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Father, we thank you for this day that you've given us. And we thank you, Lord, for your goodness to us and your grace and for all things. And, Father, we need you and pray that you will be with us. Father, I pray tonight as we go through the end of this book, that we will continue to be transformed by you, have renewed hope, have stamina and endurance, and, Father, that we will glorify you in doing so. Father, I pray that you will speak to us tonight in the name of your son, Jesus.

Amen. All right. Well, good evening, everyone. Welcome back to church. We're going to just pick up right where we left off last week.

By the way, I'll do it in our closing prayer because I forgot to do it in the opening. One of our church members has been bitten and fallen today and went to the hospital and is recovering and has asked for our prayers. So I will pray in our closing prayer for her. But like I said, I forgot in the opening. So.

So we're going to pick up where we left off last. And I'm going to redo just a few verses because we got. I was reading the passage. I hadn't even made comments on it yet. I was just reading through when we ended up ending church.

So we're going to pick up in verse 50 here in a minute. But just a reminder of what we were talking about when we got there and when I stopped, we had been talking about the resurrection. This whole chapter is about the resurrection, from evidence to it to the necessity of it in terms of our faith, right? If Christ did not die for us, then our faith is vain. It's worth nothing.

And Christianity hinges on the resurrection. If it happened, Christianity is true. And if it did not happen, Christianity is false. And then second, with the Necessity, we need to have different bodies. We need to resurrect, right?

The bodies that we have, they were shown as mortal bodies, as corruptible bodies, as bodies that are prone to sin and disease and death. So we need a new body. And we'll talk about that in a moment. And then we also talked about what the resurrection will look like in the body and that God is able and capable of building and designing bodies for us in the Resurrection, as well as we discuss things that are not true about the resurrection or this chapter in regards to some other religious beliefs or thoughts. So with that said, let's just jump in and verse 15, Paul says, what I am saying, brothers and sisters, is flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Nor can corruption inherit incorruption. Listen, I am telling you a mystery. We will not all fall asleep, but we will 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 will be changed. For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality.

When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place. Death has been swallowed up in victory, where death is your victory, where death is your sting. The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

So he starts and he tells us, he says he calls it a mystery. Now, mystery in the Bible just means knowledge

from God that we had not previously had.

And knowledge I had that you don't can still be a mystery that will be revealed to you. So here is the mystery, Here is the wisdom of God.

I jumped ahead of myself with the mystery. That's verse 51. Back to verse 50 real quick for my comment. Verse 50. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is a spiritual place, right? Christ spent a lot of time talking about there's the body and there is flesh, or there is body, flesh and there is the spirit. And we have flesh and blood now, and we have a spirit. But our flesh and blood that we currently have, this corruptible body cannot enter the kingdom of God. But also the kingdom of God will be a physical place.

God says he will physically recreate the heavens and the earth. But we need a body that's not corruptible and that is not mortal in order to enter it. And now here's the mystery. He says not everybody will fall asleep. In other words, not everybody will die.

We like to. There's a joke, right? There's only a few things that are certain in life, right? And of those certain things, two of them are death and taxes. But death is not certain because we won't all die.

Some of us will be alive when Jesus performs the resurrection of the dead. And this is what we call the rapture. He says, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. So as fast as you can blink. Those of us who are alive at the sound of the trumpet will be raised incorruptible and be changed.

Now this is really cool. So we don't. We don't have to die. We won't fall asleep. We'll will be alive.

We may be in church and suddenly disappear or drive in our car or at work or on the playground, or even asleep, like in bed asleep, not dead asleep. And at that sound we will raise from the dead or from life in this body. And be, it says change, we'll have our new body. Now, what that looks like, none of us really know what that feels like. None of us know.

But we will be changed and it will be instantaneously. And Paul describes, we must. We're corruptible now and we need to be incorruptible. And we are mortal and we must become immortal. I assume, and I think we all assume, we're pretty well gonna look close to the way we look now.

Some differences. Those of us missing limbs, fingers, other things will have them back. Those of us missing vision or hearing, we'll have it back. But in terms of look, we assume we'll look the same, but there will be a significant and definite change. And that change will be the fact that we are no longer corruptible, we are no longer mortal.

We're no longer prone to sick or disease or even death, which is where the saying comes from. He says death has been swallowed up in victory. Death is the one thing that everyone wants to avoid. It's the one thing that we can't beat, right? We.

