

1Corinthians 18-12-09b

Let's resume now our study in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and my suggestion to you, my encouragement as a topic for thought is that there is something bigger at work here in this section of Paul's letter than just explaining the resurrection. It is the means to an end, it's not just an end in itself, as has been true of the earlier parts. Yes, order in worship is important.

Yes, having these fellowship meals is important. Yes, understanding that we need to be unified and not divided is important. But all of these have been in the service of a larger theme.

And it is that understanding, it's that perspective, it's that approach to our daily life that we want to get hold of, because it is all purpose. Maybe we're not having trouble with spiritual gifts. Maybe we're not having trouble with women and what they do or do not do in the church.

Maybe we're not having trouble with how things go at the meal or any of the other specifics. Have I been invited to the temple for a meal and should I go or should I not? And what about buying things in the marketplace that could potentially have been used for some other purpose before I saw them? All of these things, what has Paul been doing with each of these areas of life, each of these issues, each of these questions? Underpinning all of it is the way to solve them. And the way to solve them is to look for the path that is defined by God's order.

What has God established by way of authority, by way of responsibility, by way of accountability? Look for that. Function within that. And do so in humility.

To do so requires humility. And the constant companion of humility is love. If we are humble, if we do not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, it frees us to look out not only for our own interests but also for the interests of others.

I'm back to Philippians chapter 2. Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Let this mind be in you, this attitude, this approach, this spirit, whatever your difficulty. And it's not going to be meet offer to idols, I feel certain.

It's not going to be somebody else waving their spiritual gift in the assembly like a big flag for us. We're going to have different issues, different challenges, different puzzles to solve. But the key is the same.

Paul is giving us the key chapter after chapter after chapter in this letter. And it has not changed in chapter 15. Here are some people questioning the foundation of the Christian faith, questioning one of its essential truths, the most important according to Paul.

Without it, Christian faith is meaningless. But even here, he's not trying to convince people of the resurrection so much as simply establishing its bona fides, its valid evidence. People will still decide.

There's people that no amount of facts can budge them. Don't bother me with the facts. My

mind's made up.

I will find a way to explain away whatever your nail in the coffin argument is. Democrat can never convince a Republican. Republican can never convince a Democrat.

Calvinist can never convince a quote unquote Arminian or a free will person and vice versa. And it's sad and it's a little bit sobering to realize how convicted we can become and the dangers of that. It is good to be convinced and to lash yourself to the mast of truth when it is truth.

But we always have to be willing to go back and question what we affirm and what we don't want to hear anybody challenge. Humility says, maybe my understanding needs refreshing or revision or improvement. Paul says, if any man thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall.

If you think you stand, it's a good time to just go back and review and say, now, why do I believe what I believe? Why does Paul preach the resurrection? Here's why. And this is not to convince. It is to affirm the solid foundation under it.

And there's a difference. He's not being argumentative here. He's being demonstrative.

He is pointing to the solidity of this truth. And this is one of the things that you don't have to worry about it having a false foundation and there really is no resurrection. No, there is.

There wouldn't be a Christ and there wouldn't be Christianity if there wasn't a resurrection. So when you go back to revisit your belief in the resurrection, you're on solid ground. So this is more affirmation than argumentation.

I deliver to you what I received. This is a truth in which we stand. This is what keeps us constant.

And you can go back and review it as much as you want. It never becomes questionable. It never becomes shaky.

It never becomes something that we should never have believed. It's solid. It is bedrock.

But why does he offer this bedrock? Because on that bedrock, we build. We build Christ the solid rock. All other ground is sinking sand.

But let every man take care how he builds. And we don't build with pride. We don't build with arrogance.

We don't build with self-importance. We don't build with competitiveness with others and a desire to prevail and to overcome and to somehow one up each other and develop an air of superiority and superiority. Let every man take care how he builds.

And the key is twofold. There is an order and it was established by God. God is higher than us.

He is at the top. He is the creator. He is the founder.

We are looking like Abraham for a city whose founder and builder is God. Abraham is not going to go in there and lay out the streets and decide that he likes a northeast-southwest plan better than a north-southeast-west plan. You ever looked at city maps and you can tell what's the core of the town and what has grown up since then because the city planners all say, you know, we really need north-southeast-west streets.

