

1Corinthians 18-12-16b

Let's pick up our study now in 1 Corinthians, we are looking at the importance of the resurrection as Paul presents it. We've looked at 2 Corinthians 4, verses 7-12, where Paul ties this truth to the transcendent power of God that is revealed. The life of the Lord Jesus is manifest in our bodies, he says.

And he says it twice. He says it's manifest in our bodies, it's manifest in our mortal flesh. Mortal flesh, flesh that dies.

And yet the life of Christ is manifest. It's manifest in actuality, it is also manifest in prospect. It is both and.

I was reading an article that Elizabeth forwarded to me from another context where we're talking about the use of the Old Testament in the New and the principle of hermeneutics that says that an Old Testament passage can only have one meaning unless it is quoted in the New Testament. And if the New Testament writer gives it a different meaning, well that's okay, now it has two. But any Old Testament passage that isn't cited in the New Testament and given a different meaning only has one meaning.

Well, without digressing, let me just say that I look at that with the same healthy skepticism that I do the idea that if a parable mentions somebody by name, it's not a parable. So Lazarus and the rich man is not a parable because Lazarus is a name. And your authority for this is what? It's the only parable that has a name in it.

So how are you substantiating this self-generated rule? Well, you and I have seen over and over and over again that Scripture, the words of Scripture, the text of Scripture strains and groans with multiple messages, with the three-dimensional, four-dimensional truth of God. And there are many things to be seen in any given passage. Just look at narrative.

We're reviewing through the life of David in 2 Samuel as we're going through digitizing tapes and you see things that happen in the life of David, but they resonate, they foreshadow, they enrich our understanding of the first advent, the time on earth of the Lord Jesus Himself. The things that are in the Psalms speak of David, but they speak of the Lord Jesus. And they're not all quoted in the New Testament.

But read Psalm 22 and ask yourself, does this only have one meaning in the days of David? A couple of verses are quoted in the New Testament, but what about the rest of it? It just to me is lacking in appreciation. Most of your, this is the view of Sam, most errors, what I consider to be errors in Scripture interpretation, Scriptural understanding, humanize or de-enlarge, de-glorify God and God's Word. It's too small.

It's trying to put God or the Word of God in a box. Well, interpretation can only be thus and so because that's all I can understand. That's all, there's going to be, it's going to be fraught with

error.

You're going to run amok if there could be more than one meaning in an Old Testament Scripture. You're too small. You're not giving account of the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit, of what God will grant if you hunger and thirst.

If you seek it as silver and search for it as for hid treasure to find the knowledge of God, you want to limit God. Well, God is sovereign and everything has to be under His sovereignty and free will can't function because God wouldn't be able to handle it, basically. Your God is too small.

Your conception of God is too small. Your understanding of the power of God is too limited. You're thinking of God as sort of a glorified human being and that's how you would run it if you were going to be God, but you know, God's ways are higher than our ways.

His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His power is infinite. And most theological error that I run across always has this element of limitation, that there's this frame that God or His Word has to fit into. And as soon as you start constructing frames and limits, obviously we don't want to be in error, we don't want to run afoul, but let Scripture make the frame.

Let God set the limits. If He sets the limits for the oceans, He can set the limits for the interpretation of His Word and go to Him and ask. Ask and it will be given.

Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened. He's not going to open a second story door and there's nothing there and you walk out into thin air and crash to the ground.

If you genuinely want to know, ask, seek, knock, a door that leads upward, that leads to glory will be opened. Well, Paul says when you look at this life, it's not just about this life. Circumstances are not just how did they turn out.

John the Baptist was a failure because his head was cut off. Jesus was a failure because He got executed. Paul was a failure because he had his head cut off.

Your view is limited and circumscribed. Lift your eyes, look up. Redemption is drawing nigh.

Redemption is eternal life. It is the return of the Lord Jesus. It is the eternal future.

It is the kingdom of God. And if in this life only we hope, we are of all men most miserable. It's all about hope for the next life.

