound.

The dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory.

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

[12:37] And we praise God that He has given to us His Word. I could just see Janet and Margie and Jean there with tambourines going.

Good old hymn. Wonderful. Well, let's turn back then to 1 Corinthians 15. That's the reason we sung that hymn, because it reflects some of the things that we've been reading of, and I trust that we're going to be thinking of and studying this evening in this final part of chapter 15, this long chapter, 58 verses.

As I said before, we have there the gospel truth Paul speaks about, verse 3, for I received what I passed on to you as of first importance. Here's the truth.

Christ died, Christ is risen, and Christ is coming again. That's the truth that we base our faith upon. And then, he had to deal with some people who were saying, well, there is no resurrection.

And he's made it very clear, of course, that there must be a resurrection because Christ has been raised from the dead. And of course, he speaks about our hope, our gospel hope.

[13:49] Verse 19, if only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people to be most pitied. Our hope is based on the resurrection of Jesus and him coming again, us being raised with him.

And then we have, as I said earlier, the gospel goal. Gospel goal, the end result, the great reward. I'm sure you've watched sporting events, the Olympics, and the ones who win the race have two occasions where they're applauded, two occasions when they are acknowledged as being the winner.

One is, of course, when they cross the tape. If they're in the 100 meters or the hurdles, they cross the tape and they're the winner and he cheers and shouts, of course. And then several hours later or maybe even the next day, they stand, don't they, before the podium and then, of course, their name is called, isn't it?

So and so, representing Great Britain, stand up, they come forward and then they receive the medal, the gold medal. Their gold medalist winners beforehand but it's only then that they actually get the reward, only then that they receive the prize, as it were.

And that's the same with the Christian. There's a double accomplishment in the Christian life.

There's that moment when we come to Christ, when we enter into his kingdom, when we become his child, when we are born again of his spirit, there's a wonderful sense of entering in, isn't it?

[15:19] Crossing the line. We've crossed the line from death to life, Paul says elsewhere. We've crossed over from darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan into the kingdom of the Son he loves, Colossians 1 talks about.

There's a beginning but then there's something we're waiting for, something we're looking forward to, something that doesn't come just a few hours later or a few days.

It did, of course, for the thief on the cross but for most of us it's many years later, perhaps even decades later, when the Lord Jesus returns again and we shall receive our resurrection bodies, when we shall be raised up into the glory with him, we shall enter into the new heavens and the new

earth in which righteousness dwells.

Now as we've seen already, there are Christians sadly and people who are speaking saying no, no, no, there's no resurrection, this is the only life there is and that's it, there's no resurrection from the dead, it's not going to happen and Paul has dealt with that as I've said and made it very clear.

Verse 20, but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. The first fruits of those who've fallen asleep, the first fruit is the guarantee, the deposit as it were, to assure us that this is ours, that we too shall share in the resurrection.

[16:40] It's definitely happened. But there's still people who in spite of that are continuing to put down this idea about the resurrection and we have it there in verse 35.

Someone will ask, this is the teachers, the false teachers, how are the dead to be raised? What kind of body will they come back in? It's sort of a question, a bit of a poo-pooing sort of question. There we are when we die, we're all, forgive me, we're all wrinkled and old and arthritic and the body's put in the grave and oh, fancy getting that up, what a horrible mess it'll be, you know, what a horrible sight to see this sort of half dead, rotting thing sort of walking around.

They're mocking it, aren't they? They're mocking and ridiculed. What sort of body will be, bits missing and all sorts of things like that? Paul says that's foolish. That's foolish to think of the resurrection in that way.

Foolish to think that the body we shall have in the glory is just like the body we're going to have in this world or it's going to be in the same state we left it when we died and our spirits were united with the Lord.

[17:52] But there were clearly some who were unsure. They had questions as well. Yes, we believe the resurrection but we've got questions too. We're not sure. What will this resurrection body be like?