It makes a whole lot more sense than this slanted thing that originally grew along the railroad which wasn't oriented to a cardinal direction. And so in the middle of Dallas, for example, there's this weird twisted thing and then they've had to connect all of the streets to a north-southeast-west grid because the founder of the city didn't stick around long enough to see the thing built all the way to its completion and they didn't look ahead and say, you know, someday this thing is going to be huge. Well, you can get lost.

I remember the first time I tried to find Dallas Theological Seminary and this is before the internet, before Google, before smartphones. I didn't really have a good map. I just went down there and thought, it's Dallas Theological Seminary.

There will be a sign. There will be some. Well, I went down south of the fairgrounds and wandered around Oak Cliff and different places trying to find it because the streets make no sense down there.

It's just wild and crazy. Oddly enough, I found it by freak accident. But God has established an order.

Now look at this section. Just keep that in mind and read this section again. Each in his own order, verse 23 of 1 Corinthians 15.

Each one in his own order. I'm telling you this is the heart of Paul's message. Whether it is in life, whether it is in death, whether it is in resurrection, you have been assigned a place in God's order.

Find it. Figure it out. Function there in humility, obedience, and love.

That's the message of this letter. Each one in his own order. Christ is the firstfruits and as the firstfruits, it is his example, it is his work, it is his humility, his obedience, his love that has satisfied God the Father.

And to the extent that we emulate that and reflect it, we are acceptable in his sight. Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's that is coming. Now why does Paul not go in in detail and say, well you know, there's the rapture and then there's the tribulation and then there's the resurrection of the Old Testament saints and then there are going to be some people who die during the millennium and when are they going to be raised and then you have the great white throne and then the unbelieving dead are raised and why does he not go into all of that? Because resurrection is not really his point.

It is an illustration in service of his main point and it's a fulsome treatment of resurrection but his resurrection discussion here is in service of the greater theme and the greater theme is each in his own order. You don't get to rise with Christ. Christ rises as the firstfruits.

If you belong to Christ, you'll be raised at his coming. That's been ordained by God the Father. If you want to talk about sovereignty and predestination, you are predestined to rise at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 14.3 Thessalonians, this passage, each in his own order. Sin is capable. You going to raise yourself at some other time? Of course not.

Each in his own order. This is a great puzzle solver. All of us have challenges.

All of us have questions. All of us look into the future like we look through our windshield and there's limited visibility. Even turning on your brights doesn't always reveal what you need to see or what you think you need to see.

It's an unknown. So what do you do in your car when you can't really see very far ahead? What if somebody's coming the other direction and they haven't turned their brights off and it's blinding? What do you do? How do you continue to make progress when you can't really see and you don't know exactly what's coming up next? My dad taught me when I was 15 years old, if you have trouble seeing because it's fog or because it's oncoming headlights especially, I remember the first time he told me about people not turning off their brights and I would soon experience that and it's blinding. He said, look, what you can always see is the white stripe on the right edge of the road.

Take your eyes off of what's ahead. You can't see right there. It's just going to blind you trying to look.

Look for the white stripe. You'll see it just above your right fender and just guide yourself on the stripe. Just keep going and just keep your eyes on the stripe.

Let the cars pass. Let the situation clear. You'll be fine.

If it's foggy, look for the stripe. Unless visibility is truly zero, you'll be able to see the stripe. Out here on the country roads, look for the bar ditch.

Look for where the gravel ends or where the crude pavement ends but you can see that edge. Just guide on what's close to you, what's near hand and what you know is right. The only time that rule has ever failed me is years ago.

It was about 1984 maybe and I was going to ski with my two-girl cousins and we were driving through Kansas to go to Colorado and we were going to go to all the biggies. We were going to Copper Mountain and Vail and I was driving my station wagon and we had to drive through southern Kansas. Well, there was a blizzard and everything, the ditches filled in.

It was nothing but level snow, blinding white everywhere. Travel advisories, everybody got off the road except us. We were determined.

