

1Corinthians 18-12-16a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It's nice to see everyone's countenances beaming with the joy of the holiday season, or the baggy eyed stress thereof, depending on how it's been going. We're going to continue our study this morning in the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 15, wonderful resurrection chapter.

We seem to be 90 degrees out from the season, this would be a great time to be at Resurrection Sunday instead of the Christmas season, one would think, although I think it's perfect because the hope in which the Lord Jesus came is the hope of the resurrection ultimately, and his birth is a harbinger of new birth for us. So, I think it's very apropos, and I'm looking forward to it. This is the 16th of December, 2018, and we're in 1 Corinthians 15, picking up at verse 30.

Let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and dedicate our fellowship to his glory, and then we'll begin. Father, we are grateful for the gift of your only begotten son. The task that lay before him as he left his throne in glory to come to this earth and take on the form of a servant and come in our likeness had to be daunting even for the Son of God, and yet motivated by his love and your love for us, he came and fulfilled all of your purpose, was faithful and obedient to death and beyond, and for that reason you have highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name, and we're so grateful to be called by that name and to represent the Lord Jesus on this earth as he awaits the time of his return at your right hand.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your word this morning, that your Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart. We hope to be motivated and challenged and instructed to be fruitful in the time that you've allotted to us in this life, to make the most of the opportunities that we have, to let the light of Christ shine in us and through us so that all of your perfect will will be accomplished in our lives and in the lives of those around us. We pray that you'll bless our study and our fellowship this morning, and we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. So we've talked about the content of this chapter, the most fulsome description of resurrection, and we saw last time that the interesting conundrum of being baptized for the dead does make sense, especially in the context, both near and stepping back and looking at the purpose of the entire letter. And the juxtaposition of the two ideas is striking.

In 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? And the peril or jeopardy that Paul stands in is, of course, not financial jeopardy or social jeopardy or anything short of being killed for his apostolic witness and ministry. And so you have death in both of these verses. There are those who have died.

Paul, who stands in peril of death every hour. And the common link here is there are those who have paid that price for their faith and have died, and others in the community have cited them

and been motivated by their example, their faithfulness unto death, just as we are motivated ultimately by the example of the Lord Jesus, who was faithful unto death. And as they commit themselves to leaving their old way of life and their old pattern of life with the ritual of baptism reflecting the renewal, death to the old life and birth in the new, water baptism being specifically spoken of here, there are people who memorialize those who have gone before, members of their community, members of their church family, young people looking at older people who have suffered the ultimate earthly penalty for their faith, which is death.

And so they memorialize those people. It is an action eulogy, if you will. And they say, I want to follow that example.

We can all think of people that have been influential in our lives who are no longer with us and have gone to glory. And even as we dedicate ourselves to the service of the Lord and to following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, we think also of these who have been faithful and have set such a wonderful example. And there is a sense in which we baptize ourselves, we dedicate ourselves and hope that we can be as worthy servants and as worthy examples as they have been.

So these are of a piece. And Paul's speaking of his own peril, you would imagine that when Paul finally did suffer execution in circa 63 AD in Rome, that there were many believers and many who came to faith and said, Paul is a witness, his life and his willingness, his hope of the resurrection that motivated him to serve the Lord despite the threat of death and even suffering that ultimate penalty is a worthy example to follow. And I want to remember him and mention him and speak of him as I enter into my life of faith and service and obedience to the Lord.

So we, at least to my own satisfaction, resolve that issue last time. But now he says, why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? In verse 30, I affirm by my boasting in you, my pride in you, my satisfaction in the progress that you all have made as a group, I affirm by that I die daily. I die daily.

He says, I'm in peril every hour. I'm in jeopardy every hour and I die daily. If in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, then let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.

Just be materialistic hedonists, make the most, you know, try to have as much pleasure with a minimum of pain and then check out. So he says, there is a reason why we're in peril every hour. There's a reason why we die daily.

