

1Corinthians 18-01-28b

Let's continue our study now in 1 Corinthians chapter 2. We're looking at a word that Paul uses repeatedly in this letter, *katargeo*, and it means to come to nothing, to bring to nothing, to nullify, to take out of the way, out of the picture. And Paul says God is using you and me, our life of faith, our trust in God through the Lord Jesus to accomplish this goal of bringing to nothing the things that are. So that seems like a fun job.

I think I would like to be a part of that. I would like to have God use me to be the eraser that takes that chalk off of the board. So this is not the only place this word is used, but as we see the usage of it, its impact, its meaning becomes more clear.

He's going to use it again a few chapters later in 1 Corinthians chapter 6. He's talking about all things are lawful in verse 12, 1 Corinthians 6.12. You remember this part. We've heard this quoted many times. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.

All things are lawful, not all things are edifying, not everything builds up. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. That's a good rule of thumb.

A lot of things in the realm of enjoyment and entertainment and pastimes are against such. There is no law, if you will. But if we are brought under the power of something, whatever it may be, it can then become unhelpful.

I will not be brought under the power of any. I won't be controlled by it. It will not begin to define me or bite into areas of my life that it should not.

Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods. Remember, this is the group to whom Paul is going to write about observing suppers with fellow believers, the Lord's table. He's going to hark back to when Jesus was in the upper room with his disciples.

That's become the communion ritual in the church. He says one of the abuses that takes place at that time are people who come and hog all the food and are insensitive to others who are hungry. And that's an opportunity for them in the communal meal to get something a little extra.

Their cupboards are bare. And he says your insensitivity due to this, you're coming to the fellowship meal and you're eating too much and you're drinking too much. But he's already anticipating that here when he says food for the stomach and the stomach for food, but God will *katargeo* both it and them.

God is going to do away with both the food and the stomachs that consume it. *Katargeo*. The body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body.

God raised up the Lord and will raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your members are members of Christ? Shall I make the members of Christ members of a harlot? Certainly not.

Put your life in some perspective.

This is another one of the powers of this age is the power of desire, the power of this lust for satisfaction. They can come in the area of culinary arts and food. It can come in the area of bodily gratification of all different sorts.

And Paul says, you should not be brought under the power of any of these things. How many times have you read and heard and seen in the past and in the present about people who get their attention drawn to somebody in the romantic arena, usually of the opposite sex, and they destroy themselves and others. These FBI files, I saw a thing where they actually caught a state trooper who was stopping women and then having his way with them so that they wouldn't have to pay their ticket.

And a gal resisted him and he got angry in the moment and shot her and killed her and then tried to cover it up. And nobody thought he could be guilty because he had this sterling reputation in the community. But this desire for illicit relations controlled him and ultimately destroyed him.

God says through Paul, watch out for transient things. Don't let them control you. They are going to be taken out of the way.

People that control, situations that control, circumstances that control, issues that are defining issues of the day are going to vanish. Peter, of course, talks about this. What kind of people ought you to be? Knowing that the elements are going to melt with a fervent heat.

The earth is going to be burned up. Do you really have to worry about how much plastic goes into the landfill? Or should you be worried about how much trash goes into your soul through the eye gate and the ear gate of our modern culture? Food for the stomach, the stomach for food. God is going to catargeo both it and them, the stomach and the foods.

That's a use of catargeo. It is going to be out of the way. Later on in this same letter in chapter 13, you remember 1 Corinthians 13, this ought to be one of those chapters, 1 Corinthians 13, 1 Corinthians 14.

Remember 13, though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, have not love, become sounding brass, clanging cymbal. I didn't say that exactly right. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Though I have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, though I have all faith to move mountains, have not love, I am nothing. Bestow all my goods to feed the poor, give my body to be burned, have not love, it profits me nothing. Now think about that in the light of what we're seeing in chapter 1 and chapter 2. What would be the transient thing? Speaking with the tongue of men and angels.

Why are they getting infatuated with Apollos and with Christ and with others? Paul is not eloquent enough. He's not wise enough. He's not persuasive enough.