We had reservations. We were going to go ski and my two-girl cousins and the older of which had a small daughter. So we're going.

Well, I couldn't see the edge of the road. Couldn't see the fence, couldn't see the ditch, couldn't see anything. So I'm creeping along going kind of by the feel and if I would get too close to the shoulder, you'd start to feel a different kind of roughness.

There's snow under your tires but there was tossed up stuff on the edge. So we just kept going but mile after mile after mile. I hate southern Kansas to this day.

Rain, shine, summer, winter. It's flat. There's nothing to guide on there and I couldn't see the stripe and I thought, well, you know, where are you now, dad? How do I navigate this? Now you can probably turn on your phone and your GPS will show you where you are.

But in any case, what Paul is saying here is there is an order. When you have a puzzle to solve, whether it is order and discipline in the church, unity or division, when do you gather, when do you separate, when do you eat, when do you refrain from eating, when do you participate, when do you not participate. If you don't know, here's the answer.

Go to the order that God has established. Each in his own order. There's a lot of things I don't know but there are some things I always know.

And I've mentioned this before but it has guided me through my life to the extent that it's useful as an illustration. But many times there's a career change. You go from military to civilian.

You go from one town to another, one place to another, one job to another. And the future can be largely unknown. It can be a great question.

It can be potentially daunting. Well now what? Well, I don't know what. And sitting and having a bunch of mental perambulations about what it might be is usually fruitless because I don't have enough clues.

I can't see that far. There are no guideposts ahead. So what do you do in that case? Well, what do I know? If I'm married, I'm a spouse.

I've got clear cut God given responsibilities as a husband in my case. If you're a wife, you've got responsibilities as a wife. If you're a parent, you have opportunities and responsibilities whether your kids are little or grown.

There are clear cut definitional functions that you perform in that role. It's a part of God's order. God has ordained, God has arranged that we be in families.

He puts the solitary in families. So how do you relate in your family? What are your opportunities and responsibilities in your family? Do you have a job? What are your opportunities and responsibilities in the job? That's God's order. When there's a lot of unknown stuff, go with what you know.

Find the stripe. Guide on the stripe. That's an ordained stripe that the county has put on the road, the state has put on the road, the federal government has put on the interstate.

That stripe is definitional. If you're on the road, guide on the stripe and you'll be in your lane. So go with what you know.

Look to the order. Are people trying to confuse you saying there's no resurrection, your faith is futile, they're going off in strange directions? Well, we should amalgamate. We should incorporate a bunch of other beliefs into faith.

We should ordain women. We should be non-doctrinal. We should be non-confrontational.

All things to everybody. Big tent. What should we do spiritually? What should we do in our family? The whole family has gotten together and decided that we're not going to do Christmas because a couple of people have married Jewish people and Hanukkah and all that.

We'll just be bland and non-confrontational, not rock the boat, no waves. What is definitional? Who are you? First and foremost, we are in Christ. Christ is the first fruits and we belong to Christ and we're going to be raised at His coming.

That's definitional. There are certain things that pertain to me no matter what if I'm a believer. What else do I know? What do I know? I know my place in my family.

I am a son. I am a father. I am a husband.

I am an employee. I have clients that have opportunities and needs. Am I given a stewardship there? And if so, am I found faithful? Am I faithful in the stewardships that God has given me? It is required in a steward, Paul says, that a man be found faithful.

Be faithful in your stewardship. Jesus said, he that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is much. And guess what? It's a lot easier to see what is least.

Maybe God hands you two talents or one talent or five talents. Well, that's tangible. I can see that.

I know what to do with that. I take the five and I make five more. Remember? I don't wrap it in a kerchief and shove it in my pocket out of sight.

That's a stewardship. It's been given to me. Do something with that.

Jesus says, if you've given up things in this life to be faithful, you're going to be rewarded

tenfold and a hundredfold later on. Faithful in what is least, you will be faithful in that which is much. Much is hard to see.

It's hard to comprehend the whole much picture. So if it's too much, go with what you know. Here is what I know I need to do.

I need to be financially responsible. I need to be spiritually faithful. I need to be accountable in my responsibilities to others.