And for us as well, we often talk about what will heaven be like? Will we recognize so and so? What will we look like when we're in... And all sorts of speculation has gone out, hasn't it, over the ages. Well, of course, Jesus died when he was 33 and raised, so everybody will be 33 in heaven. That's just one speculation. Or, well, of course, we'll all be just at the prime.

The prime of, I think, 49 is the prime age, isn't it, when you're in your prime. That's when you're just absolutely just at the right point. We'll be 21 or 18 or something like that.

We're thinking again, earthly thinking. We're thinking again, foolishly, trying to imagine. And so Paul actually describes for us and tells us what the resurrection body will be like.

[18:51] The important bits. Not the bits whether we'll have a full head of hair and all our teeth, but whether we will... The important bits, the vital bits. What will it be like?

What will this be like, this crowning event? Well, he talks about it there, doesn't he, in verse 51. Listen. Come closer. I want to tell you something. Something really important.

A mystery. We will not all sleep. In other words, we won't all physically die, but we will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised, imperishable. We will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, the mortal with immortality.

So what's this body going to be like? What's this change going to bring about? Well, the first thing we need to recognize, and we've already picked up on this, and it's so important, that the body we shall have will be different to this body.

[19:51] That's the main thing. It's going to be different. He uses these analogies, doesn't he, from the natural world. He talks first about seeds. When you plant a seed in the ground, out of it doesn't come just a giant seed, does it?

A plant comes out with leaves and branches and stems and stalks and all those sort of things. It's different. So when we plant the body in the ground, and I don't want to, please don't think I'm making a big thing, but I think, as a Christian, burial is the best way.

I really do, because not only do we have it in the Bible again and again, they were buried, our Lord Jesus was buried, but there's also this lovely picture, and I've stood at many a graveside conducting a funeral, and looked down, and when it's a believer, to me, there's this picture, there's the seed being put in the ground, waiting the day when Jesus comes, and up from the grave they shall rise. I'm not keen on cremation. Please don't feel that I'm trying to get at anybody who's been, it doesn't matter. When you're cremated, it doesn't make any difference to the resurrection, you'll still be raised and everything else, but I love the picture of a seed being planted, and this, I think, is

scriptural, and it comes here.

You sow a seed, whatever it is, your carrot seeds, or your broad bean seeds, whatever, and up comes this plant. It's a different, a different thing, a different body to the one that you plant, and then he says, well, just look around about you as well, just look at the animals, and the birds, and the fish, they all have a different physical body.

[ 21 : 24 ] A person has a different body to an animal, an animal has a different body to a bird, different creatures, there's a difference. even when you look into the sky, there's the sun, and then there's the moon, and then there's the stars.

Again, he uses this word splendor. In other words, they shine differently, don't they? And star to star, we still sing that song, twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are, up above the earth so high, you know the rest of it.

But the sun will twinkle, the planet will make a slightly different color to a star, and so on. There's a real difference. So what is the difference going to be?

What's the difference between this body that we're living in now and the body we shall have in the resurrection? There's three main differences that he brings out here for us.

First of all, the body that we shall have is a heavenly body instead of an earthly body. A heavenly body rather than an earthly body.

[ 22 : 32 ] We see that there in verse 40. There are also heavenly bodies, there are earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly body is of one kind, the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.

Later on in verse 48, as was the earthly man, this is Adam, the first Adam, he's talking about, so are those who are of the earth, as is the heavenly man, so are those who are of heaven.

A heavenly body. That's why he says later on in verse 50, I declare to you, brothers and sisters, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Why not? Because this body was made for this world. The body that God gave us when he created Adam and Eve, this flesh and blood body and bones and sinews and all that sort of thing is perfectly created by God to inhabit this earthly world.

But we're not going to be living in this earthly world when Christ comes again. We're going to be raised up to live in heaven, raised up to be in the presence of God. Therefore, we need a very different sort of body.

[ 23 : 39 ] This body is not suitable. It's not meant to be living in heaven. It just won't do. Why? Because when we're in heaven, we should be living in the perfect presence of the holiness of God.