There's a reason why he was willing to, in the human realm, face wild beasts in Ephesus and elsewhere. And he says, this is all pointless if there is no resurrection. And it's an interesting thought to pursue, especially in this day of altruism as the influence and presence of Christianity throughout the world and especially in our culture, certainly in European culture, as it wanes and fades away, people realize that they really don't want to just descend into the law

of the jungle.

And so they're looking for a substitute morality. How can we define good and yet not do it in God's terms? And so there is altruism and in many ways it echoes and is a pale imitation of Christian virtue. But what's lacking? If rich guys like Bill Gates or Elon Musk or your other well-off individuals in politics, out of politics, in business, inherited fortunes, if they are generous and beneficial, you've got a lot of athletes and it's good for their image to set up a foundation, then I don't mean to disparage.

I think there are those who genuinely want to benefit communities maybe that they came out of and help kids. And I'm not being negative about this. I'm just saying if there is not a spiritual component to that, as wonderful as it seems, well, this generosity, this money that is being spent to try to raise children out of poverty and give them direction and education and purpose in life, it all seems wonderful.

And people say, well, that is good. That is righteousness. Paul here says you can be as altruistic, you can be as sacrificial.

Remember back in the love chapter when he said, I could give my body to be burned. But if there is not an eternal component, if it doesn't touch the things of God, if it doesn't reflect the glory of God, it is a part of the corrupt and fallen that is going to be done away. And Peter is very explicit about how fervently the elements are going to melt with heat and how all of this around us is going to disappear.

And if it does not reflect eternity, if it doesn't reflect eternal life, God is light and God is life. And apart from him, there is no life and there is no light. And as wonderful as the human eye may find these acts of generosity, acts of charity, even acts of sacrifice, if they are not intrinsically defined by God and the glory of God, they don't have value.

You say, well, but humans think it has value. I look at it and I say, here was a poor child and now he's got provision. Here's someone that needed an operation and now they've gotten it.

Here's someone that somebody generously flew all the way from Africa to the United States and a team of surgeons donated their time in the hospital and all the rest of it. And now they've been repaired and this horrible disfigurement or this terrible medical problem has been ameliorated or resolved. And people did this generously.

But the Lord Jesus is never mentioned. God is not a part of it. There's no eternal life component in it.

And you say, well, but the child's life was improved. To what point? To what purpose? To what end? Is that enough when it is all going to perish? Paul's point here is that resurrection is an intrinsic part of righteousness because everything that we think is good, if it ultimately perishes. I've told you this before, I think, but it often returns to my mind.

I've got all of these family photographs that go back 100 years and more to the early days of photography even. But there's one from the turn of the last century and there is a family. It's a dim picture.

It's just like looking through a fog into the past and there's a frozen moment in time there. And they're in front of their house. It's a relatively humble rural house.

But the family is all standing there and there are children in the front, one of whom as a grandmother, who this year would be a hundred and four. But so this tells you that it's circa 1905, 1906, she's there probably just barely even able to walk and all the rest of the people are there. But there is a dog in the picture, a little dog sitting there and they got the dog to stand still for the long exposure time.

And I've thought a lot about that dog because what kind of dog was it? What was it? What personality did it have? What role did it play in the family? My grandmother may or may not have even remembered that dog because she was so small. If it lived long enough into her childhood, maybe she'd remember it the way we all remember dogs that were around when we were kids. But I think about that dog.

Did he bite people? Was he a good dog? Was he a good watchdog, you know, tail wagger, kind of a surly dog? I imagine he was probably a happy little happy little guy. Were they kind to it? Was he an indoor dog, outdoor dog? What did they feed it? This dog had a whole life of several years with the family. And I look at that picture and I look at that dog and I think, you know, there was a whole set of experiences and the kids knew the dog's name.

The parents allowed them to have the dog and so on, sitting there right, right between two of the kids. But there is no body with any living memory of that dog outside of that photograph and outside of me talking about it to you, you would never know that that dog existed. Its name is unknown.