We have no way of reversing death. If you die, science cannot bring you back, right? Doctors cannot bring you back. You are dead. It's an enemy that we are powerless against.

However, it says that it has been, Leave me alone, fly. It has been swallowed up in victory. Because while our doctors and our scientists and. And our best engineers are unable to undo death and to bring it back, Jesus did. Jesus can.

He has the power to. And he defeated it when he rose from the dead. So death, where is your victory? And where is the sting? Death has no victory over us who are saved, over us who are in Jesus.

And it has no sting on us because we are washed clean. Right here is the sting of death. It's sin, right? The sting of death is sin. Sin causes death.

And the law, right? It says the power of sin is the law. The law makes us know our sin. It makes us aware of our sin. But the law also makes us sinners because of our nature.

When you're told not to do something, you want to do it. And the law demands death for sin. But thanks be to God, who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So the law says there is a penalty for death, death or penalty for sin. And the penalty is death.

But we can give thanks to God that we have victory through Jesus Christ, who died for us. He died on our behalf. And as a result of that, because he exchanged his righteousness for our sin, we can thank God that we do not taste the sting of death. Now, verse 58 gives us encouragement. It says, therefore, right.

Because we know Jesus, because we are saved, because we've been redeemed from sin, because we will rise from the grave, because we will inherit an incorruptible and immortal body. He says, be steadfast. Be immovable. Right? Don't allow temptation.

Don't allow the enemy. Don't allow the things of this world to move you from that position, right? We are running a race, and there is a finish line that is ahead of us, and we are running for that finish line. And Paul says, be steadfast. Keep going toward that finish line.

Line. Don't allow people to take you off of this track. Don't allow people to cause your eyes to move to the left or the right, but fixate on Jesus, because He is our victory.

Nobody else can offer us this victory. Nobody else can raise us. No one else can promise the inheritance of an incorruptible body, of a sinless body, of a sickless body, and of a deathless body. And anyone else who can is a liar because no one else is able to do it on their own. But Jesus can, right?

And it says, excel in the Lord's work because your labor is not in vain. Our labor is not in vain. And I will say this from my perspective as well, right? We may feel it's in vain. We may share the gospel with people and be laughed at and mocked and rejected.

We may have people come to church, profess Jesus, attend for a while and leave and never come back. We may have people who, it seems like we don't know. We share the gospel with them and we move on our separate ways. And we don't know that a year from now, or 2 or 5 or 10, that they get saved because of the seed that we planted. However, for everyone who does get saved out of the Lord's work that he does in us, that will not be in vain.

It will not be in vain. Everyone who ignores us, laughs at us, comes and goes. It's Worth it for those who are saved and those who. Who are redeemed that they have the same gift that we have. Now we're going to move into chapter 16.

It's 19 verses, and it's going to be really fast because most of it is Paul saying his final goodbyes in this letter. So let's look at verses one through four. He says, now, about the collection for the saints. Do the same. As I instructed the Galatian churches, on the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and save in keeping with how he is prospering, so that no collections will need to be made.

When I come, when I arrive, I will send letters. Those who you recommend to carry your gift to Jerusalem, if it is suitable for me to go as well, they will travel with me. So just some quick background. There is a famine in Jerusalem, and a gift is being gathered from the churches to help Jerusalem. And Paul is instructing them.

He's instructing them to have that gift ready when he arrives. This way it can be sent off. And something to remember is today we can collect gifts very, very quickly. I can send a text message out to everybody and say, hey, so and so needs help. And everyone can send me \$10 virtually, right.

Electronically. And then I can give them the full amount of the gift in a matter of minutes. In the first century, that was not possible. You had to send word out by letter. You had to have time to gather.

Everyone had to gather. It had to be brought together. Somebody had to go and pick it up and someone had to deliver. Right? It was not nearly as instantaneous as it is today.

Even the couple of days it sometimes takes today is fast compared to then. So he's encouraging them. He says, make sure it is ready when I come, and I will send some of your people to Jerusalem with the gift. Okay, looking at. We're going to look at verses 5.