And God has said, no one can see me and live. Not in this body. It's a bit like saying, what must I wear to go and live on the surface of the sun? The radiance and the power and the glory of God is such that should we approach God as we are in this physical body, we would immediately be evaporated, destroyed, burnt up.

No, we need a different body because we're going to live in the glory and the perfection of God. These bodies, of course, are failing. They're sinful. They're tainted.

Therefore, they cannot live in the presence of God. We need a body like Jesus' body. That's why he says there, as was the earthly man, Adam, so those of the earth, that's all of us, as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven.

Just as we've borne the image of the earthly man, we are all made in the image of Adam, we're all his descendants, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly man. Heavenly body.

[ 24 : 58 ] To live in the presence of God. To stand before him and enjoy him. Not flesh and blood. So we need to get that idea out of our heads. Secondly, it's going to be a spiritual body though.

A spiritual body. Verses 44 to 46. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. God is spirit. Therefore, heaven is a spiritual place.

I think it was Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, went up into space and when he came down he said, I've been up into the heavens and God isn't there. He was an idiot, wasn't he?

Of course God isn't there. God is spirit. And where we dwell with God we have to have a spiritual body. That doesn't mean that it's sort of a ghostly body. It's not sort of a body which is sort of made of vapour or isn't tangible.

No, the body, the resurrection body that we shall have is tangible. More tangible, more touchy-feely than the body we have now. It's a body which is spirit as well.

[ 26 : 05 ] What does that mean to have a spiritual body rather than an earthly body? A physical body in that sense. A body that is of course like Jesus' body.

Well, we realise two very important things are said about this body. First of all, this new body, this resurrection body, this spiritual and heavenly body is imperishable.

Look at it there in verse 42. The body that is sown is perishable. It is raised imperishable. And again, later on in verse 50, I declare to you brothers and sisters, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

And again, verse 52, the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable and we will all be changed for the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable.

And then verse 54, when the perishable has been clothed the imperishable. So there's this whole transformation. What does he mean by perishable? Well, we don't use the word so much.

[ 27 : 17 ] Perishables, basically things that have a sell-by date, things that can grow moldy, things that can wear out, things that have to be used by a certain time, things that are temporary.

And that's exactly like our bodies, isn't it? No matter how much we look after them, no matter how much we eat well, no matter how much exercise we do, no matter how much we watch our weight and all those sort of things, in the end, this body is perishable.

It crumbles, it corrodes, it wears out, it only has a short lifespan or shelf life, as it were. I think at the moment, the oldest person alive is around about 118, I think, something like that.

But that's nothing. It seems a long, long time, but let's be honest, in a few months, I'll be half of 100. What's happened all that time? Where's it all gone?

It's gone quick, isn't it? And yeah, as we get older, I know, I don't think it's, some of you don't say, there's a lady in my church in Honiton and she always just said to me, don't get old.

[ 28 : 24 ] Don't get old. Old, was it, old age never comes alone. That's what you say. Old age never comes alone. So, yeah, because it brings aches and pains and rheumatoid and all those sort of things.

We know our bodies are perishable. They can't be, they can't be preserved forever. They can't last forever. They only have a short shelf life. But this is the wonderful thing about the new body.

The body we shall receive, this resurrection body, raised imperishable. I don't know all that that means. But what it must mean is surely this, that it's never going to wear out.

It's never going to become tired. It's never going to ache. It's never going to groan. It's never going to have, be stiff and sore. It's never going to creak and need oiling.

It's never going to have bits of it falling off or out or whatever it may be. It's imperishable. It doesn't age. Well, that's important, isn't it?

[ 29 : 21 ] Because when we are in heaven, how long are we going to be there? Not 100 years or 118 years, but eternity. Eternity. It's timeless, the time that we shall spend in the presence of the Lord.

Therefore, we need a body that's going to last. And again, what do we find? Of course, it's a body like the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, that resurrection body. That's why it's so important.

That's why Paul, all the way through this chapter, has particularly been pointing out the resurrection of Jesus. The guarantee of our resurrection is Jesus' resurrection.