Outside of me, there's nobody who knows who the rest of the people in that photograph are. It's not labeled. I made a label for it.

But if it wasn't for me, no living person would know who those people are. They're old hells. And that age has passed.

The experiences have passed. The good treatment, the kind treatment, what they did for that little dog, what the dog did for them is gone. There is no record anywhere.

Does it matter today how they treated the dog? What material difference does it make if they were kind to it or mean to it, if they fed it well or if they let it roam? What did they do for each other? You think about the detail that you know about your own life and about the lives of those around you and the things that you hope will go well and the pulling that we do for each other and the help that we try to render to each other. But someday we're going to be the people in that picture. If the Lord tarries and 100 years goes by, some great grandchild is going

to look back at remnants of Facebook or whatever it is and wonder, well, what kind of people were they? What kind of life did they leave? I have a great granddad who was a preacher.

But none of his sermons have survived. So what did he preach? How did he preach? What did he think? It's perished. It's gone.

Death takes everything away in this life, in this experience. And once living memory goes by, a hundred years passes, it's all gone. I told you I took the little pump organ, the little Melodion apart.

And inside, when I took the bellows off, the original bellows material, it was signed on the inside by the person who built it. And it said A. Schwarz, 1863. What does A stand for? Who was A. Schwarz? What kind of life did he have? Was he a Jewish man? Was he a Christian? He was in Philadelphia because that's where the Melodion was made.

It was a little plaque on the front. But he signed it in pencil and put his name and the date in there, the year. And who was he? Nobody knows.

How he lived, how he died, his joys, his sorrows, his marriage, his kids, anything like that is completely and utterly perished. Did he do good? Was he philanthropic? Was he charitable? Nobody knows. What difference does it make now? Might have made a difference in the moment, but in the sweep of time, what's the difference? The gift that Jesus Christ has given you and me is that the fruit of our lives, when it reflects his glory, when it is done in his name and for his sake, lasts.

It persists. It is eternal. It partakes of eternity.

It is gold, silver, and precious stones that survives the fire. This is going to be Paul's point. What's the point of life if everything perishes and you're just another butterfly that lived and died? Think about that as I drive around Northeast Oklahoma and bugs hit my windshield and I think, you know, here's this bug.

It's descended from innumerable bugs going all the way back to creation and a quirk of timing, it was flying across the highway just as I was flying down the highway and I killed it with my truck and its remnants are splattered on my windshield. And what an appointment with destiny the bug had, you know, the happenstance. If I had taken one more sip of coffee, if I had had a delay at a stoplight or one more car had stopped me from turning a corner, I would have never slain that bug.

But he met my windshield and died at that point. But does anybody care? How many bugs have you slain? How many how many things have died? And you don't give it a second thought. Human life is no more significant at the point that it is all forgotten than that, unless it partakes of and hooks into eternity.

This is the gift that Jesus Christ came to give us. You want to think about the nativity and the Christmas season. It's I heard a song that just sets my teeth on edge and it wasn't the little drummer, although I did hear that one, too.

But there's another one called it's supposed I think it's written after the manner of but was not actually an old spiritual and it's called Sweet Little Jesus Boy. We didn't know who you was. I find that offensive because it treats the Lord Jesus like a baby instead of who he is.

And he was willing to come in and be born and the incarnation and the rest of it. But but to just be sort of sentimental because he's a little baby misses the point. Be sentimental over any baby you want.

But but the Lord Jesus came on a mission and he knew what he was doing. And he's not something to be treated like it needs cuddling. I just it's just me.

If you like that song, God go with you. But I don't. But what is the significance of life? What is the significance of what you do? Is it just, well, somebody was pleased.

Somebody was made happy. Somebody circumstance changed for the better. OK, I've I've brightened the corner where I am.

And and that's enough. It ultimately makes no difference. You could have been a hedonistic, self-centered rascal.