He's not impressive enough in his delivery. He doesn't impress the Greeks with his delivery. I could speak with the tongues of men and angels, but it would just be noise if I don't have the thing that lasts, that transfers into eternity, that is a part of eternity, which is love.

I could have the gift of prophecy. I could understand mysteries and knowledge. I could parse the present.

I could tell you what's going to happen. I could tell you where to put your money and what not to eat and where to live and how much to spend. I could give you all of this practical wisdom.

But if I don't have love, I am nothing. I could bestow all my goods to feed the poor. I could try to solve the poverty problem.

I could give my body to be burned. I could jump on a grenade. I could sacrifice myself for others.

But if I have not love, it profits me nothing. Investing in the powers of the age is a waste of time. It's a waste of potential.

Love suffers long and is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not parade itself.

Love is not puffed up. It doesn't behave rudely. It doesn't seek its own.

It's not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, rejoices in the truth. Rejoices in the truth. Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never perishes. It never fails. Whether there are prophecies, they will catargeto.

Whether there are tongues, they will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will catargeto. You can see this is going to be a theme that is going to pervade Paul's presentation to this church that he founded, this group of believers that he loves.

You've got to keep your eye on the objective. You've got to focus on the long term, on after the ages are over. Success in this age, power in this age, accomplishment in this age isn't the issue.

May have some, may not. The enduring values are what matter. When I was a child, verse 11, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.

What do children value? I remember when I was little, I thought the world would end if I didn't have a vacuform, didn't have this one particular toy. I saw bicycles with banana seats and butterfly handlebars. Oh, I got to have one.

Of course, they were expensive. Kid up the street had one and was riding it around proudly. My dad found a used bicycle and bought the butterfly handlebars and bought the banana seat and

put it on there for me because I was a child.

I thought as a child. I had ambitions of a child. I thought childish things loomed large.

Paul says, when I became a man, I put away childish things. I learned patience. One of the things in child development, Elizabeth has talked about this and I've seen documentaries about it, and they measure this at different ages for children, is when do you learn delayed gratification? There's a killingly funny video where they put these little three-year-old children and four-year-old children in a chair at a table and they put a chocolate-covered cherry in front of them and they say, now, you could eat that piece of candy right now, but if you can wait five minutes, I'll bring another one and you can have two.

Then they leave the room and they leave the video camera running. The little child, they're just on the cusp of learning and some of them can and some of them can't. Some of them, after about 15 seconds, they just grab the thing and pop it in their mouth, but others try to resist and so they'll pick it up and lick it and put it back.

Some of them will clasp their hands and try to distract themselves and do something else. I don't want to think about the piece of candy. It's just so funny because part of growing up is learning to wait for a better thing, a more valuable thing.

When I became a man, I put away childish things. Now we see in a glass dimly, but then face to face. I know in part, then I shall know just as I am known.

Faith, hope, and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love. The Lord Jesus summed up the law, which is not set aside. It's not cut or gelled.

It is fulfilled. It is established. And what is the essence of the law as Jesus described it? Love the Lord your God.

Love your neighbor. All of the law and prophets are fulfilled in that. It's established.

It's fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, who have their eyes on the long-term view, who aren't dazzled by the needs of the immediate, the things that seem wise to the world or powerful to the world. We have that mature, long-term view. Now that brings us to our second word, our second word in the passage.

If you go back now to 1 Corinthians 2, verse 6, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, not the wisdom of the age or the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. We speak the wisdom of God to the mature, the hidden wisdom of God that comes in a mystery. This wisdom that God ordained before the ages, who gets it? The mature.

What is mature? What does it mean to be mature? Well, we've looked at that a little bit in the upcoming chapter 13, but the word translated mature here is telios. Telios means end. I've mentioned this many times before.

One of my favorite scientific uses of this is telomere. On the end of your long strand of DNA, your double helix and all of your chromosomes, it's like a shoelace that's twisted into a spiral. What do you have on the end of your shoelaces? There's a little plastic piece.

There's actually a name for that that nobody can remember for the little plastic non-fray device on the end of your shoelaces. I should have looked that up. But on the end of your DNA, you have the same thing.

It keeps the helix from unwinding, and that little thing is called a telomere on your DNA. I don't call it that on my shoelace. It's a telomere, telos.