And the body that Jesus received, which was a resurrection body, is this resurrection body we're going to receive. That's the mystery and the wonder of being a Christian, isn't it? We enter into all the blessings that belong to God the Son.

When we become children of God, then everything that is Jesus' becomes ours. We have this wonderful fellowship with God, this intimacy, this drawing near to him as our Heavenly Father.

[ 30 : 23 ] We have this wonderful ability to talk with him and pray to him and ask of him. And he will give to us good gifts. And all the blessings that other sons belong to you and me. Not because of anything we've done, not because of anything we could do, but because of what Jesus did for us in his life and death and resurrection.

So it's an imperishable body. A body will never wear out. But also he speaks about a body which is immortal. And again, that keeps coming through, doesn't it? The immortality of the body that we shall share in.

We read it there in verse 53. For the perishable must clothe itself with imperishable, the mortal with immortality.

When the perishable has been clothed by the imperishable, the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory. So the body that we shall receive, and it's interesting that he uses that phrase clothed, doesn't he?

Well in one sense that's the case now. You and I are clothed with a physical body, a natural body, because there's a soul, isn't there?

[ 31 : 36 ] A spirit. We are not just the body, though again, this is something that we find in the world today. We are just, oh we're just flesh and bones, we're just, I think Richard said it this morning, people will speak to him when he was in Oxford, oh I'm just a piece of meat, I'm just, I'm just evolved from some slime in a puddle over millions of years and I'm just, that's all I am, a functioning bit of meat.

But no, we know that the scripture teaches us and we know that we have a soul, we are soulful creatures, we have a spirit and at this moment our soul is clothed with this physical wearing out body.

That's why, isn't it? That's why when you, it was lovely to have the other week Fiona Castle with us. And did you notice that that woman who, I'm not sure what age she was, certainly in her 70s or 80s, she had a spirit which was alive, wasn't it?

She had a soul which was bursting out, it was like shooting out from her and some of you are like that still because inside you're saying, well I'm not 80, I'm only 21, I'm still 16, but it's the soul, isn't it?

It's the spirit within us because that's ever alive and ever new and though the outside is crumbling and the outside is wearing, the inner is eternal and so when he says, once again, the resurrection is like this, a wonderful change of clothes from the rags and the stinking, as it were, flesh that we carry around in our bodies now to this glorious, imperishable, unfading, never wearing out but also as we see there, immortal because that's the truth, isn't it?

[ 33 : 29 ] That we are mortal, whatever we do, however fit we are, whatever we eat, we are mortal, we will die, physically die and there's nothing we can do about it, there's nothing we can change about it, there's nothing that we can do, we can put it off perhaps as long as we possibly can but in the end, death must come but that's just the body, isn't it?

It's just the body, it's just the outer wrapping. The inner soul is immortal and now it will be clothed with an immortal body as well to match the soul.

No more death, we read in Revelation. No more dying, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more sin. Why is it that your body and mine is mortal? Why do our bodies perish? Why do they die? Because they're infected with sin. Because it's a bit like the car that you've bought.

No matter how much you polish it and wash it and keep it clean, it's going to rust one day. And our bodies are infected not with rust but with sin. God said to Adam and Eve at the very beginning, in the day that you eat of this apple, you will die.

[ 34 : 54 ] You'll be infected with that disease of death and from that moment they began to die. From that moment death was catching up with them day by day. Though they lived many, many years more than us, death had to come.

But no, this body, this resurrection body is not only imperishable, it's immortal. It can never die. It is eternal, everlasting.

And therefore, dear friends, above all else, and if this is the one thing we take away, let us take it away. The body that we shall have when Christ comes again, this resurrection body which is imperishable and is immortal, is above all victorious.

Victorious. Notice what we read there. Death has been swallowed up in victory. The sting of death is sin, verse 56. The power of sin is the law.

Thanks be to God he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. It's a victorious, splendid, glorious body.

[ 36 : 00 ] Verse 43. It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory, sown in weakness, raised in power. I don't know what you think of yourself when you look in the mirror on a Monday morning.