And in 100 years, nobody's going to know the difference. It doesn't matter if you improve a circumstance. Well, but I gave a little joy.

So what? That's a that's a human standard of righteousness. And if you think it through, it's perishable. It's temporary.

It's just a bug that didn't get hit by the windshield instead of one that did. But the bug still going to die and perish and be gone and forgotten. And nobody's going to know and nobody's going to care.

So what Paul talks about here in First Corinthians 15, when he says that resurrection is important, that it's all important, he says, why do I stand in jeopardy every hour? Why am I risking my life daily? I am putting my life on the line. When he says I die daily, he says, I'm I'm ready to die. I could possibly die every day, every day.

There are remember the Sicarii that dedicated themselves to killing him. We won't eat until Paul dies. Well, these people are doing this all the time.

So why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? If in the manner of men, we fought wild beasts, what advantage is it to me if the dead do not rise? Let's just gratify ourselves. Do you see the contrast? Why do I pour myself out on behalf of others? If it all ends at death, I should gratify myself. The only thing that makes sense is self-centered, self-gratifying.

So, Paul is saying, short-term life, eat and drink because tomorrow we die, do not be deceived. Paul returns to this theme over and over again. For example, flip a few pages in your Bible toward 2nd Corinthians chapter 4. 2nd Corinthians 4, beginning at verse 7. He's been talking about, in verse 5, we do not preach ourselves, but Christ, Christ Jesus, the Lord, and ourselves, your servants for Jesus' sake.

You might make a mark next to that. Ourselves, we preach as servants, bondservants for Jesus' sake. This is the sacrificial side.

We serve you. Paul says there's no point in service if there's no resurrection. It only makes sense if it partakes of eternity.

It is the God who commanded light to shine out of the darkness, who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. You can mark that, the light of the glory of God in Christ. So, you have two concepts here.

We're preaching Christ, and we serve you for his sake. This wouldn't make any sense if he's a dead Christ. If he's a dead figure of history that just had some aphorisms and a few happy principles to live by, the golden rule.

Verse 7, we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. This treasure, what is the treasure? It's the light of the glory of God. It is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That is treasure. It is conveyed in earthen vessels. You've got the treasure in a clay jar.

So that the excellence of the power is of God and not of us. We are servants. We are conveyances.

What is valuable to you is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ. Look at verse 8, we are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed. We are perplexed, but not in despair.

Persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed. Always carrying about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus.

So that the life of Jesus also may be manifest in our body. We carry about his death in our body, so that his life will be manifested. Isn't this what baptism pictures? There is a death, identification with the death of Christ, death to sin, death to the old, death to the temporary, death to the mundane and the temporal, and life.

We treat our lives as cheap, so that eternal life can shine. So death is at work in us, verse 12. We're always delivered to death, verse 11, for Jesus' sake.

And the life of Jesus is manifest in our mortal flesh. So you see two things when you look at the Apostle Paul. He is dying daily.

He is in jeopardy of his life every hour. In the service of life, in the service of bringing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ to people. So there is a dual idea.

There's two sides to the coin. There's death on one side and life in the other. This is the Lord Jesus.

We celebrate in the Christmas season, the coming to earth and the life and the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. But he came to die. And throughout his life, he knew that he was headed for the cross.

He knew it from the Old Testament scriptures. He knew it from the witness of the Holy Spirit in his heart. He knew it.

And he told his disciples, the Son of Man is going to be turned over to the hands of men. And he's going to suffer and die and be raised the third day. There is death and there is life.

There is death to that which is temporary and ephemeral and transient. There is life that is eternal and reflects the glory of God. And they're both evident in Paul's life.

That's why he says in our passage, I die daily. Why would I be in jeopardy every hour except that there is a resurrection? It has an eternal point. So that's 2 Corinthians 4, 7 through 12.

Death is working in us, but life in you. Sacrificially, risking death, Paul is building into eternal life for the Corinthians and by extension for everybody who has the benefit of his apostolic witness and ministry. Turn over a page to 2 Corinthians 6. We're going to look at 6, 3 through 10.

