

The Difference That the Resurrection of Christ Makes

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[0:00] Hear the words from the Gospel writer, Matthew. After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

! There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here. He is risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where you lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples he has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.

There you will see him. Now I have told you. Please turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. I'll read the first 26 verses.

[0:58] This is God's Word. Now brothers, I want to remind you of the Gospel I preached to you, which you received, and on which you have taken your stand. By this Gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the Word I preached to you.

Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter and then to the twelve.

After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all, He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

For I am the least of the apostles, and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect.

No, I worked harder than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether then it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

[2:11] But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless, and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God. For we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead.

But He did not raise Him, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile. You are still in your sins.

Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn, Christ the firstfruits, then when He comes, those who belong to Him.

[3:19] Then the end will come when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after He has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death. We've read the beginning of the chapter. Now we'll read the end, verses 51 to the end of the chapter, beginning in verse 51.

Listen.

When the saying that is written will come true, death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God.

He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

[4:44] The body of our Lord Jesus was taken down from the cross and laid in a nearby tomb, and a large stone rolled across the opening.

And He was as dead as any corpse pulled out of a crashed automobile and laid in a morgue.

But on the third day, His corpse came to life as the Spirit of Jesus was reunited with the same body in which He died on the cross.

And the grave that held Him for three days could hold Him no more, and He left it empty, so that those who went to the grave to find Him there were told, He is not here, He is risen.

Why do you seek the living among the dead? Now, that physical resurrection took place over in Jerusalem some 2,000 years ago.

[5:47] But that resurrection has made a staggering difference in my life. And I'm not alone this morning.

Most of you here have had your lives profoundly changed by that event. And so I just want to remind us all this morning of the profound difference that the resurrection of Jesus Christ makes in the life of a believer, not in all men, but in those who have put their trust in this Savior for salvation. And I'm going to speak quite personally this morning, and I want you to listen and take it quite personally, the difference that the resurrected Christ makes in our lives.

First of all, Christ's resurrection means that the whole of my Christian religion is not a farce. The Christian religion teaches many things besides the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

But do you know that if this one thing is not true, that none of the rest of it is worth anything? It all stands or falls with the resurrection of Christ.

[7:04] 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 14. Most of our points will be taken from this chapter on the resurrection. And here the Apostle Paul is willing to hang it all on this one peg of the resurrection of Jesus.

If Christ, verse 14, if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is useless, and so is your faith. Now, Paul was one who preached the whole counsel of God. And yet he says it's all empty, worthless, futile, if Christ has not been raised.

And by the way, so is your faith. You're following this religion. You're believing it. You're keeping all of its teachings.

Everything you do in your Christian life. It's all in vain. We might as well be Buddhists. Or Muslims this morning. It may be that I'm very sincere in my Christianity.

[8:10] Pouring time and money and effort and life into my religion. But it's all in vain if Christ is not risen. Jesus Christ claimed many things.

But the most staggering of his claims was that he would rise again on the third day. After I die, I'm going to come back to life three days later.

I am the resurrection and the life. Now, if that claim is false, then all he claimed comes tumbling down and the whole structure of truth is undone.

It's like some knitted sweaters. And there it is before you and there's a loose thread of yarn and you just give it a tug. And it just keeps pulling.

And to your dismay, after you've pulled and pulled, it's just a pile of yarn unraveled on your lap. That's the resurrection of Jesus Christ in its relationship to the whole garment of Christianity.

[9:15] You pull that one out and you have no sweater left. You have no Christianity at all. It stands or falls with the resurrection of Jesus.

If this is not true, then I've wasted my life preaching this message. And you've wasted much of your life believing it. But he is risen, as he said.

And that changes everything. You see, the resurrection becomes then the great proof of all that he ever said. It's the vindication of all his claims that he is the eternal son of God.

He is the Messiah, the Savior that God has sent to save his people from their sins. That eternal life is found in him alone. It's all proven true by his rising from the dead.

And so, because the resurrection resurrection of Christ is real, I have a Bible worth reading. Christ. Risen as he said.

[10:23] So, so I'll find everything else that he said is true. And it happens just as he said it would. I can put my trust in whatever Jesus said and never be disappointed for having done so.

As I open my Bible, I know that this is something I can count on because he lives. So, because of the resurrection, you see, I have a Bible to read. I have a Savior worth worshiping. I have a God worth knowing. I have a Christian life worth living. I have a message worth preaching. And I have a message worth your believing. Christianity is the one true religion. and it's verified by the risen Christ. Now, that's no small thing. That's made a profound difference in my life.