It's at the end. Telios is that which is at the end. This is why we talk about a goal or a purpose being the end.

The end justifies the means, they like to say. If I accomplish the goal, then however I got there must be okay, which is, of course, not biblical. But the end, this is telios.

So we speak wisdom among those who are telios, those who are focused on the goal, on the end, those who are mature, who have put away childish things. Paul says, I became a man, I became mature, and I'm not taking that short-term myopic, childish, I can only see what's in front of me. Another one of the things is, what do they call it? Persistent memory, I think.

You show, and they do this not only with children, but even with dogs and birds. They're trying to measure the intelligence of birds in another documentary, and they talk about the persistence of memory. So you show the child, the dog, the bird, an object, preferably something they're interested in, and then you cover it up.

You have three cups on the table, you show them a treat, and then you hide it under a cup. Well, do they remember that there's something under the cup, even though they can't see it? And how long do they remember that? And one of the measures of maturity for humans is, when do you reach the point that you can remember indefinitely that there is a thing there? Dogs will bury bones and then forget where they buried them. And the persistence isn't there.

If I don't see it, I don't remember that it's there. And when we get sometimes advanced in years, we put something somewhere and then we can't remember where it is either, and we start to lose that which we worked so hard to gain when we were young. But there's a spiritual analogy there.

Can we remember that which we cannot see? It is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. How long can we remember that? Here is the prize, here is the goal, here is the end, but we see dimly. Someday we're going to be face-to-face with these things, but can we remember it in the interim? Those who are mature, telaios, where is this word used? The Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 5, and as soon as I say Matthew 5, you should remember that this is Matthew 5 through 7 is the Sermon on the Mount.

Good thing to know. Know your biblical geography a little bit. Matthew chapter 5. So when I say Matthew chapter 5, you say, ah, Sermon on the Mount.

Blessed are the meek, blessed are the poor. So in Matthew chapter 5, verse 43, you have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, and there's a whole series of these, you have heard this, but I say something else.

I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. Now, your enemies, those who persecute you and spitefully use you and hate you, visible or invisible? Visible. Your Father in heaven, visible or invisible? Invisible.

You've heard it said, love the good guys, hate the bad guys. I say, love the bad guys, so that you can be sons of your Father in heaven, so that you can fulfill an invisible truth. He makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good.

He sends rain on the just and on the unjust. If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? What reward? What do you anticipate down the road? In the present, you may find it gratifying and fulfilling, but what about the future? Can you be mature? Can you be teleios? If you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even tax collectors do that. Your rank, uninterested in spiritual things people, can do that much.

Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. The word translated perfect in both of those places, teleios. God is teleios, and you should be teleios.

And you think, well, be mature because God is mature? Doesn't quite catch it, does it? What does it mean? Be focused on the goal, because God is focused on the goal. The wisdom of this age focuses on the immediate and the short-term and cause and effect that you can see before your eyes. God is focused on that goal that He ordained before the ages and is going to result in glory after the ages.

You be focused on that too. You be teleios, because God is teleios. You will be sons of your Father in heaven.

You'll be a chip off the block. You will be after His heart, after His purposes, after His glory, when you are teleios. This is who Paul wants to talk to in Corinth.

Those who are focused on the goal, this is who is going to get this wisdom that God hid. Remember the rich young ruler in Matthew 19, verse 16? Behold, one came and said to him, Good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? Good teacher, what good thing shall I do to accomplish the goal? Jesus says, Why do you call me good? No one is good, but one, God. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.

So He says, Which ones? You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as

yourself. Young man said, All these I've kept for my youth, what do I still lack? Jesus said, If you want to be perfect, if you want to be teleios, if you want to be looking at the goal that God looks at, if you want to be focused on the glory that God has ordained to end the ages, sell what you have and give it to the poor, you'll have treasure in heaven, and come follow me. Why did Jesus say all the law and prophets are summed up in love your neighbor as yourself in this context? He says, Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't bear false witness, honor your father and mother.

These are time-bound, short-term, easy to see things, right? And it's a test. Jesus says, Well, the good things that are defined in the law are these immediate visible things. Well, I'm doing that.