He leads into it saying, Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. We give no offense in anything that our ministry may not be blamed.

But in all things, we commend ourselves as ministers of God. In all things, we commend ourselves as servants, as those who minister on behalf of God. In much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings.

Now those are the deprivations. Those are the afflictions. And with what spirit and what fruit does he meet them in verse 6? By purity, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere or unfeigned love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor weapons, is a better term here, by the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left.

He's got righteousness. Remember the soliloquy in Hamlet? You know, slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. What should I do? Should I take arms against a sea of opponents or just let them overwhelm me and end it all? Should I live or should I die? Well, Paul says, I meet that opposition of stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labor, sleeplessness, fasting, tribulation, need, and distress.

I meet it with the fruit of the Spirit. Purity, knowledge, long-suffering, kindness, love, the word of truth, the power of God, the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and the left, in honor and dishonor, evil report and good report. They are called deceivers, but they are true.

They are unknown and yet well-known, dying and behold we live, chastened and yet not killed, sorrowful yet always rejoicing, poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things. It's the truth of the hope of the resurrection that makes that perspective live and breathe, isn't it? It would be pointless if it was just a momentary service, if it was just a temporary help. You know the old saw about you can hand a guy a fish or you can teach him to fish.

Why is teaching him to fish considered better in the secular realm? Well, because he can provide for himself and he can have many fish. If you teach him to fish, he can have a fish every day. If you hand him one fish, it's kind of like handing somebody a sawbuck out the window with a cardboard sign on the curb.

You might have helped him momentarily, but he's going to be hungry again. Jesus talked about that when he fed the crowds and he said, don't labor for the food that perishes. You eat this bread, you'll be hungry again.

I've got bread to give you and you'll never hunger. I've got water to give you and you'll never thirst. It is eternal.

Eternality is resurrection. It's eternal life and it ought to make a difference in how we view our sojourn in this life. How do we look at it? Paul had it worse than any of us.

Look at, turn a few pages further in 2 Corinthians to chapter 11. 11, beginning at verse 23. There are other messengers who are coming to the Corinthians.

We've seen that in this first letter and he mentions it again in the second. Are these messengers Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they of the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I'm speaking here, he says, I'm talking like a madman. I'm talking like somebody who doesn't have good sense.

I would normally not talk this way, but I am more so. Are they servants of Christ? Are they ministers of Christ? I am more so. In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often.

People around Paul have been killed. He's been under the threat of death. He says, I have been in labors more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently and in deaths often.

From the Jews, five times I received the 40 stripes minus one. Now you think about this being lashed to a post with your bare back and you've got that whip, 39 lashes. That happened to him five different times.

I was thinking about this early this morning. You know, about the fourth or fifth time when you know what's coming and that back has already been lacerated several times before. And here it comes again.

Sometime this afternoon, just sit and count to 39. And imagine a well-aimed, vigorously employed whip hitting your back every time you say a number, two, three, four. And you keep going all the way to 39.

And you think about that experience five times. What motivates a guy to not cave, to not say whatever he has to say, to not give it up and say, you know, this is just not worth it. Everybody accuses Paul of inventing Christianity for his own benefit.

What are they thinking? How was this a benefit to him? Look at this from the Jews. Notice his own people. I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

I was raised at the feet of Gamaliel as a Pharisee. Circumcised on the eighth day. I'm as Hebrew as it gets.

And his own people, just as the Lord Jesus' own people put him on the cross. Paul's own people, five different times. How do you consider yourself righteous? Here's a guy who you think, well, he's theologically off.

Let's whip him within an inch of his life. And then let's do it again. And then let's do it again.

And let's do it again. And let's do it again. Because he just won't learn.

He won't come around to our way of thinking. Five times, 40 stripes minus one. You could stop right there and the point is made.

But look at the rest of this. Three times I was beaten with rods. Now, this is a caning.