It's huge. And I owe it all to my risen Lord. How would you like to spend your whole lifetime following a religion? From the time you were a wee boy being brought up in a religion that you later found out to be a farce to the praise of Jesus' resurrection because he lives.

[11:38] The whole of my Christian religion is not a farce. Secondly, Christ's resurrection means that my sins are forgiven. My sins are forgiven.

Now, this is huge also because sin is the thing that sends people to hell. It is because of these that the wrath of God is coming. Colossians 3, 5 says and to live our whole life under the burden and guilt of sin is to have all the pleasures of life tainted by this memory that I have yet to receive from God the punishment for all my sins.

And so it's a wonderful thing to have the burden and guilt of sin removed. To have it all paid for. Forgiven. Taken away. To have my sins separated from me as far as the east is from the west. To have them taken away to where they're forgotten, they're buried, and they'll never be brought up against me again forever and ever. Blessed freedom from sin.

Now that's a blessing only for those whose trust is resting on Christ. You see, Christ died for sin on the cross. His death paid the full penalty due to it.

[13:02] But, here's the big difference. That death is only effective if Jesus rises from the dead. You see, these two, the death and resurrection of Jesus are two inseparable parts of His one great salvation.

Without the resurrection, His death means nothing to us. For a dead Savior can do us no good. No saving good. And so Paul says in verse 17, If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins.

Even if He's died, if He's not been raised, you're still in your sins. You see, faith joins us to this only Savior of sin.

And yet, it's only a living Savior that can apply the benefits of His death to sinners. This is illustrated to us in the Old Testament role of the high priest.

The Old Testament high priest had two great tasks. He made a blood sacrifice for sin. He slaughtered the animal there on the altar.

[14:24] And then He took that blood, that blood of the sacrifice into the presence of God, behind the veil, into the Holy of Holies. And He presented it there before God and prayed for the people.

That on the basis of that sacrifice, God would forgive their sins. That God would turn His wrath away and do them good rather than evil.

sacrifice and intercession. Both parts of the high priest's role in the Old Testament.

Turn, hold your place here, but turn over to Hebrews 9 because the book of Hebrews presents our Lord Jesus as the great high priest, the one who fulfills all these Old Testament pictures and types. Christ. And what we find is the Lord Jesus has the same two-fold work of the high priest. First of all, He must make a blood sacrifice for sin. And what is that sacrifice?

[15:27] Hebrews 9 and verse 26. He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

See, that's different about the priesthood. The priest never sacrificed himself. Obviously, he wouldn't be able to go back and present the blood and pray for the people if he had.

No, he sacrificed an animal. But now here, this great high priest must sacrifice for sin, but the only sacrifice that will atone for sin is not bulls and goats and sheep, but his own blood, so he sacrifices himself.

See, the same thing in verse 27, Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people. But that's not all he did. Remember, the high priest must still take the sacrifice into the presence of God, plead for forgiveness on the people's part on the basis of that sacrifice.

But he's dead. The priest is dead because he was himself the sacrifice. Oh, that requires and makes absolutely necessary then that he be raised from the dead, that he might go present himself the sacrifice, not in some holy of holies in a temple in Jerusalem, but into the real holy place where God dwells in heaven.

[16:58] We see all of this stated for us in chapter 9 and verse 24. Christ is risen that he might intercede for us in heaven.

Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one. He entered heaven itself now to appear for us in God's presence. Same two roles, sacrifice, intercession.

Chapter 7, verses 23 to 25 show how much better Jesus is as a high priest than the Old Testament priests. Verse 23 of chapter 7, Now there have been many of those priests since death prevented them from continuing in office.

Yeah, they had to be replaced because they kept dying off. But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

Such a high priest meets our need. You get it? Because Jesus lives forever, he doesn't have to be replaced as all the other high priests.

[18:12] No, he says, I am the living one. I was dead and behold, I am alive forevermore. So he is able to save completely all who come unto God through him.

That's why my sins are forgiven. Because my high priest made the ultimate sacrifice of himself and then rose from the dead to present that sacrifice before God in heaven and to plead the merits of his sacrifice as my righteousness and as the reason that my sins should be forgiven.

It's all mediated to me through the living Savior, a great high priest who always lives. But you see, if he's not risen, then I have no one in heaven to plead his precious blood for me.

I'm still so sinful and God is still so holy that if for a moment my high priest were not there for me, I would be damned.

I would perish in my sins. And so Paul says, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Oh, but he he lives.

[19:24] He ever lives above for me to intercede. His all redeeming love, his precious blood to plead. And so John the apostle writes and he says, my dear children, I write these things to you so that you do not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have one who speaks to the father on our defense. Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

Right now, he is speaking to the father on my defense. Forgive him. Oh, forgive he cries, nor let that ransom sinner die.