I need to be dependable. I need to be there when I'm supposed to be there. People are counting on me.

I need to do all of these things. How? In humility, in obedience, and in love. Humility, obedience, and love are the colors that prevail and shoot through every thread in this letter.

And it's no different here. Paul suggests the resurrection because it is the ultimate reflection of God's order, God's requirement that we be faithful, that we be found in Him and not be ashamed at His coming. So that unscrambles, for me at least, a lot of what follows.

Each one in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, and you'll notice that there is something, sort of a passive note in verse 23. Christ is the firstfruits, and then afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

Christ has been assigned first place in the order. Those who are Christ's have been assigned a place. But then as you go to verse 24, there's more of an active note.

Once you recognize that you're in the order, then comes the end when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father. It doesn't say when God the Father takes the kingdom away from the Son, does it? The Son, seeing His place in the order, and that His responsibility in that order has been fulfilled, actively takes the kingdom and hands it to God the Father, because God the Father is above the Lord Jesus Christ in the divinely ordained structure. So He actively delivers the kingdom.

What should we actively deliver in our place in the order? Love, obedience, humility, recognition. God's ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

He knows the end from the beginning. It may seem obscure. It may not be clear.

It may even be frustrating or discouraging, but God knows what He's doing. And as somebody in that order, I will look for what I know. I will function on what I know, because the order informs me.

The order tells me where I am, who I am, what I should be doing. Jesus knows that when the kingdom is fulfilled, and He has subordinated the enemies, it's time to turn the kingdom over to the Father. And the Father is not going to have to say, now Son, how long are you going to keep the keys to that kingdom? I really need that thing back.

And if you don't give it to me, I'm going to have to take it. The Lord Jesus knows His place, knows His function, and when it is fulfilled, He will turn it over to God the Father. He is going to come before the Father and give Him the kingdom.

This is important. Why would Paul mention it here in the context of resurrection? What's the end of the kingdom got to do with anything? It's all about structure. Seeing your place, knowing your place, functioning in that place to the very best of your ability, faith, love, obedience, humility.

He puts an end to all rule and all authority and all power. If you've got some short-term goal of trying to get control of a situation, trying to have authority over a person or people, this rule, authority, and power, this is kind of like Peter's argument about why are you investing in the earth when it's all going to melt with a fervent heat? I don't, and this is probably a bad thing to say, but I don't really care about what goes into the landfill. Oh, don't throw that battery into the trash.

I don't care about the landfill. It's going to melt with a fervent heat, and I think pretty soon. A thousand years plus the distance between us and, well, a thousand and seven years and whatever the distance is to the rapture, but God's going to melt the whole thing anyway.

It's all going to be incinerated. It will be purified. There's going to be a new heaven and a new earth.

I'm not trying to preserve the earth for untold future generations. Future generations are going to have to do just like us. They're going to have to fend for themselves.

We got handed an environment that was messed up by people before us. People after us are going to get whatever is left, and I've got my hands full trying to function now. I'm not worrying about the landfill.

I don't want to muck up our own property, have them haul it off and put it somewhere else, but I can't control the landfill. I can't change what they put in there. Me, a few plastic bottles one way or the other isn't going to matter.

That's just me. This is I, not the Lord. But we look at order and structure, and He will put an end to all rule and authority and power, just as this whole world, the elements, the universe itself is going to be dissolved, and God is going to set up a new one.

So thinking, well, gosh, this is going to be here in perpetuity. I need to do something to make sure it's... I'm going to try to purify it and sanctify it myself. There's no point.

God will purify and sanctify the universe, and He's going to do away with it and make a brand new one that just like our resurrection body is far better than the one we have. But, verse 25, He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. Now, the Lord is our example.

Paul is offering this as an example to us. What does this mean to you and me? He is eventually going to turn all of this over to the Father, but not yet. Right now, his job is not to relinquish the kingdom and say, oh, Lord, I'm taking my hands off the controls.

It's all yours anyway. You created it. You put me here.