We'll do verses 5 through 11. We'll break this up here a little bit. He says, I will come to you after I pass through Macedonia, for I'll be traveling through Macedonia and perhaps I will remain with you or even spend the winter here, so that you may send me on my way wherever I go. I don't want to see you now, just in passing, since I hope to spend time with you if the Lord allows. But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost because a wide door for effective ministry has opened for me.

Yet many oppose me. If Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear while with you, because he is doing the Lord's work just as I am, so that no one look down on him, send him on his way in peace so that he can come to me because I am expecting him with the brothers. Let's read verse 12 as well. Now, about our brother Apollos. I strongly urged him to come to you with the brothers, but he was not at all willing to come now.

However, he will come when he has an opportunity.

So in this passage, Paul says he is currently traveling and intends to come and stay with them at some point in the future. It sounds like he has the option to see them now as he's traveling, but he says he does not want to go through and see them only for a moment. He wants to come and he wants to spend time with them. And we can see why. We've just finished.

We're finishing First Corinthians. We can see why he needs to spend time with them and not just an hour or a day in passing. In the meanwhile, though, he shows us something. He says, for now I'm going to Ephesus because there is a wide door for effective ministry.

Sometimes, like Paul right now, he wants to be in Corinth. That's where he wants to be. When you read the Book of Acts, you'll notice there are times or read the Book of the Romans, you'll see he's in other places, yet he wants to be in Rome. So I'm pointing out sometimes we want to be places, but the Lord has somewhere else for us to go and we need to be open to that. I also want to point out that when ministry becomes available somewhere, that we should take advantage of that.

And I also want to point out that when there's a place, an open door for ministry and a place where God wants you, that there will be opposition. You will never have a calling from God or a place to go from God and a job to do from God that will not be opposed either by spiritual and unseen forces or even by people. There will be opposition anytime you're doing what the Lord wants you to do. Now he tells us that when people come. So Timothy, I assume, is the one hand delivering the letter, right?

Because he's right and or sorry, we can't assume that it says if. But when Timothy comes, he tells them, and not just Timothy, but even Apollos. When ministry workers come, he says, take care of them. Don't let them have fear and worry about where they are and their providence while they're doing the work right, but see to it that they are taken care of. He also says that no one looked down on him, which I find interesting.

Just that command, and this command isn't no one. In general, people will look down on Timothy and people will look down on you and people will look down on me. But this is within the church. When the Lord's servants come, we are not to look down on them. We're not to think that we're better than them.

We're not to think we don't need them. And we're not. We're not to judge them either. When we read through the letters, you will see that various workers of Paul, co workers of Paul, they've made mistakes, they've done things. They.

And Paul says, don't look down on him and then send him in peace. Ultimately, he will end up with Paul, right? He says, I'm expecting him to come to me. The final thing that to us, before we conclude will be 13 through 18. He says, Brothers and sisters, you know the household of Stephanus.

They are the first fruits of Achaia and have devoted themselves to serving the saints. I urge you also to submit to such people and to everyone who works and labors with them. I am delighted to have Stephanas fortunate in that name because these men have made up for your absence, for they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore, recognize such people.

Be alert. This is a command. Be alert. Right? What are we being alert for?

We're being alert for wickedness in the church, right? We read through this letter of a man sleeping with his mother or his stepmother. We've read of people sacrificing to idols. We've read of lawsuits within the church. So be alert of wickedness in the church.

Be alert of wickedness in yourself. Be alert of wolves in sheep clothing. And be alert for the most importantly, the coming of God, the coming of Jesus. Be alert. Be ready for it.

Be looking. Stand firm in the faith is the second command. Stand firm. Our faith is not in vain because Jesus rose from the grave. Grave.

Our faith is not in vain because he has paid the penalty. Our faith is not in vain because it's not based on idle stories, some fairy tale, some fable, but it's truth. So stand firm in it. Regardless of what the world says or your friends say or your family says. Stand firm in the faith.

Be courageous and strong. And then he reminds us the final time. Do everything in love. Remember four chapters of this letter. We're devoted to love.

We're devoted to loving our neighbor, loving our brothers and our sisters, more than loving our own Rights. So he reminds us, whatever it is that you do, do it with love. And then he urges us to submit to our leader, to submit to and to recognize people who are doing the Lord's work, who he has placed over us, who he has given the authority to, and he even encourages us. He says that we can be refreshed by such people.