He's pleading for me the merits of his own blood. Yes, he sinned again. But I've paid the price for that sin. So forgive him. You're righteous.

Oh, Lord, you are just. You are faithful. So forgive him and cleanse him from all unrighteousness. He prays. He pleads for me. My advocate appears for my defense on high.

[20:32] The father bows his ears and lays his thunders by. Not all that hell or sin can say shall turn his heart, his love away. And so Paul says, who shall lay anything against the charge of God's elect?

It is God that justifies. Who is he who condemns? Christ Jesus who died. More than that, who was raised to life is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Do you see it? What a difference the risen Christ has made for me. The forgiveness of sins because he's ever there before the father presenting himself as my righteousness.

My whole Christian religion is not a farce. My sins are forgiven. Thirdly, because Christ is risen, I have a living Savior every day. And nothing else will do because I need a Savior every day of my life.

life. I try to keep a journal recording significant events in my Christian experience, insights, trials, answers to prayer, blessings.

[21:50] And what I found is I'm very sporadic and I forget about it and I'll enter maybe once every other year. I'm so inconsistent. And as I was thinking about this yesterday, I realized there's not a

day when the living Christ does not make a significant difference in my life.

But in reality, I don't have that journal out every day recording the staggering difference that is made because he lives. Because he's alive.

And he's alive for me. There's a sweet word in Hebrews 6, 19 and 20 that speaks of our hope. Our hope's like an anchor. It gives us great encouragement.

We have this anchor as we have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure because it enters into the inner sanctuary behind the curtain where Jesus who went before us has entered on our behalf.

Where does our hope hook? Not on anything in this world, but into the inner sanctuary where Jesus has gone before us and where he is on our behalf.

[23:09] He's there on my behalf. He's there for me. You want to interview Archangel Michael or have Michael interview Jesus.

Jesus, what are you doing alive in this place? Why have you risen from the dead? Why are you here in heaven? And he would say, I'm here on their behalf. I'm here on his behalf.

On John's behalf. I'm here for him. I'm here for her. That's why I'm here. I've entered on their behalf. Drink it in. The wonder that he ever lives for me.

He's there for me. And we've just seen the difference that makes in our forgiveness. We have forgiveness of sins because he's there for me. Oh, there's so much more. Because he's there for me, my prayers are heard on high.

Is that not a staggering, amazing thing? Every day when I pause and in my heart and just my thoughts or my words, I rise to heaven and I cry out to God on high through Jesus name.

[24:13] That prayer is immediately heard there because Jesus lives. I would have no access to the throne of grace, but through him. But because our great high priest has gone through the heavens, he's there for us.

Therefore, we're told to come with confidence to the throne of grace that we might receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. He's there so I can pray. He's there so my wee voice is heard in heaven and my concerns are felt there because he's able to sympathize.

He's a living savior with a beating heart, a human heart as well as a divine reality to him. He's there in our flesh and he's able to sympathize with us in our weakness.

He's able to feel what we feel in our temptations and because he himself suffered when he was tempted. He's now able as this living savior to help us in our trials and temptations.

What a difference that makes in my life every day. You think about it. What if none of your prayers got into heaven? What a change because he lives and gives us access to the throne of grace.

[25:29] And I've sinned and I can come and I can say father forgive me look on him and pardon me look on the one at your right hand. Yeah there he is my representative my redeemer.

Look on him and do me good for his sake. Meet my needs. And then because he's alive every day I'm supplied with supernatural resources for living the Christian life.

I say because he lives I have supernatural resources for living the Christian life. Jesus says I am the vine. You are the branches.

If a man abides in me and I in him the same will bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing. And his resurrection means that I am attached to a living vine not a dead stump.

If he's still in the grave then you might have hooked me up with a dead stump. There's no virtue. But because he's alive all the healing strength the nurturing strength the power the divine sap of the divine life flows from him into me.

[26:43] And that is exactly what I need for living the Christian life. Today and yesterday and I'm going to need it tomorrow. And blessed be God I have a living vine.

And so he equips me and he enables me with everything good for doing his will. And then it's because he's a living king that he is able to rule over everything so that it works for my good.

A wonderful thing to have that kind of a living king on throne of everything so that all things must serve my good. If he's dead in the tomb my friend that's Romans 8 28 isn't reality.

And he's a living prophet who by his word and spirit is teaching me the will of God and he's creating in me a hunger and thirst for righteousness and to know him and he's moving me.

He's moving in the very inner recesses of my heart to keep his commandments. And he's a living savior who daily leads me and feeds me and protects me and keeps me.