And so Paul talks about that. I gave you 2 Corinthians 4, 7-12. We have this treasure in earthen vessels.

It's both. There is the treasure of eternal life, but there is the earthen vessel. And you see them both.

They're both in view. They're both necessary. The treasure has to be freighted, has to be carried, has to be conveyed in a vessel.

Well, the vessel is earthen. The vessel will eventually go away and be replaced by a glorious eternal one. But right now it's earthen.

So you have the treasure and you have the earthen vessel. They're both in view. There is service in the interest of life.

There is death in the interest of life. There is affliction in the interest of blessing. They're both necessary.

You can't have one without the other. You have need of patience so that after you have suffered a while, you inherit the promises. It's a part of it.

It's a part of God's process. So, we're hard-pressed, he says in chapter 4, verse 8. But we're not crushed. We're perplexed, but we're not in despair.

Did you notice that it's okay to be hard-pressed? Do you ever feel hard-pressed? Yes. I know you have. Hard-pressed.

Have you ever felt perplexed? A lot of us undergo perplexation, perplexity, perplexification, puzzlement. But we're not in despair. Just because we don't understand, it doesn't get us down.

Just because we're hard-pressed, we don't crush. I moved some furniture that's been sitting in the same spot for two years. Very heavy desk, four big legs.

I was looking at the carpet underneath, and I had put the little cups. But nevertheless, there is a completely flat disk of carpet and pad. And I thought, two solid years of just over 100 pounds of pressure on each leg.

This is like, well, it's probably not a 400-pound desk. Probably 50 pounds of pressure on each leg. It's probably a 200-pound desk, especially with everything I had in it and on it.

And moved it. And, I mean, these absolutely, I didn't think the fibers of the carpet, they look fused. And I thought, well, you know, that's going to leave a mark.

I got up this morning and walked in there and looked around. Now, I did try to encourage it a little bit last night. But, you know, you pick it up, and it just goes right back down.

But it has, the pad has started to lift. The carpet has started to, its inherent molecular nature has started to reassert itself. And it's coming back.

And you know how this is. You buy a house, and you can see the imprints of the previous owner's furniture in the carpet. And you think, oh, man, I'm going to have to replace this carpet.

But they've only recently moved out. But after a while, you look in that same spot, and it's gone.

You can be hard-pressed, but you're not crushed.

You recover. There's a dent for a time, but it comes back. It's supernatural.

It's the way God built us. It's the power of God. Paul says this can happen.

It's okay to be hard-pressed. It's okay to be perplexed. It is okay to be persecuted when you realize that you're not forsaken.

God doesn't prevent persecution, but He's with us in it. We are not forsaken. Jesus said, I will never leave you or forsake you.

The disciples forsook Him during His hour of persecution, but He does not forsake us. Struck down but not destroyed. Ever been struck down? Ever been smacked down by circumstance? Yes, you have.

I know you have. I can think of all of you, whether you're present or absent, and I know you've been struck down. I've been struck down.

But we're not destroyed. Why? Even if you're struck down unto death, you're not destroyed because you're coming back. It's the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it gives us hope in this life that whatever we undertake, whatever we undergo, whatever we experience, there is a purpose.

There is a point. We carry about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. We carry it about.

We reflect it. There's a sense in which we die daily. We die to self.

We live to God. We mortify the flesh. We want the desires of this flesh to die so that we can serve God's desires, God's purposes, God's goals.

We who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. Notice He said that in verse 10. We carry in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifest in our body.

Then in verse 11 He says we are delivered to death for Jesus' sake so that, and it's almost a mirror image of verse 10, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. Do you see it? You've got mortal flesh. You've got a body that is persecuted, that is afflicted, that is undergoing stress and whipsaw circumstance, but the life of Jesus is manifest in that same flesh.

It is dying, but it's living. It is persecuted, but it is rejoicing. That's only possible because of the resurrection.