I'm just going to give it to you. It's not time to give it to Him yet. Do you notice that the Lord Jesus has not yet given the kingdom to God the Father? Now, what kingdom is it? Well, if this is the millennial kingdom, what is Paul saying? Jesus has a responsibility to exercise His God-given place in the order until the enemies are defeated.

Our enemies have not been defeated, so what's our job? Exercise our God-given responsibilities in our place in the order until our enemies are defeated. They've been strategically defeated. Death and darkness, the powers of the air, have been strategically defeated, but they're still around.

We wrestle against them, Paul says. The devil roams like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, Peter says. Resist him steadfast in the faith.

We exercise the authority that we have. We function in the order until our enemies are put under our feet, just as the Lord does. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

There is going to be death right up until the point that Jesus is ready to turn the kingdom over. The last enemy to be destroyed. When death is destroyed, that's when the kingdom reverts to God the Father.

Mission complete. For He has put all things under His feet. You see why Paul is not digressing here.

He is moving to the center of his argument. He has put all things under his feet, but when he says all things are put under him, it is evident that He who put all things under him is accepted. The Lord Jesus understands His place in the order, and God the Father is above Him and will always be above Him, and He will turn the kingdom over to God the Father because that's His role, that's His function, and He understands it perfectly.

Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject, subject, subject, the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets. Women are subject to their husbands. Men are subject to Christ.

Order. Look for it. I've mentioned before, I think one of the tragedies of modern child raising is that parents are not encouraged to create structure.

Young children are just like plants that need the support of something immovable so that they can grow tall and straight, and they feel for what is solid. They look for structure. They look for discipline.

They look for the rules, and here are the walls, and here are the stakes, and here are the immovables, and that gives me security. I know exactly where I am. I know what I can do, and I know what I'm not supposed to do, and if everything is nebulous and changeable and unpredictable, how do you develop self-control? How do you develop stability? It's different from day to day.

Well, we're just going with the flow and rolling with the punch, and you wind up with great big pumpkin plants spread all over the ground instead of mighty oak trees tall and straight because you don't have structure. God gives us structure, and we should do the same thing spiritually. We rely on it to grow straight and tall and be fruitful.

All things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject. Notice, even in the eternal future, the Son is still subject to Him who put everything else under His feet so that God is all in all. It's definitional.

Then, verse 29, otherwise what will they do who are baptized for the dead if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead, and why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? Now, this is an interesting turn of argument. He's affirming that we are baptized for the dead. He's affirmed this great theme.

Now, he seems to be going back to the earlier part of the chapter where he says, if there's no resurrection, look at the consequences. He says, if there's no resurrection, what about these people who are being baptized for the dead, and why do I risk my life? I risk my life every day. I die daily.

I've faced wild beasts at Ephesus and so on. Why does he use this as an argument? Well, what is the nature of it, first of all? What will they do who are baptized for the dead? Whatever this is, and believe me, there's well over 40 different interpretations of what this verse means. It says baptized for the dead, and the word for is *huper*, which is like *hyper*.

It's above. So they said, well, there was a tradition where they would take people out and stand them on a grave and baptize them, and they were baptized over the dead. There's baptized in the name of the dead, like the Mormons do, and that you're going to impersonate this dead person and get them saved by being baptized.

Of course, you have to believe in salvation through baptism, which is non-sequitur, on and on and on. All of the different ways of parsing this. There are people who repunctuate the sentence and say, otherwise, what will they do who are baptized, question mark, for the dead? What will they do who are baptized? And they try to reconstruct the whole flow of thought.

It's all goober peas, as far as I'm concerned. This is my belief. It is what it says.

There are people who are being baptized upon *huper*, on account of the dead. Now, why would you be baptized for the dead? Paul is not going to bring it up if there's any suggestion or hint that this somehow secures salvation. You're getting somebody out of purgatory or whatever

else.

No. So, if I was going to be baptized for my grandmother, love my grandmother Betty, wonderful Christian woman, great example when I was growing up, very smart lady, very formidable lady. I admired her in a lot of ways.

So, she passed on. She was 94, I think, and went to glory. So now, I am going to be baptized for my grandmother.