[27:52] Who fights against the powers of darkness for me and who will not let me be tempted beyond what I am able to bear but with the temptation will provide a way to escape.

All because he's living. He's alive. He's intimately involved and active in my life. He comes after me when I stray. And he rebukes me and he disciplines me and he brings me back into the narrow way. Because he's alive. He's a living shepherd. A dead shepherd can do his sheep no good. When they stray they just keep on straying. But the living shepherd goes after them and brings them back. And his goodness and steadfast love follow me every day of my life. I say that makes a difference. And all because Jesus lives.

It's only a living Savior who's able to keep me from falling. Jude 24. I'm prone to fall. I'm prone to fall spiritually. I'm prone to go back to the world.

[28:56] Back to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. I'm pulled. But there's one who lives who's able to keep me from falling. All because he lives.

He lives. He lives within my heart. If I, if Jesus was still in the tomb, I'd be left to myself. And left to myself, I can't make it through a day without falling and falling hard and going back to the world. We little know what a wreck we'd make of ourselves if he wasn't alive. Just one day. Just one day. We can't live the Christian life for a day without the living Savior. We need him every hour. We can't stand before God for a second without him appearing there for us. What a difference every day Jesus makes in my life.

Fourth, because Jesus has risen, I have a sure hope in the day of death. Death is the destiny of every man. The living should take this to heart.

[30:03] The scriptures say. And it seems I've been involved in more funerals in this past year than I ever have. And they've been difficult funerals. They've been funerals that have been hitting close to home.

Sickness and death is a mark left on every door. But they've done me good in that they've reminded me that I too must die one day.

one day the pastor here will be asking you to pray for me in a hospital bed somewhere dying. I'll be the one on the sick bed, the death bed, waiting to die.

You'll be asked to pray for me. Or I'll be caught in some unexpected accident and I'll be face to face with death. And what then? What difference does the resurrection of Jesus make in the day of death?

My friend, if your Jesus is no good in the day of death, he's no good. You need one to save you in the day of your death. And a dead Savior can do you no good.

[31:13] But because Jesus lives, I will too. We sang that, didn't we? Jesus lives and so shall I. That's not just the words of a hymn writer. That's the words of scripture. scripture. So I hope to show you presently.

Because he was raised from the dead, I too will be raised from the dead. That's a pillow for any deathbed. But if Christ has not been raised, then neither will I.

And then all the hope I have is just for this life. And if that's the only hope I have, I'm to be pitied above all men. Look at verses 20 through 23 of 1 Corinthians 15.

Paul's been spending much time on what if Jesus is not alive and now he says, but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. Verse 20.

He has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, that is one man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man, one man.

[32:21] For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive, but each in his own turn. Christ the firstfruits, then when he comes, those who belong to him.

Kids, mom ever say, take turns, take turns? That's the way God is saying it. We're all, all who are in Christ are going to rise. Christ, but must take your own turn, each in his own turn.

Christ first. Christ the firstfruits. Now, in Israel, when it was harvest time, they held a festival of firstfruits.

And the reapers would go out into the field, and they wouldn't reap the field, they would just reap the first sheaves of grain and bring it back. And they would hold a festival of celebration.

What were they celebrating? Not just the few sheaves that they had in their hands. Wow, this was a great harvest, was it? No. This was a firstfruit of more to come.

[33:24] Where this came from, there's plenty more that's going to come. So let's rejoice and praise God for his goodness. And they held the festival of firstfruits. And so, the resurrection of Christ was the firstfruits.

of a great harvest at the end of the age. And there's this field, this grave, with all the bodies that belong to Jesus.

They're in this, the furrows of the grave, as we sang. There they are. The firstfruits have been plucked. Jesus has been raised from the dead.

And then, when he, Christ, comes, those who belong to him. Your turn's coming, Christian. All in Christ will then be made alive.

So if the firstfruits have been harvested from the dead, it guarantees that all the rest who belong to Christ will also be raised with him.

[34:27] You'll never have eternity with Christ the head raised and his body still dead. No, no. All in Christ will rise too.

So, brothers and sisters, what a difference the resurrection makes in the day of death. Our resurrected Lord is waiting to receive our spirit the moment we die.

For to depart and to be with Christ is better by far. That's what it is. To die is to be with Christ. And then we await the coming of Christ when he will come to this harvest field and raise the bodies of all that belong to him to be with him forever.

So that what happened at the grave of Jesus 2,000 years ago, it's going to happen at your grave if you're in Christ. Just as surely as Jesus lives, you're going to live.

For in a flash, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we will be changed. And then the saying that is written will come true.