And the racially bigoted practices 150 years ago, and even before the Civil War, abuses that were perpetrated on slaves and black men that were captured and accused of various things. And then they were caned. If you've ever seen photographs of that, that is horrific.

You think, oh, somebody tapped him with a stick. No, this is laceration with a flexible knotted stick. It's worse than bamboo because these are little knots that stick out.

And when you're caned with these things, it just shreds the flesh. He suffered that three times. Three times.

All of this probably on the back, but these whips and these rods are also flexible and they whip around and get your underbelly as well. And it is just, I can't imagine what the human body of the Apostle Paul looked like. I suspect that the Lord Jesus and Paul could compare scars with what the Lord endured on the night of his arrest and trial and what Paul endured.

But Paul's was spread over years. And he was getting on in years. He wasn't a young man.

Three times beaten with rods, once stoned, and they thought he was dead. Remember this in Lystra? It's in Acts. He was stoned and left for dead.

Now, how many rocks do you have to be hit with? How bloody and disfigured do you have to be before they figure, well, he's dead? People knew the difference between unconsciousness and death. And a happy rock knocking a guy unconscious, they thought he was dead because he was just a pulp. He was a bloody pulp laying on the ground.

There were pools of blood. There were gashes. There was no movement, no visible respiration.

And people in the ancient day knew about death. They killed their own food. They witnessed executions on a regular basis.

They knew what death looked like. And in Lystra, when he was left for dead, you can't imagine what he had to have looked like. He was stoned.

Three times I was shipwrecked. A night and a day I was in the deep. He was clinging to wreckage in the Mediterranean Sea for a day and a half.

In journeys, often in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen and in perils of the Gentiles. Where are his friends? The Jews hate him. The Gentiles hate him.

When he's on these journeys, his party, there's no details given to us. But when he talks about robbers and so on, this happened. It's not, we thought we might be attacked.

I think when you read Nehemiah and he's worried as he goes back to Jerusalem, he says, well, I wanted to get a bunch of soldiers in case we were attacked, but I was ashamed to ask for them because, you know, it would reflect badly on me being afraid and that I didn't think God would preserve me. But the actuality of this, his parties were attacked. People were killed.

They were robbed. They were, who knows what happened, tied up, beaten up, you know, the Samaritan taking care of the guy in the ditch type of robbery. Peril of water, peril of robbers, perils of my own countrymen, perils of the Gentiles.

And by the perils of waters, this is really rivers, not just in the sea, but also they had to forgo rivers. And, you know, people would regularly be washed downstream, spring rains and things that animals lose their footing. The ferry comes loose from its moorings and goes crashing down and people drowned.

It was perilous to journey on foot in those days. Perils in the city, perils in the wilderness. Not only can he not rely on any group to be loyal to him, the Jews hate him and the Gentiles hate him.

But if he's in the city, there's people that hate him. If he's in the country, there's people that

hate him. Perils in the sea, perils among false brethren, people who cozy up and then betray him for money.

You know, they smile in your face and then they stab you in the back. False brethren in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often. Have you ever been sleepless? Wished you could sleep, needed to sleep, got a big day tomorrow, but, you know, your hamster won't get running in his little wheel and you can't get to sleep.

He says in sleeplessness often. This ought to be a little bit of an encouragement that you don't necessarily have a spiritual problem if you're sleepless. The Apostle Paul suffered from sleeplessness because they were worried about attacks at night, betrayal at night.

The Lord Jesus was betrayed and arrested at night and he had to be on his guard. He had to take precautions and he had worries and he had cares and he probably had physical pain. I can't even imagine how his body felt.

I've got Tylenol and Ibuprofen available. Paul, you know, they had very few anesthetic agents in those days. Sleeplessness in hunger and thirst.

This is the Apostle Paul of New Testament fame, one of the most brilliant intellects, one of the greatest spiritual giants in history. And he's starving and he's thirsty and nobody's looking out for him. He's on his own.