It only makes sense in the light of eternal life. You flip over to chapter 11 that we looked at, verses 23 through 29. I'm sorry, chapter 6. This is the second time I've almost missed chapter 6.

2 Corinthians chapter 6, verses 3 through 10, and I didn't talk about the last couple of verses there.

We give no offense in anything not to be blamed. We commend ourselves as ministers of God in verse 4, 2 Corinthians 6, 4, in patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings. How do we do that? How do we not give offense? How do we commend ourselves? When we meet those things, when we encounter them, when we experience them by purity.

I don't know that I am guilty of anything. I don't know myself to be guilty in any area. Purity.

By knowledge, I spend time rehearsing, reviewing, reflecting on the Word of God. I know God's will. I know God's Word.

By longsuffering, purity and knowledge are sort of Godward. We talked about the character of God and the action of God as it's reflected in the Psalms on Thursday night. David reflects on who God is and what God has done.

The heavens declare God's glory, who He is. The firmament shows forth His handiwork, what He does. Well, Paul says here, purity, this is who I am before God.

Knowledge is what I do before God. I make sure I know what to do. I know what God wants me to do.

I know what God does. I know what He wants me to do. It's knowledge.

Longsuffering is horizontal. I put up with a lot in the earthly realm. Kindness.

I bear with shortcoming, animosity, persecution, suffering. I put up with that. And what is my response? What is my outward flow? It isn't bitterness.

It isn't hatred. It isn't implacability. It isn't seeking for vengeance or for vindication or for justification.

It is kindness. I suffer long with what is done to me, and what I do to others is kindness. How do I do it? By the Holy Spirit and by genuine love.

By the word of truth, you're back to knowledge again. By the power of God, you're back to purity again. By the armor of righteousness, the weapons of righteousness, and the right hand and the left.

By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report. If he's doing what he's supposed to do, there's going to be two responses. Remember Jesus said, I've not come to bring peace but a sword, and it'll divide households.

Half the household is going to appreciate the Lord Jesus as Son of Man and Son of God. As

Messiah, Lord, and Redeemer. The other half is going to make him out a liar, a fraud, a myth, a fake.

Somebody who, if he even existed, spent his life in a useless cause. He was deluded. He thought he was the Son of God.

People strangely followed him. It's going to divide. Some recognize him and glorify him and assign him honor.

Others dishonor him, think he was a fraud. Think the religion that bears his name is a fraud. Honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report.

Notice this goes all the way back. We commend ourselves as ministers of God by honor and by dishonor. Ministers of God are going to meet with both.

Some people will appreciate, some people will deprecate, depreciate. Some are going to give a good report and glorify God through the treasure that is brought by the earthen vessel. Others are going to give an evil report.

This guy is a rabble rouser. He's a deceiver. Look at all of the harm that's been done by Christianity down through the centuries.

Blah, blah, blah. It's going to be an evil report. As deceivers and yet true.

Called deceivers. Accused of deception. And Paul says, if there's no resurrection, we are deceivers.

But Christ has been raised from the dead and he is the first fruits of those that sleep. Therefore we are not deceivers. We're called deceivers.

We're labeled deceivers. We're branded as deceivers. And yet we are true.

As unknown, there was accused that this is a religion that came out of nowhere. Even today people say, Paul just made Christianity out of whole cloth. Here was Jesus who had the golden rule.

He was just a nice rabbi going around trying to encourage people to be nice to each other. Paul invented Christianity. And with it all of its abuses and all of its flaws and errors.

And he came out of nowhere. He was unknown. It was an unknown religion.

And so Paul says, there are people who say that we came out of nowhere. We're unknowns. We weren't even with Jesus.

Peter at least can claim he walked with the Lord. This Paul came out of nowhere and he's suddenly numbering himself with the apostles. He's unknown.

And yet he is well known. Well known to who? Remember back in Corinthians when he's talking about love? And he says, I will know even as I am known. We see through a glass darkly but then face to face.

