

RESURRECTED

REJUVENATED



When I was nineteen years old I was an idealist.

I had just come out of some major addictions that almost completely wrecked my life, and I was overcome by the beauty of a new, sober reality. I felt more awake than ever and wanted to just drink in all that life had to offer me.

I was looking for the best possible thing constantly. I wanted the ideal education, ideal experiences, ideal relationships, ideal health, and ideal creativity to constantly be flowing out of me via my constant efforts in music and writing projects.

All of that pursuit led me on a spiritual search. What was the ideal center of belief? Buddha? Astrology? New Age? Native American Spirituality? Vishnu? Myself? I searched all of them and found inconsistencies along the way- obviously myself included!

And then, through searching the Gospels and the New Testament in a Comparative Religion Studies Class I was exposed to the core message of Christianity for the first time, and all the ideals I had leading up to that moment were actually completely obliterated by this ideal, perfect, loving, holy God of the Universe as revealed through His Son Jesus Christ!

And not only are we able to experience this ideal God of the Universe. We are heading towards an ideal existence in eternity forever with Him!

Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15:

⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption. (1 Cor. 15:50)

Eternal life with Christ and the inheritance of God's kingdom will require a heavenly spiritual body like Christ's (1 Cor 15:49). The perishable body of human existence ("sarx" or "flesh") will be replaced.¹ The thing is- the body of flesh, blood and human experience that we dwell in is not ideal. Not only do Eden and the fall of humankind prove this, but Paul had also, by proxy, established this fact in the preceding verses while comparing the human experience and the heavenly experience. Corruption could not inherit incorruption.

There is a difference between

- the natural body,
- the soul,
- and the spirit of a human being.

A natural body experiences the purely sensual things of life- things we can taste, smell, hear, touch and see. No doubt many things that can be experienced by the five senses can also lead us to God, but also some can detract us from God. We are all subject to decay and sensual degradation. "Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4:16) The taste of a warm cup of coffee can, on one hand, lead to a wonderfully powerful moment of worship and enjoyment of the presence of God on a cold morning. But that same warm cup day after day doesn't necessarily get better after it's been experienced thousands of times. With age, our sexuality, our faculties, and our senses fade gradually. What remains is the "inner person".

Is the soul the "inner person"? Some would say the soul is the hootspa of a human. It's the drive. It's the talent. It's the ego. It's the gifting of someone. However, even the things of the soul, while being used of God, can be wayward and untrustworthy simultaneously leading us away from Him. Watchman Nee extensively digs into this reality in his book "The Normal Christian Life". Our ability to converse with people,

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:50). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

speak to an audience, make beautiful music, dance, make beautiful visual art, work hard, solve technical or mechanical problems, or play a sport can be used to lead others to God as much as they can be polluted with the desire to inflate one's own sense of self-importance.

It's really the spirit within the human that is the most receptive to the regeneration of the Holy Spirit Himself. Only when that spiritual aspect of all we truly are collides with the Spirit of God is the inner person renewed, and then the soul and natural body begin to bow in submission to the Spirit also. That happens certainly as a single event as much as it happens in perpetuity throughout the life of a genuine follower of Jesus!

Paul goes on:

⁵¹ Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. (1 Cor. 15:51-53)

When Paul writes that “we will not all fall asleep”, he implies that not all Christ followers will die before Jesus returns. (Compare 1 Thess 4:15). We also must remember what Paul mentioned earlier in 1 Cor. 15. Those things that die experience change and transformation. This is a mystery because those who are alive when Jesus returns will not experience death, but they will still experience transformation into a glorious state.² They will be changed! The dead in Christ will first be raised, and then the living will be instantaneously transformed.³

All of this will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The last trumpet will signal the day of redemption, when God will bring to completion the salvation of His people (uniting them fully with Him). The trumpet, in the book of Exodus, signals the appearance of God (Ex. 19:16).⁴ In Joel 2:1, the trumpet serves (perhaps figuratively or symbolically) as a warning signal for God's judgment.⁵

This isn't the seventh trumpet in Rev. 11:15–19. The trumpets in Revelation 11 pertain to judgments during what can be understood as the Tribulation, whereas the trumpet in

² Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:51). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

³ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 545). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 545–546). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:51). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

1 Cor. 15:52 is related to the church. It is, however, the last blast for the church because this appearance shall never end (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12).⁶

When this goes down, *the corruptible body will be clothed with incorruptibility, and the mortal body will be clothed with immortality*. Christ will reverse the condition of mortality and grant to people the immortality God created them to enjoy.⁷

Again, we have the choice to live only for this life, where decay, degradation, and a gradually lackluster response to all that we once enjoyed will run its downward course. We can grasp at all that we think thrills us. We will inevitably find that the pursuit of it all ends in genuine emptiness. There are many pleasurable things in this life, yes, and they are certainly gifts from God, but they are not more satisfying than the Creator of them all!

Why not live for the life to come and find that the eternality of life truly breathes life into our past, present and future state? The God of the Universe wants us to flourish! He wants us to be raised again eternally and perpetually resurrect our decisions, our thoughts, our priorities, and our purposes!

⁵⁴ *When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:*

Death has been swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ ***Where, death, is your victory?***

Where, death, is your sting?

⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! (1 Cor. 15:54-57)*

You, Christ chaser, will one day be clothed with incorruptibility, and immortality! Death, the ultimate enemy, and its cousin, fear, will be swallowed up in victory! It will have no dominion over us! It will no longer have any sting within or outside of us!

My fear of death has certainly had the steering wheel of a lot of things in my life.

I once did drugs all of the time to try and avoid the pain of what felt like a meaningless life to me. It seemed to set me on a trajectory of gradually dying. Until, eventually, it led me to the brink of insanity and possible death, and then it led to extreme paranoia.

In all my spiritual conquests beyond sobriety I was desperately trying, by all my efforts, to defeat, once and for all, my fear of death and dying. Panic ensued. Anxiety followed.

⁶ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 545–546). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:53). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

There were plenty of moments where I felt carefree and other key times where I was absolutely paralyzed by the fear of potentially dying at any moment.

And then at the age of 20 the Holy Spirit spoke louder than all of those things to me that **“Death is swallowed up in victory!”** The words of Isaiah 25:8 signaled me towards the sign of the new age.

*⁸ When he has swallowed up death once and for all,
the Lord God will wipe away the tears
from every face
and remove his people’s disgrace
from the whole earth,
for the Lord has spoken. (Is 25:8)*

The hunger for the age to come, where the effects of humanity’s sin will be removed (1 Cor 15:21–22; Rom 5:17)⁸ exploded into my mind, heart, soul and spirit! Fear of death was removed and hunger for genuine life replaced it! The promise of what Christ will do in the restored Eden, the New Heavens and the New Earth became a translucent reality!

⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away. (Re 21:4)

Come on man, am I the only one *longing for something new*??? All my ideals have never led me there. All of my pursuits have hit walls. The Lord of the Universe blasts down our walls and unleashes our ideals into prayerful whispers of the indestructible future ahead!

In 1 Cor. 15:55 Paul quotes Hos 13:14 to taunt death on account of Christ’s victory.⁹

*¹⁴ I will ransom them from the power of Sheol.
I will redeem them from death.
Death, where are your barbs?
Sheol, where is your sting? (Ho 13:14)*

⁸ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:54). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (1 Co 15:55). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

The apparent victories of Satan, in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:13) and on Golgotha (Mark 15:22–24) were reversed on the cross (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14–15) and vindicated in the resurrection of Christ!¹⁰

Death came as a result of humankind’s rebellion and disobedience against the command of God (Gen. 3:17–19). The **Law**, which epitomized the command of God, was thus the mirror against which human rebellion and disobedience was starkly portrayed. Like the first Adam, all who followed him rebelled (1 Cor. 2:14). But through the obedience of the last Adam, **our Lord Jesus Christ** (15:45; Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8–11), came “victory” and life (1 Cor. 15:22; 2:15–16).¹¹

Paul concludes;

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord’s work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Cor. 15:58)

Paul’s doctrinal declarations lead to practical directives and this chapter’s conclusion is no exception. The Corinthians are urged to be steadfast in the apostles’ teaching (v. 2), unmoved by the denials of false teachers (Eph. 4:14). This certainty, especially concerning the Resurrection, provides an impetus to faithful service (cf. 1 Cor. 3:8; Gal. 6:9) since labor in the resurrected Lord is not “futile” or “vain” (*kenos*, “empty”; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10, 14, 17, 30–32).¹²

And you, beloved in the Lord, fueled by His resurrection power, be encouraged!!! Every discipleship group you show up at, every Sunday gathering of worship you serve and worship in, every time you lend an ear to someone, buy someone a meal, make someone a meal, sit over a cup of coffee, pay someone’s bill, give to the Church, give to a nonprofit, help to administrate, provide food for the hungry, help to organize, take in someone that needs somewhere to lay their head, build your generous, life-giving business, pour into a youth that needs a mentor, treat your employees well, treat your boss well, treat your spouse well, treat your kids well, treat your parents well, love your enemies, share the gospel, bless your neighbors, disciple someone in the ways of following Christ, work hard to provide for your family, or give a voice back to someone who’s had it taken from them, IT IS NOT IN VAIN!!!! Jesus died for such things! Jesus

¹⁰ Lowery, D. K. (1985). [1 Corinthians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 546). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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died so that His kids, His followers, His disciples would do the works that He's laid out for us!

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do. (Eph. 2:10)

14 *"We are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, (we must) let (our) light shine before others, so that they may see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:14-16)*

IT IS NOT IN VAIN! The work of a life of discipleship and ministry is rewarding but hard! There are fruitful seasons and there are seasons of pruning, waiting, and trial as well! God is in it all! KEEP serving Him! KEEP loving people! KEEP building others up! KEEP worshiping! KEEP praying! He will fuel it all by His all forgiving, powerful love that was put on glorious display by Jesus Christ dying on the cross to forgive EVERY sin of EVERY person that would ever truly follow Him and know Him! Glory be to His Name forevermore!

JESUS CHRIST is the ideal! JESUS CHRIST is the pinnacle! JESUS is the center! JESUS is the fulfillment of the longing in all of our hearts! He died, He rose again, He ascended to heaven so that we would have eternal life and a life lived to the fullness of heavenly joy amidst all and any of the struggles we may face!