And you think, why does he do this? He saw the resurrected Christ. He saw his own coming resurrection and he knew it was worth it. We are bond servants for your sake.

We carry about death in our bodies for your sake because there is a coming life that vindicates it, that justifies it, that makes it worthwhile. When you look at this list and you think, well, you know, I don't really think any time in the rest of my life I'm going to be facing the 40 stripes minus one. I'm not expecting to be caned within an inch of my life.

I don't expect to be shipwrecked and float in the sea for a day and a half. Cold, you know, waves tossing. Why would he be in the water except that there was a storm? This is probably a storm.

You've seen some of these, you know, video of storm waves and you're clinging to a piece of flotsam. Don't cling to the jetsam, that's what sinks. Cling to the flotsam.

Just remember, flot means float. It floats some. Jetsam is when you jettison it and it sinks.

Flotsam floats, jetsam sinks. Cling to the flotsam. But for a day and a half, and he is in mortal peril all the time.

Why? Because of who he represents and what he stands for. The life that he is trying to deliver as a servant, as an earthen vessel. And he never flags, he never wavers, he never fades.

He dedicates himself to it and he does it. There is nothing that can motivate you but the life of

God. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit is what does it and he talks about that.

He says, besides the other things that comes upon me daily, my deep concern for all the churches. He does this because he's concerned about the groups of believers to whom he can bring spiritual food, spiritual light, eternal life. The presence and the power and the glory of Christ is his to bring and to convey.

And it's worth it. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble and I do not burn with indignation? I am not indignant. Who is caused to fall? Somebody is, what is he talking about in 1 Corinthians? He says these people that are trying to deny the resurrection are trying to push you off the path.

They're trying to make you stumble and fall. These people who are harping about meat offered to idols and trying to invite you up the hill to the feasts in the Temple of Aphrodite and such. They're trying to divert you and he says, I worry about that.

I want to be there and fortify you and I want to write these letters and encourage you in the faith. Paul is 110% dedicated all the time. Why? It only makes sense in the light of the resurrection.

That's why it's the most important doctrine in the gospel. The gospel is meaningless without it. If there's no resurrection, why do I die daily? Why did I fight the wild beast? Why do I put up with all of these perils and all of this awful persecution and affliction and suffering, hunger and thirst? And he says, if I'm going to boast, verse 30, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.

The God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows I am not lying. He talks about in Damascus when he had to be let down out the window in a basket to escape. Then he goes on to talk about the concomitant glory that has been revealed to him in the next chapter.

Turn for one more quick passage here to Philippians chapter one. You remember Philippians chapter two, the Lord Jesus did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped. It talks about him emptying himself and coming in the form of a servant and in the likeness of men and suffering, even the shameful and humiliating death of the cross.

But Paul leads into that in chapter one, look at Philippians 1:19 and following. I know that this, what he's been talking about above, uh, that he's, uh, been preaching even in chains, uh, and fulfilling his appointment for the defense of the gospel. He says, I know this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the provision of the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Notice Paul says, I know that all of this is going to work out for deliverance because of your prayers, your prayers of intercession, your prayers on behalf of others make a difference. Paul says, I know this is going to work out for good because of your prayers. He does.

He's not a Calvinist. He doesn't say, well, you know, if God's ordained, it is going to happen. And if he hasn't, it won't.

He says it will work out because of your prayers. There is a causative effect to prayer on behalf of others and what the spirit of Jesus Christ supplies. According to my earnest expectation and hope, he's got a vigorous living expectation and hope in verse 20 that in nothing I will be ashamed.

But with boldness, as always, now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is good. I hate to line out the name of Christ, but in this context, this is Christos, not Christos.

Notice what he said at the end of verse 20, whether by life or by death, living is good. Dying is a game. And he's going to continue that theme all the way through.

This is a part of a thread that begins in verse 20. Christ will be magnified in my body. If my body lives, Christ is going to be magnified.