He says, Well, if you want to be teleios, you've got to transcend that. You've got to go beyond the short-term, immediate obedience check boxes. Sell what you have and invest in the glory of the future.

That's the heart of God. That's the mind of God. That's the teleios of God.

He goes away sorrowing because he doesn't have that persistence of memory. He can't invest in what he can't see. I can do these short-term things all day long, but this treasure in heaven, what are you talking about? I've got great riches now, and I can do things with them now.

I can entertain myself now. I can gratify myself now, and I can hit these check boxes now and be thought of as righteous. If you're going to be teleios, you've got to raise your game.

You've got to raise your sight. You can't be tactical. You've got to be strategic to be like your Father in heaven.

Teleios. Wonderful word. Romans 12, 1 and 2. Say it with me.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and teleios will of God. Teleios.

Good, acceptable, and the ultimate goal. So work backward. If you're going to prove, if you're going to find out, if you're going to lay hold of the good and acceptable and teleios will of God, what do you do? Don't be conformed to the world.

Get your mind transformed. Raise your game. Raise your sights.

Get the big picture view that you can be sons of your Father in heaven. That you can be teleios, because He's teleios. You can partake of the eternal, because He's eternal.

Good and acceptable and teleios will of God. Finally, so many of these we could look at. If you want to get a Strong's Concordance and go to word number 5046, Strong's number 5046, just look it up in a concordance, and you can look at these.

There are many, many wonderful. I'm just giving you a sample, just a taste. Taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

We speak wisdom among those who are teleios, 1 Corinthians 2.6. Later on in chapter 13, we just read about love suffers long. Love is patient. Love is kind.

Love doesn't seek its own. Where there are tongues, it will vanish. Prophecies perish.

We know in part. We prophesy in part. But when that which is teleios has come, that which is in part will be done away.

Done away. There used to be a man that lived across the road from us named Mr. Dunaway. Be done away.

When that which is teleios has come, focus on the teleios. Don't measure with the yardstick of the world. Don't be impressed by what impresses the world.

Don't be distracted. Don't be pulled. Don't be invested in that which is passing away, katargeo.

Look for the perfect. Look for the complete. Look for the goal.

That's our life. That's why we're here. And don't be fooled by the foolishness of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than the world.

Don't buy into the idea that you are insignificant. That your daily faithfulness, your daily trust, your daily expressions of love to God and love to one another don't count. It's everything.

It's the goal. It's teleios. Everything else that the world measures with is passing away.

When that which is teleios has come, that which is in part will be done away. Why is there going to be a new heaven and a new earth? Dr. Griswold thinks it's a renovation, and he tries to justify that from scripture and bless his heart. He got a lot of things right, but he got that wrong.

It is a new heaven and a new earth. The old heaven and the old earth are passed away. They are gone.

The world and all that is in it, the elements are going to melt with a fervent heat. There is going to be a new Big Bang, new heavens and a new earth, a new Jerusalem. Think about that.

Does it matter that I haven't painted the trim on the north end of my house? I should get that done. I will get that done, but I keep that in perspective. We do what we need to do in this world.

We're faithful. We're good stewards of resources, time, energy, opportunity, but it does not define us. It does not control us.

Food for the stomach, the stomach for food. Got to eat. Perfectly legitimate.

Nothing wrong with that. Got great cooks in the family. Got great food on the shelves you can go and get.

Great restaurants you can visit like we're going to do later, but it doesn't define me. It doesn't control me. It is not the issue in my system of goals and values and priorities.

It's a necessity. I'm in the world. I've got to eat food.

I've got a stomach, but I keep in mind all of this stuff is passing away. Talias. Remember what's qadar ge'oh and remember what is talias.

There is a difference and wisdom. God's wisdom that was ordained before the ages began is spoken to those who have their eyes on the prize, who can appreciate it, who understand it. God the Holy Spirit is going to make it pertinent and meaningful and motivating and challenging and alive and powerful to those who are looking for it.

To those who are looking for him will he appear a second time apart from sin for deliverance. Remember that? Those who are looking for him, looking unto Jesus. First Corinthians chapter 14 verse 20.

Brethren, do not be children in understanding. When it comes to malice and bickering and eyes on people, be a baby in that. Be short-term and easily distracted away from it by that.