I will know even as I am known. He's known to God. His sleeplessness, his trials and travails, his sufferings.

A lot of the people didn't know. Paul didn't spend every session with the churches as he traveled around Asia Minor. He didn't say, well, I'm Paul, let me tell you about all my sufferings.

There are a lot of those people that never heard that list. He sends it to the Corinthians because it is evidence of the power of the resurrection for motivation, for hope. Because it's real.

As dying and yet behold we live. We risk death. They try to kill us.

We die in the sense that we die to self and die to our own benefit, our own interest, our own well-being. And yet we live. God preserves us.

As chastened and yet not killed. 39 stripes five times. Rods three times.

Stoned as unto death at Lystra. Shipwrecked. Attacked by robbers.

Stress of every kind. Chastened but not killed. God has preserved his life.

Sorrowful yet always rejoicing. There is a time, you go back to Ecclesiastes, you look at some things and it makes you sorrow. Paul says, I tell you, even weeping.

There are those who are enemies of the cross. Yet we're always rejoicing. There are things about which we are unceasingly glad.

What are you looking at? You're not defined by sorrow. People say, well, you can't have, if he says no more tears in the eternal future, then we can't be remembering things that would make us sad. You can do both.

You can be sorrowful about some things and yet be always rejoicing. We do it in this life and we can certainly do it in the next. But it will not mar our rejoicing.

It will never be something we joy over, that there are those who didn't come to faith, who rejected the Lord Jesus, who perish in the lake of fire. But it isn't something that crushes us. As poor yet making many rich.

Paul didn't have the comfortable life of a Pharisee, but he rejoiced in giving eternal riches to those to whom he ministered, as having nothing and yet possessing all things. In this life, everything you have you're going to give away. It's all going to end up down at the cranberry merchant or the rusty rabbit.

It's what you have that has any value. Somebody else is going to have it. It's going to sit in a

house two generations later.

Well, where'd that come from? That doesn't fit the theme of my furniture. So take it down to the place and some antique hound will appreciate it and recognize it. We've got all kinds of stuff.

I don't know where it came from. I don't know who had it before me. The Melodion that A. Schwartz built.

I don't know how many people have had that thing. I've got it now, but somebody else will have it after me. It'll work a lot better than when I got it.

But we have nothing. We are stewards. We are temporary caretakers.

But we basically in this life have nothing because you take nothing in this life with you. No possessions. Clothing.

I was looking at my Navy class ring this morning. It's really looking the worst for wear because I never take it off. Working, I never take it off.

I'm not even sure it will come off now. But it's really beat up. The stone is chipped.

The underside where your palm is. The little chain links have all worn off. And it means something to me.

But I remember being at the museum at Navy and they had the Naval Academy ring of I think Chester Nimitz in a case. And his looked way worse than mine. I mean the thing is just nearly worn smooth.

And I thought that is a nasty looking ring. It just looks really old and worn. You can barely read anything on it anymore.

And mine is getting there. And that ring will never mean as much to anybody else as it does to the guy that earned it or the girl who earned it. That ring means something to me.

Somebody else might have it and say, oh yeah, dad, granddad, great great granddad had that. It's never going to mean to them what it means to me. But I can't take it with me.

I will leave it here. It will be in a box somewhere. Somebody will run across it every five or six years and say, oh yeah, there's dad's Annapolis ring.

Big whoop and put it back. Wonder what it would be worth melted down. And they might.

I melted down my high school ring. I mean I didn't even keep that thing very long. But it's transient.

Having nothing and yet possessing all things. How does Paul know that he possesses all things? Do you remember in 1 Corinthians when he said, don't say I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos. You have

all things in Christ.

You possess everything. Where? When? In the resurrection, in the future, in eternal life. It ought to make a difference.

Do you think in terms of coming life and coming resurrection and the coming kingdom, coming service to Christ, coming glory of God, do you think about it in the day or do you get crushed? Do you get broken? Do you get down and out by circumstance? Paul says, I've had circumstances way worse than yours and it doesn't crush me and it doesn't get me down because I never let my hope of the resurrection flag. It is always before me. To live is good, to die is gain.

You can't say to die is gain unless you are absolutely 100% positively convinced of the resurrection. He doesn't say, I hope I get raised. He says, when I die, I'm going to be with Christ and that is far better.

But I'm willing to stay here because it is a service. It is a service to you fellow believers and it is a service to the God who saved me. So that's what he is pulling for here.

Having nothing and yet possessing all things. I look around and say, I don't have anything that I can keep. And yet, I look up, I look forward.

I've got everything. I potentially have everything in Christ. Look at what we have.

Look at what we own. He continues that in chapter 11, 23-29, which we just looked at, I'm not going to review it. We went to Philippians 1, 20-26.

If I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor. But I'm hard pressed having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

Colossians, flip over two pages to Colossians 1, starting at verse 24. I now rejoice in my sufferings for you. This is a tough assignment.

My being, the fiber of my being, wants to whine when I suffer. I want to groan when I experience pain, when I experience discomfort. The older you get, the more often these little groans escape you.

Getting up, sitting down, taking a step that twists your trickney, whatever it may be, you give out with an expression of discomfort. It's just in our nature. But he says, I rejoice in my sufferings for you.

Think of the list. And I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. Catholics light their hair on fire because they say, I don't know if this is even Scripture.

Because how can there be anything lacking in the affliction of Christ? And the people that get all

theologically contorted, that there would be some gap in the affliction of Christ. That's not what Paul is saying. He's not saying that the suffering of, what the Catholics do is they say, the saints are suffering and filling in.

Mary is contributing to the Christ's suffering. And the saints are contributing to Christ's suffering. And all of it together is what accomplishes redemption and satisfaction for God.

It wasn't enough that Jesus suffered. Everybody else has to suffer who is a saint. And you partake of that, and you can buy it, and you can appropriate it for yourself.

That's not what Paul is saying here at all. He says, I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. A good way of saying this is, and I have it in the RSV here.

Let me find my page. I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. I complete what is, I would say, incomplete.

I complete what is incomplete in Christ's afflictions. The Lord Jesus suffered on our behalf, and that accomplishes so many things. But there is more that can be accomplished in the service of others by enduring affliction.

And it isn't that we can all live on flowery beds of ease. Remember, am I a soldier of the cross? Do I want to live on flowery beds of ease? There is an ongoing service. The body of Christ suffered when He came in the first advent.

We are the body of Christ, and we continue the self-sacrificial enduring of affliction on behalf of others the way Christ did. His body is still undergoing affliction, and we fill up that which is not yet complete because we are His body. And we're not the glorified body.

We are the mortal body. The mortal body of the Lord Jesus suffered affliction. He was the lamb for slaughter.

He was the suffering servant. He was despised and rejected for our sakes. He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our transgressions.

By His stripes we were healed. Well, we are now His body, and we fill up that potential by suffering as He suffered on behalf of others, reflecting that same pattern because we are His body. And Paul says, I am a prominent and visible part of the body of Christ, and I complete what is incomplete in those sufferings because the body is still here and still suffering on behalf of others, willing to undergo affliction on behalf of others.

What is the behalf? What is the advantage that comes? It is for the sake of His body, which is the church of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God, which was given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God, to reflect the Word of God, to live the Word of God, to put flesh and sinews on the bone, to illustrate it. The Lord Jesus was the Word. In the beginning was the Word, which was with God and was God, but the Word became flesh and

dwelt among us.

We are the flesh reflection of the Word. To fulfill the Word of God, the mystery hidden from the ages and generations, now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

You remember back in 2 Corinthians 4, the power of God is revealed, the life of Jesus is manifest in our flesh. This is the same idea. Death is at work in us, but life in you.

God is making known in our sufferings and through our afflictions, as we embody hope and expectation and confidence in resurrection and in life with Christ, it is the Word of God living and breathing, Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working, which works in me mightily.

Enabled by the power of God that works mightily in me. But to present every man complete in Christ, that's future, that's the glory of the resurrection. Finally flip over to 1 Thessalonians 3. 1 Thessalonians chapter 3. When we could no longer endure, having been taken away from you, you go back up to verse 17 of the previous chapter, we were taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoring more eagerly to see your face with great desire.

We wanted to come to you, even I, Paul, time and again, Satan hindered us. What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? That's our hope, that's our glory, that's our joy. And I wanted to be with you to get you ready for that.

To impart to you that which will make you ready. So when I could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith. That no one should be shaken by afflictions.

These afflictions, don't be shaken, don't be moved, is what it literally says. Don't be moved by these afflictions. You yourself know that we are appointed for this.

This is a part of God's plan. It's accounted for, it is intrinsic, it is necessary, it is appointed. In fact, we told you before when we were with you we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know, told you it was going to happen, it has happened.

So when I could no longer endure it, I sent Timothy to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you and our labor might be in vain. Wouldn't it be awful if these afflictions got you so short-sighted that you were put off your stride, you were deflected, you were drawn away by the tempter. What is Satan's goal? To keep us from thinking about the future life and thinking only of this life.

He did that to Eve in the garden. What you want is a short-term gain here, don't worry about the long-term effect. God doesn't want you to eat this fruit because He knows it will make you wise, and you'll know what He knows right now.

She doesn't think, well, what happens the next time I see Him? What happens with that command that says in the day that I eat thereof I will die? I just know that right now it will make me wise. It's a short-term benefit, it's an immediate gratification. So Paul says, there is a necessity for fellowship, and you cannot understate how important fellowship is.

Paul says, it's not enough for me to send you an inspired epistle, I'm going to send you a guy to be with you. Fellowship, first-hand speaking the truth to one another in love, is essential. And Paul says, I can't endure being away and just sending letters and hearing reports, I'm going to send Timothy.

He's my representative. Jesus can't be here, so what does he do? He sent you. You are here on behalf of Christ the way Timothy went to Thessalonica, the Thessalonians, Thessalonians, Thessalonica.

Paul couldn't be there, so he sent a representative. Jesus can't be here, so he sent you. That's why you're here.

You are here to represent the Lord Jesus, and to encourage people in the faith that afflictions don't sidetrack them, don't deflect them, don't stop them. And to the extent that you encounter afflictions, and endure them without being crushed, and maintain your hope, and allow the life of Christ to shine in and through, you're representing the Lord Jesus. You're doing what the Apostle Paul did.

That's our opportunity. We are Timothy. That's why I'm looking forward to the first chance I get to do the books of Timothy and Titus, because what Paul tells Timothy is what we need to know.

Well, as you go forward now in 1 Corinthians, and we just have a few minutes, go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and let's pick up at verse 35. Paul says, I affirm, in verse 31, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus, I die daily, fought wild beasts at Ephesus. What's the advantage if the dead do not rise? Verse 33, Do not be deceived.

Evil company corrupts good ethos, good lifestyle. If you hang around people who are short-sighted, and temporal, and focused on the ephemeral, if you're on a Facebook page where all people do is talk about what's happening today, and that's what occupies your thoughts, if you circulate with nothing but short-term occupation with the immediate, it is subjectivity. It is eyes on people and eyes on circumstance in the short term.

Paul says, Do not be deceived. What did he just tell the Thessalonians? I don't want you to be tempted by the tempter. I'm going to send Timothy to you.

He'll be a presence more immediate than a letter. And that fellowship, that contact, that

personal contact, is effective in ameliorating, and in countering, and in witnessing against the tempter and his temptations. We need that witness in our lives.

Evil company corrupts your lifestyle, your viewpoint, your perspective, the ethos. You know what an ethos is, right? And there's no English word that really, that's why we use the word ethos. We don't have a good translation.

It's not just lifestyle. It's not just habits. It's your whole way of being and doing.

The ethos is how you define and perpetrate your life. And evil company will corrupt it. Evil company will deflect it.

And so you've got to limit. You can't, you know, Paul says you can't separate from everything or you must needs go out of the world. But evil companionship, this is what you cultivate and what you perpetuate and what is a regular pattern.

You can contact these things a lot. You can have conversations with people who are wildly different in their ethos. And they can be evil and reflect evil and communicate evil and talk about evil.

But do you make it your companion? Evil companionship will corrupt your ethos. You've got to limit the contact. And when you do contact it, it's like defilement in ancient Israel.

Go do the cleansing. Wash. Be clean.

Ask God to purge us. What does he say in verse 34? Awake to righteousness and stop sinning. Awake to righteousness and die to sin.

Leave sin. Now when he says awake to righteousness, what does that mean? Death is pictured as sleep in the New Testament. So what are you going to awake to? This is a double entendre, isn't it? He says wake up in your daily life here to righteousness so that you will wake up to righteousness.

Awake to righteousness. Awake every day and think about righteousness as you undergo the trials of this life so that you will awake. This is a resurrection chapter, right? And he's talking here about awaking.

Awake to righteousness and do not sin. Some do not have the knowledge of God. Remember I'm talking about I want to make the Word of God fully known.

I want you to have the glory of the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. Awake to righteousness. Awake to the knowledge of God.

Some don't have it and that's a shame. If you don't have this knowledge, if you're not awake to righteousness, if you're not looking forward to awaking to righteousness, if you're not building into eternal life because you're thinking about resurrection, you ought to be ashamed. He says I

say this to make you ashamed of yourself.

Shameful if you forget that. Well, we'll pick up next time where he begins in verse 35. Some will say, How are the dead raised up and in what body do they come? Oh, this is really fascinating.

And Paul talks about it here and in other passages. We're going to be in Romans, we're going to be back in 2 Corinthians, we're going to be in Philippians again, but different passages because the nature of the resurrection, what is it like? People say, well, I don't think there's a resurrection because remember the Sadducees? Well, I don't think there's a resurrection because what if a woman was married seven times? Whose wife will she be in the resurrection? That makes it not possible as though that's some sort of nail-in-the-coffin argument. And so Paul cites these people who say, Well, if there's a resurrection, how could that be? You were all beat up and dismembered and had all kinds of... Paul, you're going to come back in that old broken down, beat up, scarred body? The eyes? You get the idea that maybe his eyes were damaged in some of these afflictions and he says, When I write, I have to write with large letters with my own hand and you would have given your eyes to me if you were able.

I think he suffered damage and he had to go by memory. Couldn't read the manuscripts anymore that he left with his cloak behind. And he says, Bring me my cloak and bring me my books.

Well, after so much abuse, he might not have even been able to read them. He had to have somebody else read them to him. But he says, Well, some will say, How are the dead raised up? What body do they have? Is there just going to be a body appear out of thin air? How is that even possible? He says, Oh, foolish ones.

Well, we don't want to be foolish so we'll take a look at that next time. But let's close for now in a word of prayer. Father, we do thank you for the wonderful hope of life.

We have life in this life and we have life in the age to come all through the Lord Jesus who pictured both of them for us in his coming to earth and being obedient even to the point of death, the death of the cross. You have exalted him. You have set him at your right hand as a motivation, as an example, as a symbol of hope for us.

And we pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister these things to our hearts in such a way that we are motivated and we are encouraged and we do have that clear perspective on our lives as potential and as opportunity and as we face difficulties and challenges that these are no more than ways in which the Lord Jesus can be reflected in us and through us that others can see that light and be drawn to you through the Lord Jesus and have that same opportunity for blessing in this life and potential in the next that we ourselves have. We thank you for the truth of these things. We thank you for the hope of eternal life and we pray that we can make ourselves worthy of it as we seek to implement it in our lives day by day.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.