And his final greeting, we'll finish here, picking up in verse 19. The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla send you greetings warmly in the Lord, along with the church that meets in their home. All the brothers and sisters send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

This greeting is in my own hand, Paul. If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse be on him. Our Lord come.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. May love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

So he ends here and he says, the churches are sending, right? He's doing mission trips to Asia. And he says, the churches greet you. And he says, greet everyone with a holy kiss. I'm going to say this today is not applicable in that way.

Greetings. Back then they were done with a kiss to the cheek. However, today, greetings are done with a handshake. And that is acceptable to me, and I think that is acceptable to Paul. What Paul is getting at, though, is that we greet each other warmly, friendly, lovingly, that when we come together, it is done in a way that we recognize one another.

Also, something to point out about the first century church that we see here. And there's a few places we see it, but it's important that we recognize, right, it says this, the church that meets in their home. In verse 19, meeting in gigantic buildings is a relatively new thing. Churches took place in homes. They were small gatherings by the riverside.

They took place at supper tables. So the reason that's important to me isn't just because we meet in homes, but it's because there's something to be said about small gatherings and about what the church, what the members of the church are intended to do. We're intended to support one another, love one another, encourage one another.

And that. That's something that often gets lost when you have 5,000 people crammed into a building.

But that's something when we go. If you read Acts 2, and even through the rest of the letter, you see that these small gatherings did just that. They prayed, they ate, they laughed, they cried, they supported each other. And as we read through the book of First Corinthians, when we talked about gifts, the gifts that God has given you the gifts that he's given me. They were given that we will can edify the church and build the kingdom.

So let's make sure that we use our gifts in such a way. Finally, he tells us that he himself wrote this letter. It's very rare for Paul to actually be the author. And when I say the author, I mean the penman. He usually has someone he dictates and someone writes a scribe.

So he tells us he wrote this on his own. And finally, may the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with us as well. And each of you, as we come to the end of this book, I ask that and hope that we have all learned, we've grown, we've been conformed to the image of Jesus. I pray that we recognize the importance of being alert and being steadfast. And I pray for anyone here who has. Who has heard these things and has not yet known Jesus.

We read, and I'm going to go back to it real quick, verses three and four of chapter 15, right? It says that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried and raised on the third day according to Scriptures.

And we read today that we have victory in Jesus, right? It says the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory, victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So I ask for anyone here tonight who has not yet given their life to Christ. I ask that you acknowledge who Jesus is, that he is God, that He is Lord, that He is the only hope and victory that you may have.

I ask that you will be reconciled to God and that you can look forward to the incorruptible and immortal body that he will give you, that you can look forward to his eternal kingdom and being with Him. And it begins with admitting that you're a sinner, with believing that he is God and that he rose from the dead, and with confessing

him as your Lord, which means to give your life to him and to submit to him and follow Him. And he says he will save you and he will do these things that we read about. And if you're ready to do that in our closing prayer, I'll invite you to confess with me to him those things. After our closing prayer, we will partake of the Lord's Supper, his communion.

I invite anyone who would like to partake of that with us to stick around for a few minutes. And then next week we will begin a new book I'm still deciding on whether or not we're going to continue with Second Corinthians or if we're going to go somewhere else. So we'll know by next week. In the meantime, we will meet on Wednesday at 6:30. We'll continue our study through the book of Luke.

Right now we're doing the Sermon on the Mount, and we'll pick up and finish that in chapter, the Sermon on the Mount, chapter six, next week. Let's pray. Father, I admit that I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. And I know, Lord, that your ways are not my ways. And I know that.

I know that there is a penalty for the things I have done. And I believe, Jesus, that you are God, that you died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the grave the third day. And I believe, Lord Jesus, that you did that to take my sin and that you can take my sin. And I confess you, Lord Jesus, as my God and king, and I will submit myself to you and to your rulership, your Lordship. And I ask you for this gift.

I ask you for this immortal life, this immortal body, this incorruptible and sinless body, so that I may have no more sin and to be in your kingdom with you. Father, I pray that we will be steadfast. I pray that we'll be alert and stand firm in the faith. I pray, Father, that your love will overflow through us into the lives of those around us. I pray that you will be glorified as we are diligent in the church and our personal lives.

And I pray, Father, that you will work out of us issues we've discussed in this letter that exist in our own lives to your own glory and to our benefit. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.