But in understanding, be talias. Be mature. That's first Corinthians 14 20.

Do not be children in understanding. In understanding, be mature. If you want to be a baby, if you want to be immature, be unpracticed, be inexperienced, be easily distracted away from malice, from envy, from jealousy, from bickering, from strife.

Be easily put it under the cup and you've already forgot about it. Gumdrops there, you ate it and it's gone. In understanding, be talias.

Don't be distracted by tongues. It's just a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers. God's power manifest in your life is a technique that God uses to draw people to himself.

It's not a vindication of you. It's not something to be proud of for you. Tongues was an overt sign in those days, but the power of God is still evident in our lives today.

What's it for? So that someone will ask you a reason for the hope that is in you and you're ready to give them an answer. The power of the Spirit in our lives and what is his power? To make the goal real to us, to motivate us, to challenge us, to bring us along, to make us talias. It's a sign to unbelievers.

Ephesians chapter 4 verse 13. Gifts have been given. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, the building up of the body, until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the

knowledge of the Son of God to a talias man.

The goal of the gifts, your gift of encouragement, of prayer, of faith, of music, of teaching, of encouragement, washing the feet of the saints, whatever you do, whatever role you play, and every single one of you does, there's not a one that's in the body of Christ that isn't gifted by the Spirit to be a blessing to other believers. Don't have to give it a name, don't even have to know what it is. You do what you're supposed to do, that gift is going to function.

My earlobe doesn't know it's an earlobe, but it still sits there and gives my head definition, keeps me from looking strange. My little finger doesn't know it's a little finger, but it's extremely useful. It doesn't have to know that it's called little finger, it just does what it does because it's a part of the body, and it's controlled by the mind, and that's what we are.

You don't have to name a gift. There's some examples given in Scripture, but there are dozens of gifts. All we have to do is be responsive, be willing, be ready, be able.

Don't get stuck. Do you ever have your finger get stuck? You're trying to grab something and your knuckle won't bend? It's very frustrating. I've been using tools or something and my fingers will freeze up, and then when I need to do something else, they won't move.

Well, this is what happens in the body of Christ when we are not teleos. We become an impediment instead of an asset. We become an obstacle instead of a resource.

So, come to the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, a teleos man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. What is the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ? When are we going to see that? When is that going to be revealed? It is the glory that is to come. That's what we keep our eyes on.

So, we have katar ge'o. Pay attention and remember what is passing away. It doesn't mean we ignore it, we don't eschew it, we don't run from it, but we recognize it's transient, temporary, ephemeral, useful-in-the-moment nature, and we're not controlled by it, we're not defined by it.

We keep it subordinate to that which is a part of God's purpose, the end, teleos. And in so doing, we are not put to shame. That is our third and final word.

Not put to shame. This is found in our passage in verse 27 of chapter 1. You see, your calling brethren, not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise.

God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. They are not just katar ge'o'd. Remember, that's on down in 28.

Base things of the world, things which are despised, God has chosen the things which are not to bring to nothing the things that are. Not only are they brought to nothing, not only are they obviated, taken out of the way, rendered ineffective, not present, not pertinent, but God is

putting them to shame. Now, what does it mean to be put to shame? Why didn't he just say katar ge'o'd? God is bringing these things to nothing.

He's canceling them. He's terminating them. He's ending them.

They will be no more. But it's not just that. He is also putting them to shame.

This word is kataiskune. Aiskune is the root word. A-I-S-C-H-U-N-E.

Aiskune. And kataiskune just intensifies it. They're synonymous.

Why is it being put to shame? This isn't, we tend to think that this is an experience of shame, a feeling of shame. I am going to be ashamed. That's not the meaning.

The we be not ashamed at his coming is a different word. This is put to shame. And what it means is, from the outside, demonstrated to be shameful.

Demonstrated to be not great, not proper, not good, not appropriate, not important. To put something to shame isn't to make it feel ashamed. You can put someone to shame by your energy and your effort and your diligence, who is lazy and indifferent and apathetic.

You can have two employees, one of them is busy working hard, getting the exact same pay as another person who is doing practically nothing and just skating and loafing. Now, the first person who is faithful and diligent and obedient puts the other one to shame. Doesn't mean the other one feels ashamed.