What would that mean? Why would I be baptized for my grandmother? Here's my suggestion to you, what I think this means. Because Paul goes on to say, context, context, context, why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? There is jeopardy for Christians, Paul in particular and Christians in general, every hour. There is an active persecution going on of the church that Paul refers to right here.

We're in jeopardy every hour. I faced wild beasts in Ephesus, whatever that is and we'll get to that in a minute. But wild beast implies violent death, right? In Ephesus he faced violent death.

Die daily, jeopardy every hour. Every hour, every day there's jeopardy for believers, right? So, what is the ultimate in that jeopardy? You get killed, right? And then you're dead. Family members, close friends, observers, see these people who are faithful unto death, who do not renounce their faith, do not relinquish their faith, do not fold and fail under pressure, going to glory, being persecuted unto death and being executed and killed for their faith on account of their faith.

They look at them and they say, you know what, that is a strength and that is a perspective and that is an example and an honorable way to live and to die that I want. I want that. I'm going to follow Christ.

I am going to join this company and this assembly. I want to be one of those people and as I formally acknowledge my faith in Christ, which in the earliest days of the church was done by baptism, by water baptism, I am going to give testimony that my grandmother was influential in my life, my mother, my father, my brother, my sister. I am going to make mention of them at my baptism because they inspired me to make this commitment.

It is their living out the life of Christ. It is Christ shining in and through them. Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works.

Glorify your Father. Glorify your Savior. They were key in galvanizing me to commitment and I'm reflecting that commitment in my baptism.

I'm making mention of them. I want to honor them and their faithfulness unto death as I enter onto that same road. I think that is what baptism on account of the dead is.

I think that there were believers who were being persecuted unto death and others who were

honoring them as they came to faith and were baptized into the assembly, into the fellowship and they made mention of these that had gone before and they said, I memorialize them. I bring their example to your mind. Well, what do they do if these people aren't coming back? You are trying to honor and change your life and make a commitment and get baptized into the assembly and into the faith for somebody who basically failed because they got themselves killed for their trouble.

If the dead are not raised, this honor and dedication and change of life and commitment, baptism always reflects a change of life, right? Die to the old, rise to the new. The whole idea reflected in baptism is dying to something old and coming back to something new. That's what baptism is.

Well, if on account of the dead you have died to the old and come back to something new, if they're not raised, that's just ridiculous. Think it through. Baptism should be put you under the water and wait until you drown and then let you float downstream, right? This makes no sense.

The whole hope that is reflected in honoring those who have gone before and in churches we recognize, in our families we recognize wonderful believers that have set an example that continues to influence us on a daily basis. And the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the filling of the Holy Spirit, the ongoing work of ministry in love and obedience and faith and humility is often influenced by. Paul says, follow my example.

Follow the example of those in Romans chapter 16. He says, here are some exemplary believers in your midst. Greet them, honor them, follow their example.

This is the kind of life to live. And baptism was just a formal way of recognizing these who had lived their lives faithfully unto death. That's my view.

And it makes sense to me in the flow of the argument here. Why are they baptized for the dead if they're not coming back? That's a really silly thing. You're just dedicating yourself to somebody that failed.

John the Baptist got himself killed trying to announce the Messiah. That was dumb, unless he's coming back. The Messiah died on the cross.

Well, that was dumb, unless he's coming back. These believers who have been faithful unto death and others honor them, that's all ridiculous, unless they're coming back. That's his point.

And he says, look at us. Why would we be apostles and risk death hourly and daily if we're not coming back? What do you think gives us the courage? What do you think undergirds our commitment and our hope and our confidence? God will keep us here as long as we need to be. Absent from the body, face to face with the Lord.

I'd love to do that, but it is better for me to live as Christ and to die as gain. Remember that verse, and we've seen that it's Christos, not Christos. For me to live is good.

To die is gain. I'm not afraid of death. Death holds no terror.

God will keep me here and allow me to function as long as I need to. And it makes sense to me and we have confidence and courage and peace because we're coming back. Those that have gone before us across the veil, we're going to see them again.

It gives us peace. It gives us confidence. We're excited about that prospect.