Perhaps you can't see much, it's all a bit blurred until you put your glasses on and perhaps you like it that way. I don't know. But when you look in the mirror you think, oh my goodness, oh look, there's another wrinkle there and there's another grey, oh there's another hair less there or whatever it may be.

So in one sense our bodies are not shameful but well, they're not all that glorious are they? They don't look really victorious.

They don't look world conquering. But dear friends, the truth is the resurrection body that is awaiting us and that we shall have is victorious. It makes Superman look like a wimp.

All right? It makes any action hero, these great Marvel comic heroes, makes them all look absolutely pathetic. The victorious Christian body. Nobody was there, were they, when Jesus was risen from the dead at that moment, did they?

[ 37 : 08 ] I wonder what it would have been like. I wonder what it would have been like. I can't help but imagine it must have been something marvellous. Sometimes you see it in a film or in a piece of artwork, a sort of blaze of glory.

Dear friends, we're going to look good. We're going to look glorious because we're going to be like Jesus. 1 John in chapter 3, John says, dear friends, we don't know what we're going to be like just yet, but we know that when he comes we shall be like him.

We're going to look good. There's going to be none of this in heaven wandering around saying, wow, they look better than me. No, they don't. We're all going to look really, really good. Going to look victorious and glorious and Christ-like.

See, at the moment we're the caterpillar, aren't we? We're the sort of the grub. And one day we're going to die and we're going to be in that cocoon, that death body, as it were, which is just like a brown, horrible thing.

But we're waiting the day when we shall burst out as the beautiful, glorious butterfly. And that's exactly what it shall be like. Dear friends, whatever you feel, whatever you think of yourself, whatever your state at this time, it's not the end.

[ 38 : 39 ] You haven't got to the podium yet. You haven't taken that step up yet. You haven't been clothed with that wonderful, heavenly reward yet.

But you shall be and I shall be. Because of what Jesus has done. We've shared in his sufferings. We've shared in the cross. We shall share in the resurrection as well.

And very finally then as we close, verses 58, or rather verse 58, how should we live now? If we really believe this, if we really believe that we are heaven bound and that awaiting us is this glorious resurrection body, then dear friends, it must affect how we live.

First of all, it must make us firm in the faith. What can move us? What can knock us? What can change direction? What can stop us believing and trusting in Christ?

When we know that he has gone before and we know that we shall be like him? Nothing.

Remember right at the very start of the chapter, Paul speaks about the gospel that I preached to you which you received and on which you've taken your stand.

[ 39 : 51 ] By this gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to it. What's the greatest way that we can hold firmly to the gospel? How can we be certain of it and keep going at it because we're looking for our reward?

Because we're looking to the end. We keep looking around about us, we'll be discouraged. But when we look to the end, the resurrection body, the glorious, victorious body, then dear friends, we can press on.

And as we press on, we can serve. Stand firm and serve faithfully. I think of these closing words. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord.

Are there times when you think, why do I keep serving in the church? Not me personally, all of us. Why do I keep on seeking to witness for Jesus? Why do I keep on making the meals and serving the coffee and doing the mums and toddlers and doing the children's work?

Why do I keep on visiting people and encouraging people? Why do I do all these things?

Sometimes it seems pointless. No, says Paul. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord.

[ 40 : 57 ] Why? Because you know your labour in the Lord is not in vain. It's not pointless. It's not empty. It's not meaningless. It's not getting you nowhere. It's getting you closer to the reward.

What's the point of living for ourselves in this world when it's passing and has nothing to offer?

Rather, dear friends, let us press on to that which is certain.

I'm going to close with these verses. verses of Paul from 2 Corinthians chapter 4. Therefore, we do not lose heart.

Though outwardly, physically, we're wasting away, yet inwardly, we're being renewed day by day.

For our light and momentary troubles, they don't feel like that.

They feel much heavier and harder and difficult than that. But that's what they really are in the light of eternity in comparison to eternity. Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

[ 42 : 04 ] So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. Since what is seen is temporary, what is unseen is eternal.

May the Lord help us to do just that. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, majesty, power, and authority through Jesus Christ, our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen.