

No Resurrection – No Hope
(1 Corinthians 15:12-34 April 11, 2021)

No Resurrection No Hope

— 1 Corinthians 15:12-34 —



Jim Elliot famously summed up the Christian life with these words:

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that
which he cannot lose



He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

Everything in this life is going.

There is no sacrifice we can make – time, wealth, health – even our life – that is too great – because our real life begins when we die.

Death is not the end – it is the beginning.

To live is Christ – and to die is gain.

However, some in the church in Corinth would have summed up the Christian life in this way:

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose

He is no fool who gains it all



He is no fool who gains it all.

If faith gets us all to heaven – regardless of works done in the body – why bust a gut now?

Sure. Give a bit, make a few sacrifices – but as long as you get to heaven – the wise Christian will do what they can to enjoy this world and its pleasures now and enjoy heaven then.

I know which one of these I say I believe – but there are parts of my life that sure look more Corinthian than Christian – and I may not be alone in this.

The question our passage asks us this morning is this – which view of the Christian life do we *really* believe?

This morning we are going to find that what you believe about the life to come profoundly affects how you live this life.

Do our lives declare – I am living for this world or the next?

This morning we are going to see this truth:

The resurrection is proof that our best life is yet to come



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The resurrection is proof that our best life is yet to come.

Your best life is not now.

How pitiful if this is as good as it gets. Even those who live good lives suffer. Everyone has illness and relationship problems and eventually we all age and die.

No – our hope is that this world is not all there is. That our best life is yet to come – and the resurrection of Jesus is proof of this.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15:12:

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, “There is no resurrection of the dead”?

The resurrection is a beacon of hope.

But some in Corinth – prophets – the self-proclaimed spiritual elite – were saying – not so fast – there is no resurrection of the dead.

Jesus didn’t rise and you won’t rise.

A false idea that our bodies are intrinsically evil and only our spirit is good had found its way into the church.

One result of this was they denied any resurrection – Jesus’ or ours.

It is hard to be certain what the Corinthians who denied the resurrection believed happened when you died.

You read verse 19:

If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only.

And verse 32:

If the dead are not raised, **Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.**

This might suggest the Corinthians thought this life was it. You die and that is the end – no afterlife – so enjoy this life while you can.

But then you read verse 35:

But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?”

This seems to suggest they did believe in a resurrection – just not a bodily resurrection.

You die and your body rots – good riddance – and your spirit rises to live in a spiritual heaven.

When you read all of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians – this seems to be the view they held.

To many Greeks death was a good thing because it freed the soul from the corrupt body. Here is an inscription from a tomb of the era:

“[Friend, this] tomb Attica did win. But Italy [kept my body], and my soul went up on high.”

Your soul goes to heaven – while your body rots.

I think this is what had infected the church in Corinth.

When the Corinthians said – there is no resurrection of the dead – the word dead is *nekros* – which is the word for a dead body.

It is where we get our words like – *necropsy* – or the examination of a dead body – from.

Verse 12 is better read as saying:

How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of *our dead bodies*?

Most of us have attended a funeral.

Most of us would have stood by an open grave as a coffin is lowered into the ground.

Inside that coffin is a body.

If the one being buried is a Christian – how should we think of their lifeless body?

As a:

Hindrance: Good riddance

Their body was an anchor – causing sin – disease and death.

They would never want to see that body again. Hallelujah they are free.

This was the Corinthian view.

Interestingly, a survey a few years back showed that two thirds of Americans who believe in life after death – believe they will not have bodies in the life to come. They viewed heaven as entirely spiritual.

I don't know what the figures are in Australia – but possibly similar.

Now how many of those are professing Christians – I don't know – but I have met a number of Christians who picture heaven only as a spiritual place.

But the Christian view of the body is not as a hindrance but as a:

Seed: Farewell for now

Just as a seed is sown to grow into something else.

We watch the body lowered into the ground and think – I await the new you in a body that is not fallen – not corrupted.

This is not just an academic exercise – if we rise we rise – if we don't, we don't. God will sort it all out.

Paul says – if your body just rots away to nothing – if that is true – then we **all** have an issue – a huge issue.

There will be no paradise to come. Our hope is vain.

Last week we looked at verses 1-11 – where Paul made one point.

No Resurrection - No Gospel



No resurrection – no gospel.

If you deny the resurrection – you have altered the gospel – the way of salvation – to the point that it will not save.

Paul said – a gospel that includes a resurrection is the gospel I preached and it saved you.

It is the gospel expected in the Scriptures.

And it is the gospel Jesus proclaimed after He rose from the dead.

Any other gospel is a false gospel and not good news.

This morning we come to Paul's second point:

No Resurrection - No Gospel No Resurrection - No Hope



No resurrection – no hope.

Our hope is not that Jesus will make our passage through this life a bit better – a bit healthier, wealthier and easier.

Our hope is that this fallen world is **not** all there is.

Our hope is that there is a world free of sin and the consequences of sin.

And the resurrection is the proof that this hope is not vain.

The resurrection says – this fallen messed up world's days are numbered.

Christ didn't come to iron out a few kinks in this messed up world – He can to make all things new.

The Bible is very clear – sin corrupted everything in this creation.

Us, our world, our universe.

We are corrupt morally and physically.

Our world now has thorns and thistles, viruses and earthquakes.

We are surrounded by cancer, war, natural disasters and ultimately all of us die.

The fact I am preaching to people in masks in the midst of a pandemic has to show this world is obviously fallen.

And sin is the ultimate cause of all corruption.

Our gospel is that One will come who will deal with the root cause – sin.

The death of Christ on the cross will ripple through every last corner of our universe.

The death of Christ will ultimately undo every last effect of sin in the creation. He will restore the universe, this earth and us.

He will redeem a new heavens, a new earth and new men and women.

Our hope is not that one day the universe will die – this world will die – our bodies will die – and our spirits will be free.

Our hope is the *restoration* of all things.

But, this means that if any stain of corruption remains – then sin has not been dealt with – and if any sin remains – our hope is vain.

This is Paul's argument.

If Christ did not rise:

Sin remains



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Look at verses 13–17:

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ—whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not

even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

Paul's logic is clear.

If there is no resurrection of the body – ours or Christ's – then our gospel is false and your faith is vain.

Why? Because sin remains – it has not been dealt with.

There is a whole truckload of theology behind these verses.

To understand this, we need to think through the creation account.

It is not that God created us as spirit – then later made us temporary bodies – with the expectation that one day we will be done with those bodies and live for eternity as spirits.

No – when you read about heaven in places like Revelation 21 and 22 – there are so many links to life in Eden.

Heaven is a restoration of Eden – but better. Christ is there and sin can never again cause corruption.

Heaven restores things to the way they were meant to be.

Crucially, we need to realise that God didn't create us as spirits and then when we sinned He afflicted us by giving us bodies.

No! God created us as body **and** spirit. Listen to Genesis 2:7:

Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

Dust and breath – body and spirit – **together** they make man a living creature.

And God did not say – this is a second-best temporary situation. He said – it is good. In fact – it is very good.

Our bodies are *not* intrinsically evil.

Men and women in bodies in a paradise – in a right relationship with God – this was God's good design.

However, after creating him, God commanded Adam – if you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – you shall surely die.

Adam ate and death followed.

Romans 6:23:

For the wages of sin is death.

This was *both* spiritual **and** physical death.

God said – you are of dust – to dust you will return – that is physical death.

God banished them from Eden – that is spiritual death.

Adam's sin was the crucial event.

As God's King over the creation – his sin rippled out through Eden ... through the world ... through the universe.

Every created thing became corrupt.

Thorns, thistles, disease.

Animals killed and ate animals.

Earthquakes and hurricanes.

Adam's sin also corrupted his descendants – us – our body and spirit – dies.

We get cancer, COVID and ultimately everyone dies.

The Bible is very clear that redemption, salvation, undoing the curse will involve an event that deals with sin and this *anti-sin* will ripple through creation and through us it will restore creation and us – **both** body **and** spirit.

Jesus could not save your spirit without saving your body and without renewing the corrupt universe.

It is not that the important part of us is our spirit and Jesus came to save that.

We are body and spirit.

Saving just your spirit would be like a doctor coming out to see you after your child was involved in a car accident. Good news – we saved her life. Bad news – her brain was pulped – but hey her heart is beating.

Medically you can't save someone if you can't save their brain.

Spiritually you can't save someone if you can't save their body.

Undoing sin – undoes all the corruption of sin. It undoes every last vestige of corruption in the universe, in the world – and in us – body and spirit.

A key passage on this is Romans 8:19–24:

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For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, **the redemption of our bodies**. Now in this hope we were saved.



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The whole corrupt creation is waiting. Waiting for the last son of God to be saved. Then everything will be redeemed.

Redemption **must** include the redemption of our physical bodies – or sin is still out there.

The undoing of the curse includes a restored, renewed, redeemed heaven and earth – the new heaven and earth – and for us it means restored, renewed, redeemed bodies and spirits free of sin.

Why is this absolutely crucial?

The Corinthians said – it is only your spirit that is important.

Your body is an anchor.

This bad theology had implications. What you do in the body doesn't affect your spirit.

That is why in 1 Corinthians 6 we saw some Corinthians were fine with a Christian sleeping with a prostitute.

That is just body stuff not spirit stuff.

So, the idea developed – the Christian life is spiritual stuff – like prayer and faith.

Money, time, gluttony, sex – these are body things – these have nothing to do with spiritual stuff.

Here is the Corinthian hope.

Jesus came to improve your life in the body. To help you enjoy the pleasures of the body now.

Then the day comes that you die.

Your body rots **but** your soul is freed to go to a spiritual heaven.

This corrupt universe with death and disease continues until Christ annihilates it. But you are free to spend eternity – with no body – existing as spirit.

And Paul is aghast. We should be aghast.

John Piper writes:

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Christianity is not a platonic religion that regards material things as mere shadows of reality, which will be sloughed off as soon as possible. Not the mere immortality of the soul, but rather the resurrection of the body and the renewal of all creation is the hope of the Christian faith. Just as our bodies will be raised imperishable for the glory of God, so the earth itself will be made new and fit for the habitation of risen and glorified persons.



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¹ John Piper, Future Grace (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 1995), 374.

Where is all of this leading?

When Adam sinned – everything in creation – including our bodies became corrupted.

The world has natural disasters, diseases and problems.

Our bodies get sick, get old and die.

True redemption deals with sin – and the effects of sin – in the world and in our bodies.

That is why eternity means a *new* heavens, a *new* earth and *new* bodies for us.

But, if any corruption remains – death, disease, natural disasters – then sin has not been fully dealt with.

If sin is what causes my body to die and rot – if it stays dead and rotting – it has to mean sin is still corrupting it.

If there is no reversal of the curse – sin remains.

And here is the really bad news. If there is still sin then:

If Christ did not rise:

Sin remains
Judgment awaits



Judgment awaits.

This idea that our bodies are sinful and our spirit is pure is clearly wrong.

Jesus didn't say – your body made you do it. He said what comes out of a man is a reflection of what is inside a man. We are corrupt – body and spirit.

Even if you could separate body and spirit – if sin remains – your spirit is not pure – it is under judgment.

This Corinthian theology of a spiritual heaven fails to account for sin.

That is why in 1 Corinthians 15:17 Paul says if Christ has not been raised – we are still in our sins – and that is terrible news.

If Christ's body rotted away and turned to dust – there is no hope.

It means there is still corruption and death – sin is not dealt with. We are still under judgment.

Verse 18:

Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished.

Fallen asleep is a reference to death.

If there is no resurrection – it is not that those who are dead – their lily-white pure souls are in spiritual heaven.

Those who are dead are still sinners and they will perish in judgment – eternally.

Verse 19:

If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

This verse is a little unclear.

There are two ways to translate this first part – and they give quite different understandings:

If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only (CSB)

If only for this life we have hope in Christ (NIV)



If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only (CSB)

This seems to make the Corinthians say – death is the end – Christ came only to give us a good life now so suck what we can out of this life while our hearts are still beating – because when you die there is nothing.

OR

If only for this life we have hope in Christ (NIV)

If Christ just came to give us a better life in the body now – if He doesn't need to wash our spirit clean – then our hope is vain.

Overall, I think the NIV is better because I think the Corinthians did believe Christ's main work is to give us a better earthly life – and that is their hope.

BUT – we have a greater hope:

Jesus did rise – and we will rise so:

If Christ did not rise:

Sin remains
Judgment awaits

Since Christ did rise:

Sin is defeated



Since Christ did rise:

Sin is defeated

Verse 20:

But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

This concept of the firstfruits is common in Scripture.

The farmer plants seed in the ground. Why?

In general, we put three kinds of things in the ground.

Rubbish – something we hope to never see again.

Treasure – something we hope we will see exactly as we left it.

Seeds – something we trust will change and burst from the ground as a plentiful harvest.

Our bodies are not rubbish – they are not disposable – gone forever.

Nor could we say they are treasure – they get old and die – and what we put in the ground is certainly no treasure. I for one am trusting for a better body.

Instead, they are like a seed. Waiting to change into something different and amazing.

How does the farmer know there will be a full harvest?

When he sees the firstfruits.

When that first seed germinates and bursts forth.

The resurrection of Christ is the firstfruits – a guarantee, a pledge by God of the full harvest to come, the resurrection of all believers.

But what comes forth is not the same as what went into the ground. Why?

Verses 21–22:

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

When Adam sinned – corruption rippled through the entire creation corrupting absolutely everything. It is the reason you and I die because all of us are sons and daughters of Adam.

But when Christ died on the cross to remove the stain of sin – that redeeming power to destroy sin and its effects rippled through the entire creation.

And it rippled through those who are **in** the second Adam – Christ.

It imputes Christ's righteousness to us now – but the day will come when it will renew our bodies – they will rise from the dead.

Verses 23–28:

But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom

to God the Father, when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death. For **God has put everything under his feet**. Now when it says “everything” is put under him, it is obvious that he who puts everything under him is the exception. When everything is subject to Christ, then the Son himself will also be subject to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

Jesus has to rule over everything – or he is not King. He has to defeat every last vestige of sin and corruption.

It is not that Jesus died – and a flash of light went forth transforming the fallen creation into the new creation.

God could have done that. But 2 Peter 3 and Romans 8 say the reason God didn’t do that is He is waiting until all the redeemed – the sons of God – are gathered in.

So, the power of the cross ripples out through time.

Backwards – to save those under the Old Covenant – and forwards to save those under the New Covenant.

Paul now focusses on how that power is manifest from the cross to the end of history.

First – the power of the cross raises Christ. As proof that God accepts the cross as full payment and proof that we will rise.

Then He skips to the end of human history.

Jesus will return – the trump will sound – the power of the cross will cause the bodies of the dead in Christ to rise.

Then the power of the cross will totally destroy every enemy. Every person not in Christ. Every demon. And every effect of corruption in the universe.

Finally, the last enemy – death.

Since every enemy is defeated – since there is no sin to ever corrupt our bodies again – our resurrected bodies will never die.

If Christ did not rise:

Sin remains
Judgment awaits

Since Christ did rise:

Sin is defeated
Heaven awaits



The defeat of sin means **heaven awaits**.

The cross will have destroyed every enemy and renewed every friend – it will have transformed the heavens and earth – and Christ will hand this renewed, redeemed sinless kingdom – including us – over to the Father and submit Himself to the Father for all eternity.

And all will live forever in Him.

That is our gospel. This is our hope.

Now, Paul applies it.

If you believe this – it changes how you live.

Verse 29:

Otherwise, what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them?

No shock that this is probably one of the most obscure verses in the Bible.

Well over 200 years ago, John Bengel wrote this:

Of the baptisms for the dead, the variety of interpretations is so great that he who would collect, I shall not say those different opinions, but a catalogue of those different opinions, would have to write a dissertation.

There are probably a dozen pretty reasonable interpretations and one commentator said he had catalogued over 300 possible interpretations.

This tells us that it is a tough passage and we have to hesitate to think our view is definitely correct.

I can tell you a view that is not right – the Mormon view.

If grandma dies without faith – you can be baptised on her behalf to save her.

This flies in the face of everything the Bible teaches.

Two words here are key.

The first is *huper* – often translated ‘on behalf of’.

While a common usage of this preposition is *on behalf of* – any Greek dictionary will list many other possible meanings – *about, beyond, above*.

But here are the ones that I think are most relevant here – **because of** or **on account of**.

The next word of interest is *nekros* – which as we have seen basically refers to a dead body. And repeatedly in this chapter Paul links these dead bodies with the resurrection.

This morning you saw a baptism.

Baptism signifies many things. Death to our old self, new life, being buried with Christ, joining His church.

But – very clearly one of the things that baptism signifies is faith that our union with Christ means that we not only die with Him – but as He rose – so on the final day – we too will rise.

Listen to Romans 6:3–4:

Or are you unaware that all of us who were **baptized** into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him by **baptism** into **death**, in order that, **just as Christ was raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.

Baptism signifies our faith that we are united with Christ **both** in His death **and** His resurrection.

Putting all of this together – here is how I want to paraphrase 1 Corinthians 15:29:

Otherwise what will they do who are being baptized with the hope that their bodies will rise? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized because of this hope?

Baptism is a sign of our faith that we will rise with Christ – this world is not all there is. My hope is not that this world is it – my hope is in the life to come.

But, if the dead are not raised – Paul asks why bother being baptised?

Your hope is vain.

Now – one truth that is found again and again in the Bible is this – what we really believe is seen in how we live our lives.

Our theology is reflected in the life choices we make.

How we spend our money.

How we use our time.

What sacrifices we are willing to make for Christ.

Imagine attending two funerals. Both are professing Christians.

The first funeral is that of a twenty-five-year-old single woman who spent her life preparing to be a missionary but was killed two months after arriving in a Muslim country.

The Corinthians would call her life a foolish waste. Paul would call it a life well lived.

The second funeral is that of a ninety-year-old successful businessman, pillar of his community who dies surrounded by four generations of family. He made a lot of money, marriage was shaky, relationships with his kids was strained – but he had a great time – travel, houses and left a business legacy. He paid to build his local church and for that was made a deacon. Basically – he lived life mainly for him – but trusted he did enough to get to heaven.

The Corinthians would call this a life well lived. Paul is not going to mince words – he doesn't even call it foolishness – he just calls it sin.

And he says – the reason each one chose the life they did is because of what they believe concerning the life to come.

Then Paul points out the implications for each theology.

Verses 30-32a:

Why are we in danger every hour? I face death every day, as surely as I may boast about you, brothers and sisters, in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus as a mere man, what good did that do me?

If Christ did not rise:

Sin remains
Judgment awaits

Since Christ did rise:

Sin is defeated
Heaven awaits

Your best life is coming - so you will live for eternity



Since Christ did rise:

Your best life is coming – so you will live for eternity.

If the dead are raised – the life you should worry about is not the 80 years on earth – but the eternity of heaven.

Your best life is not life in this sick dying body.

You should lay up treasure in heaven – you should give everything to drag a few dying embers into the light of heaven by sharing your faith – you should count the cost and give Him everything.

Paul gave it his all. If he died – hallelujah – to die is gain.

Yes, his gospel ministry put him in constant danger.

Fighting wild beasts in Ephesus is probably metaphorical – facing opposition and persecution.

Paul says – if the dead are not raised – what good did it do me? I am wasting my life. I am a fool.

But – he saw the risen Christ.

The dead do rise. Sin is defeated. He was free to give this life his all and live for eternity.

But:

If Christ did not rise:

Sin remains
Judgment awaits

Your best life is now - so you will live for today

Since Christ did rise:

Sin is defeated
Heaven awaits

Your best life is coming - so you will live for eternity



If you believe Christ did **not** rise – you will reason that **your best life is now – so you will live for today.**

You will join the Corinthians in sucking the marrow out of this life.

Verse 32b:

If the dead are not raised, **Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.**

If the dead are not raised – this is it for bodily things – like eating and drinking – so have at it while you may.

Live your life for you while you can.

Verses 33-34:

Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” Come to your senses and stop sinning; for some people are ignorant about God. I say this to your shame.

Bad company corrupts good morals.

Listening to the false prophets in Corinth had corrupted the church.

Be careful who you listen to. Be careful the theology you accept.

There is so much bad theology out there – and it can corrupt.

This was not some unimportant area – end time events or views on who wrote Hebrews.

This was a core truth.

Paul calls it sin – **stop sinning!**

Bad theology had led to selfish living and Paul calls it out. It is sin.

And it betrays an ignorance about God. Shame on you. If you live this way – you may not even be saved.

Now – I doubt anyone here holds to the Corinthian error that the body is only for this life – so what we do in the body doesn't matter.

But I suspect some hold to a variation on this error. What we do in the body doesn't matter because God is a God of grace.

What do I mean?

If you hold to cheap grace – non-lordship – your goal is just to get to heaven. You are happy to be the least in heaven because eternal joy and bliss is its own reward.

How does this flesh out?

Matthew 16:27:

For the Son of Man ... will reward each according to what he has done.

2 Corinthians 5:10:

Each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Matthew 25:21:

Well done, good and faithful servant! ... I will put you in charge of many things.

Matthew 6:20–21:

Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

Revelation 22:12:

Look, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me to repay each person according to his work.

1 Corinthians 3:14–15:

If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will experience loss, but he himself will be saved—but only as through fire.



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There are many verses that talk about reward in heaven based on how we live in this life.

I will be honest – I don't understand heavenly reward. You get Christ, no sin and a perfect new earth forever – I can't imagine what extra reward there could be.

But the Bible does teach it.

However, many Christians I talk to say something like – hey I just want heaven – I'm happy to be saved even if by fire – as long as I'm saved.

I know I'm not laying up a lot of treasure in heaven – but I'm not greedy – any treasure there will do.

I'm not expecting a big reward and huge mansion in heaven – I will be happy just to be there.

The problem is – this seems to be code for – I know I am living this life pretty worldly – I know I'm not the greatest Christian – but hey – I believe I am a Christian – that I am saved by grace not works – I'm going to glory – it's all good.

Paul would say – shame on you.

Are you ignorant of God? How can any true Christian live like that?

If you just want to live for this world – maybe you don't even know the gospel – maybe you don't know Christ.

Fruit in our lives is not unimportant – it is proof that Christ is at work in us.

Brothers and sisters – where is your hope?

Perhaps when the tough times come – and they always do – instead of remembering the hope of heaven – you expect God to just give you an easy life.

Or perhaps you try and find comfort in the ways of the world – money, sex, drugs.

Perhaps you despair like the world and weep like the world.

This is *not* the hope of the resurrection.

When you fail to cling to that hope – it can corrupt the way you live your life.

Your body matters. The deeds done in the body matter. Don't play spiritual roulette with your eternal life.

If you love God and long for heaven – you will give everything you have now for the cause of Christ. You will cling to the hope of heaven.

Brothers and sisters – if you love Christ chances are a fair chunk of your friends and family think the life you live is foolish.

That you are wasting your education, your talents, your money.

Most of you could have bigger houses and better holidays.

Many of you give as much to the church as you do to your superannuation.

If you add up time given to the church, to worship, to serving – you give a decade or more of your life.

Why give so much time, money and service to the church?

The answer is that you believe your best life is yet to come.

And the resurrection of Jesus is proof of that.

A woman had been diagnosed with cancer and had been given three months to live. Her doctor told her to start making preparations to die. So, she contacted her pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and who she wanted involved.

Everything was in order and the pastor was preparing to leave when the woman suddenly remembered something very important to her. "There's one more thing," she said excitedly.

"What's that?" came the pastor's reply.

"This is very important." The woman continued, "At the viewing I want you to make sure there is a fork in my right hand."

The pastor wondered if the cancer had affected her mind.

“That confuses you, doesn’t it?” the woman asked.

“Well, to be honest, I am puzzled by the request,” said the pastor.

The woman explained. “In all my years of attending church socials and functions where food was involved, and let’s be honest, food is an important part of any church event, my favourite part was when whoever was clearing away the dishes of the main course would lean over and say ‘you can keep your fork.’ It was my favourite part because I knew that something better was coming.”

“When they told me to keep my fork, I knew that something great was about to be given to me. It wasn’t going to be jelly or ice cream. It was going to be pie or cake. So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder, ‘What’s with the fork?’ Then I want you to tell them, ‘She knew something better is coming.’”

Whatever the best bits of this life are – better is coming.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

No Resurrection – No Hope **(1 Corinthians 15:12-34 April 11, 2021)**

Main Point: The resurrection is proof that our best life is yet to come.

General Questions:

1. Why does your theology affect the way you live your life?
2. Why can a messed-up theology of the resurrection and the life to come affect the way you live today?
3. How would you summarise what the Corinthians expected to happen after death?
4. What do you imagine heaven to be like? What is the same or similar to this world and what is different? What is the same or similar to Eden and what is different?
5. Does it really matter if it turns out heaven is an entirely spiritual existence, and your body never rises?
6. If Jesus did not rise – why are you and I still in our sins?
7. When Jesus returns is your body renewed or recreated? Why? Does it matter?
8. When Jesus returns is this earth renewed or recreated? Why? Does it matter?
9. What are the effects of the cross on our lives now? What are the effects of the cross on our lives eternally?
10. Why would a body that does not rise show that sin remains and is not defeated?
11. What has to be defeated to eradicate every last vestige of sin?
12. What do you think the rewards in heaven are?
13. How does the hope of heaven inspire us to live wholeheartedly for Christ now?
14. How can cheap grace deceive you into living poorly in this life?

Application Questions:

1. If you were to look at the way you live your life would it be more:

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

OR

He is no fool who gains it all.

2. What are you looking forward to about heaven?
3. How would you describe: a. A life well lived and b. A life wasted?
4. Are you listening to or being influenced by anyone with bad theology? Does it matter?