And the Lord Jesus, the first fruits of that whole group. We'll see him and we'll see them. What a wonderful prospect.

Why then be worried? So that's his argument here. I affirm by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. I have confidence.

Boasting is confidence. Remember the guy that said it's not bragging if it's true? Not bragging if it's true. Well, I've got great confidence.

Look at you. Look at the change you made coming out from serving idols and wasting your life to serve the living God. And as sure as your conversion is a part of my confidence, I base this statement on it.

I die daily. And if in the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus. When Paul gives the list in other places of his persecutions and whippings and shipwrecks and all that, he doesn't mention being in an arena facing lions in Ephesus.

And he says if in the manner of men, if talking about men, if in the context of men, the wild beasts are these foaming at the mouth opponents who tried to get him killed in Ephesus. This is Acts chapter 19. We don't have time to turn there, but if you want to know what he's talking about with the wild animals in Ephesus, read Acts chapter 19.

That's what he's talking about. It's not literal lions. This is people who are no better than beasts in their vituperative, hateful, dedicated unto death attitude.

Remember there were guys that took a vow and said we're not going to eat until we kill Paul? Wild beasts. That of course was in Jerusalem, but it's the same idea. What advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, you might as well be a hedonist.

Get as much fun as you can and then return to the dust. And this by the way is a quote from Isaiah 22.13. And this was a flippant attitude that Old Testament saints had under threat. And Isaiah records their lack of seriousness about their identity as belonging to God.

Well, live it up. If we die, we die. Who cares? And they weren't looking ahead.

This is short-sighted. It's one thing to guide on what is near at hand so that you can stay on your course. It's something else to have no regard for what is ahead and not remember that you are coming back and there is an inheritance on the line.

There is a coming kingdom. There is a place in the future order that is being determined by what we decide here. Well, we might as well just eat and drink if tomorrow we die.

Do not be deceived. Evil company corrupts good ethos. You remember in the King James it says good morals.

Here it says good habits. Ethos is your approach, your perspective, why you do what you do, how you do what you do. It's your lifestyle.

Bad company, if you associate, and this can be association in social media, this can be association in entertainment, this can be association in what you read or what you take in. We have so many media-based associations now that we've got to look at those as well. Evil in our daily intake, our daily exposure to others, whether it is at first hand or at second hand through whatever eye gate and ear gate is currently functional, evil company corrupts your ethos.

You can't help but be stained, to be sullied, to be dirtied, to be corrupted. And what is Paul saying here? These who do not respect God's order, who don't respect not only the order of authority and the order of function, but also the order of events. That there is a now and there is a future.

And there's verticality in the sense of who am I subject to and who is subject to me and can I be faithful and fair and loving and humble as I both exercise authority and function under authority, recognize my place in God's structure, but there is also a chronological order. Each in his own order works multi-dimensionally. And those who do not respect God's order, who don't care about the future and live too much in the present, those who don't care about God's authority structure, God's family structure, God's societal structure, who abuse it and try to rub it out and there's no such thing as heterosexual marriage and there's no such thing as family authority and let the kids run the house and all the rest of it, if you associate with that, if you constantly contact it, it will corrupt your ethos, corrupts your function.

It's inevitable. Contact with rotten fruit is going to make good fruit rot. That's the idea.

Awake to righteousness. Awake. Keep your fingers here and flip a few pages forward to Ephesians chapter 5. Paul is also making a structural argument in Ephesians chapter 5. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us, offering his sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Functioning in love. Fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, let it not even be named among you as is fitting for sanctified ones. Filthiness, foolish talking, coarse jesting, not fitting.

They don't comport. They're not a part of your assigned place in God's order. That's Ephesians 5.4. Rather giving of thanks, be thankful for where you are and what you are.

Know this, no fornicator, unclean person or covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. You see the flow of Paul's thought here? You've

got to see where you are in the structure and function there in love and in humility because the future is coming and if you're short-sighted, let's eat and drink for tomorrow we die, you're going to be corrupting your ethos with that evil. And no unclean person, no fornicator, no covetous idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

He's looking ahead. The kingdom of Christ is going to be turned over to God. Let no one deceive you with empty words for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Therefore, do not be partakers with them. Evil company corrupts your ethos. Separate from that which drags you down and holds you back and reflects a short-sighted non-orderly view.