If my body dies, Christ is still going to be magnified. He's going to be lifted up. He's going to be brought to the attention of others.

For me, to live is good and to die is game. If I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor. That's good.

For me to live is good. There will be fruit from my labor. Yet what I shall choose, I cannot tell.

Now, he's not saying that whether to live or die is within the power of his choice. He's saying, which one I would prefer. You got a buffet.

What do you prefer? What I would hope for, what I would ask the Lord for, what I would choose, Lord, if it be thy will. What would Jesus choose in the garden? If it be your will, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, I choose your will.

I don't choose my own. Paul says, I don't know what I would choose, because on the one hand, staying here is good. It's fruit from my labor.

But I don't know what I would choose, for I'm hard-pressed between the two, living and dying, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, the living Christ, and I will be alive. He says, living is good, dying is better. Why? Because dying is departing to be with Christ, which is far better.

Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. This is the servant side. This is the sacrificial to self and beneficial to others.

If I was going to please myself, Paul says, I'd depart and be with Christ. That's far better. But it is needful for me to labor and bear fruit for you.

To remain in the flesh is needful for you. And 25, being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue. I sort of fantasize about how great it would be to go and be with the Lord, but I know I need to stay here.

I have a service. I've still got opportunities that God has given me to bear fruit. I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and your joy of the faith so that your rejoicing for me will be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

I'm going to stay here. You're going to see me. I will be able to impart a gift to you, he says in another place, the light of the glory of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, right? That's his opportunity.

That's his mission. And as long as we are alive, we have opportunities and missions that are sacrificial to self and beneficial to others. If we are here, it is more needful for us to be here and labor to bear fruit.

That's why we're here. And it only makes sense if we are ultimately going there. Otherwise, what's the point? You might as well just be an altruist.

And he says in verse 27, only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ. By implication, he says, that's what mine is. That's how I view my life.

I want my conduct to be worthy of the gospel of Christ. So that whether I come and see you or I'm absent, I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. And the cornerstone, the bedrock of the gospel is life, new life, resurrection life.

The Lord Jesus is the first fruits. Then we who are Christ's at his coming will enter into it. To you, it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him.

It's been granted to you not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake. Now, a Calvinist would say, see, it's been granted to you. It's been ordained that you will believe.

Well, has it been ordained to suffer? People choose whether or not to opt out. I'm not going to go through this suffering. I'll recant.

Yeah, Caesar is God. Caesar is Lord. Forget that Jesus stuff.

I don't want any part of that. We choose whether or not we are willing to endure suffering for his sake. We choose whether or not we are going to believe in him.

You've been granted the opportunity to believe. You've been granted the opportunity to suffer for his sake. Having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear in me.

You have the same opportunity to persist, to endure, to be sacrificial to self and beneficial to others because of the resurrection, because of the opportunity to go and be with the Lord. And

how much sweeter is it going to be when you have something in common with the Lord? You have suffered as he suffered. How interesting will it be for those who have endured great physical suffering for the sake of the gospel to visit with the apostle Paul and have that in common? Closeness is often based on what we have in common with people.

Do you want to have something in common with the Lord Jesus? Do you want to have being willing to endure for his sake because he was willing to endure for our sake, to carry death about in our bodies and endure it and bear with it? Because that's what he did? That's what the apostle Paul did as an extension? Well, this is something we slow down and take a look at because it's the heart of this letter. This is what makes everything else in the letter make sense. Paul's not just concerned that they have an orderly worship service.

He's not just concerned that they don't run up to the temple and partake of ungodly rituals. He wants believers to whom he is speaking to see what he has seen, the resurrected Christ, where we are going, what it is going to mean to be there, and the opportunities we have in this life to sow the seeds that will bear fruit that grows into inheritance and into opportunity and to service in that life to come. Let's pause here and take a break.

When we come back, we have a few more parallel passages to look at that flesh out what Paul says here in summary to the Corinthians about resurrection.