They're probably calloused over. Their conscience is seared with a hot iron. They don't care.

And there are people who are proud of their indolence, proud of their indigence, proud of their things that we look at as shameful. To put to shame is to demonstrate what's wrong with a thing. That's what katai skune means.

Now, what does this mean to us? Very quickly, not only is God using us to put an end to Satan's regime and all of the things, the lie that he has told people about what's important and what they should pursue, how they should invest their time and their lives and their talents and their energy and their resources. It's the same lie that goes all the way back to the garden. Eat the fruit and you will be wise and you will have power.

Isn't that the lie? God knows that you'll be like him and you'll have this wisdom. You'll be like him, powerful. And you'll be wise.

It's the oldest lie. It's the lie of Satan. God is using your life and my life to put an end to that whole thing.

The powers of this age are coming to nothing. And we focus instead on that which is to lie us. But not only is God ending them, and not only is he focusing our attention on his eternal goal

and purpose, his eternal life, his eternal son, but he is demonstrating the shamefulfulness of the alternative.

He is demonstrating its inefficiency, its inadequacy, its hopelessness, its ephemerality, its temporality. Everything that is a shortcoming, everything that is wrong with it is demonstrated. We're not just bringing it to an end.

We are vindicating what is to lie us and showing everything that is wrong with the alternative. Your life is a contrast to the lives that aren't committed to God, that aren't obedient, that aren't faithful, that aren't empowered by the Spirit, that don't produce the fruit of the Spirit, that don't focus on faith and hope and love. You are a demonstration.

You put to shame these other things. It's not just a means of saying, this is good, this is bad, so this is ending. God says, this is good, this is bad, and here's why.

Look at the difference. Examine the contrast. Comparison, contrast.

God is putting to shame these other things. He is demonstration. This is what Bob Thieme used to call the court case in heaven.

Satan says, I'll do the five I wills. I can do the God job better than God Himself. Just turn me loose with the angels that want to follow me.

I'll establish my own universe. I'll be God for that universe. I'll raise my throne above the stars.

I'll be like the Most High. Just let us go off and do our own thing. Why do we have to always be doing the to lie us thing and working for God's goals? We can do fine.

We can be equal but different. We can have a godless society. We can have a godless universe.

We can have a godless system. It doesn't always have to be God's way. Not only is God going to put that to an end, throw it all into the lake of fire, but God is demonstrating why it has to go, why it has to end, what its flaws and deficiencies and shortcomings and impossibilities are.

It is impossible to have life when you cut yourself off from the source of life. It is impossible to be righteous when you are cut off from the source of righteousness. It is impossible to have power, self-control, love, joy, peace, or patience when you have cut yourself off from the only source of those things.

God is putting it to shame. He is demonstrating that it cannot survive. It cannot persist.

Pleasures of sin for a season, but the season has got to end because it is a metastasizing cancer, and if you do not cut it out and destroy it, it will destroy everything it touches. Your life has meaning. Your life has value.

Your life has purpose. It has a goal, and it is an important goal. It is the biggest goal.

It is the biggest thing God is doing. You and I are essential, integral parts of God accomplishing that purpose. He is using you to put an end to and to put to shame the satanic alternative.

Everything you think and everything you do counts all day long, all night long, all life long. It makes a difference. Don't forget, Paul says, who we are and why we're here.

Just think about those words, kadargeo, kadaiskune, and telaio. They recur in this letter. They recur in the epistles of Paul.

They recur in the whole New Testament. They begin from the lips of the Lord Jesus, and it is going to be at the end of the age when the judgment comes, and we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, wood, hay, and stubble, kadargeo, the gold, silver, and precious stones, telaio. That's our objective.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word and how powerfully and clearly it's presented to us here in the pages of 1 Corinthians. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will bring these things to our minds and hearts as we approach decision points and face the challenges and opportunities that come to us each and every day.

We pray that we can produce the fruit of Your Holy Spirit. We can be walking a path that is illuminated by the light of Your Word, and in so doing, we will reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, Your Son, with whom we will one day unite and be in Your presence. We pray that this will be ever in our minds, and we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.