You were once darkness but now you are light and the Lord. Walk as children of light. See where you're going.

The fruit of the Spirit is in goodness, righteousness and truth. Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. Look to those solid truths that clearly define what is acceptable to the Lord.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather expose them. If you shine as a light, it is going to suffer by contrast. It is shameful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret but all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light.

Whatever makes manifest is light. If you focus on doing what you're supposed to do in the clear areas of responsibility and opportunity that you have, light shines from that and it's going to illuminate those areas that seem to be dark. We'll know what to do if we focus on doing what we know.

Right? Areas that are obscure, the future, the unknown, what next? Do what you know. Light shines from that and it's going to illuminate the path. Whatever makes manifest is light.

Awake you who sleep. What did he just say here in verse 34 of 1 Corinthians 15? Awake to righteousness and stop sinning. Stop sinning.

This is a present tense with a negative. That always means stop doing what you're doing. You are sinning, stop it.

In Ephesians 5.14, awake you who sleep. Arise from the dead and Christ will give you light. Arise from the dead and Christ will give you light.

You see the connection here? If you think about the resurrection, if you think about being awake to righteousness, refrain from sin, separate from sin, separate from that that corrupts your ethos. Light is going to imbue your life and your circumstance and that light is going to shine and make your path clear. One of the overlooked principles of divine guidance is, if you're not sure which direction God is leading, concentrate on doing what you know you are supposed to do, hour by hour, day by day, Christ will give you light.

Incorporate light in the near term and that light is going to shine forth and God will reveal. Christ will give us light. Awake you who sleep.

We're not all asleep but some of us are. Awake if you're asleep. You can be alive to sin and dead to righteousness.

He says, wake up. Be dead to sin and alive to righteousness. Separate from sin.

Put it in the same place you'd put something that's dead, something that's gone off. Separate. Arise from the dead.

Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly not as fools but as wise. Not as fools.

Look at verse 35 in our passage. I had you keep your finger there so you can flip back and forth. 1 Corinthians 15, 35.

Someone will say how are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? Fools, foolish ones. Verse 36. If you're occupied with some of these questions and it's keeping you from doing what Paul has just given an exhortation to do, you're foolish.

Same thing in Ephesians. Don't walk as a fool but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise.

This is Ephesians 5, 17. But understand what the will of the Lord is. Isn't this what we want? I want to understand the will of the Lord.

Well, he says, be awake to righteousness. Separate from sin. Don't let it corrupt your ethos.

Redeem the time. The days are evil. Left to itself, the day is going to go evil.

It's like the second law of thermodynamics. Therefore do not be unwise. Do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit.

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns. The importance of fellowship. The importance of our being together.

Assembling ourselves together. Speaking to one another. How do you not be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit? It's linked to fellowship.

It is linked to association. Separate from those who corrupt your ethos. Evil company corrupts it.

So if you're not having evil company, what kind of company do you have? Those who share life in Christ. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. What's verse 21? Ephesians 5.21. Look at it. Submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Submitting. Submission. Find your place in the order.

Focus on that. That's your solid ground. That's your clear guidance.

That's your white stripe. When you can't see anything else, guide on the order. Remember the chronological order.

Christ is coming. He's the first fruits. Those who are Christ will be raised at His coming.

We're going to the kingdom. That kingdom is going to the Father. Keep it in mind.

Clean up your associations so that light can shine in your life. Purge out the leaven. Depart from the darkness.

God has transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. The Lamb is the light in that kingdom. Walk as children of light.

Walk as children of light. So I think at least you can see the suggestion here in 1 Corinthians 15 of why this resurrection discussion is here. Why he moves right in the middle of it back to God's order and the importance of submission.

Paul does it in other places such as Ephesians chapter 5. This is treasure. This is gold for us to live our lives as unto the Lord. Let's close in prayer.

Father we thank You for the truth of Your Word. We thank You for this passage. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will bless it to our hearts we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.