[35:35] Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. There's the reason that we have hope in the day of our death. death. The sting is gone.

The sting is gone. What's the sting of death? What is it that causes death to be such a dreadful enemy? It's sin. Did you see that? The sting of death is sin.

It's dying knowing that I'm a sinner before this holy God, and I'm going to appear to be judged by Him. But if I am in Christ and trusting in His death and resurrection, you see the stinger's been pulled out.

My sin has been paid for. I have a living Savior who answers to every charge of my sin. He has a righteousness for every unrighteousness of mine, and His righteousness covers me.

[36:42] And so, sin has been taken care of for the believer. The stinger's gone. Victory over death. And we follow in His train. Yes, the resurrection of Jesus is the difference between despair and hope in the day of death.

It's the difference between living all your life in bondage to the fear of death and living with that living hope, dying with that living hope in a risen Savior.

Jesus lives, and so shall I. Death, thy sting, is gone forever. He who deigned for me to die lives the bands of death to sever.

He shall raise me from the dust. Jesus is my hope and trust. Jesus lives. And death is now, but my entrance into glory. How is it that the Apostle Paul can say, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain?

He didn't say anything that every believer in Jesus is not able to say in the day of death. It's because Jesus has pulled the stinger out of death by taking it Himself and has triumphed over it in His death and resurrection.

[37:57] And so now the worst that death can do is bring us home to Him. I'm thankful that Jesus rose from the dead because He gives me hope in the day of death.

death. Comfort one another with these words, even as you look upon the grave of loved ones. Hope in Christ.

And then fifthly, because Christ is risen, the day of judgment can be faced with confidence.

Because death is not the only thing that we have an appointment with. It's appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment.

Then the judgment. Oh yes, we not only have that awesome day of our death to face, but we have a day of judgment. When I must stand before my Maker and the books will be opened and He will judge me for the things done while in the body, whether they be good or bad.

And you've got an appointment for that day too. And it's an appointment no man can break. Have you thought about that lately?

[39:04] The world's not reminding you of it. But I'm here to remind you of it. It's in God's word. You've got an appointment to keep. A day of judgment. What a difference the Lord Jesus makes in the day of judgment.

It's the difference between heaven and hell, isn't it? Because He's living, He's able to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

Okay, there you are. You're coming into judgment hall. You and God. And if you're alone, my friend, you have no hope and you have no confidence and you will, your knees will not be able to hold you up because you know the sentence and what the punishment will be.

But if you're in Christ, you won't be alone. You'll be on the arm of your Savior. And He will present you to the Father without fault and with great joy.

Jude 1, 24. Not a dead Savior. A living Savior. Take you by the arm. Say, Father, here I am and the children you have given me.

[40:15] You gave them to me. I died for them. I rose for them. I lived for them. They're mine. They're yours. Do them good for my sake. Remember my righteousness for all their sin.

He will present us to the Father. Remember Jesus said that those who acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior here and now, He will acknowledge them before His Father in heaven.

That's it. He'll say, Father, these are mine. She's one of mine. And He will acknowledge us before the Father in the day of judgment.

What's that going to be worth to you? In the day when you stand before God. To have Him, Jesus, the living Christ, own you in that day. He'll stand by me.

He'll answer for me as my advocate, my defense attorney. And He'll say, Father, look on me and pardon Him.

[41:22] And that will be enough. That will be enough. What a difference the resurrection makes in the day of judgment. And lastly, because Christ is risen, my labor in the Lord is not in vain.

I say lastly because that's where Paul ends lastly, isn't it? Verse 58. What a long chapter this is. It would have been nice if we could have read the whole, but here He comes.

Where's He leading? Where's He going? At the end of it all, a glorious message on the resurrection of Christ. And because He rose again, we in Christ will rise again. Therefore, because that's all true, therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm.

Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Christians, have you thought lately that much of what you do in the Christian life is a waste of time if there's no resurrection of the dead?

So much of what you do has reference to another world that if there isn't another world, then you're living in vain. That indeed, everything that you do has reference to another Lord.

[42:42] And if He's dead, nothing that you're doing amounts to a hill of beans. We're like the farmer and he takes precious grain, think back in the days of pioneers, okay?

And there's the seed corn. And there's the sack. And maybe things were thin in a hard winter and in the spring, there's not much food.

It's been a long time since harvest. And all He's got is this sack of food. And the kids are hungry. And He takes that sack and He goes out and He sticks it in the ground.

You and I know what He's doing, but imagine you were a Martian. You were a Martian and you'd never seen harvest and planting before. And you've come to Him and you've just been dropped down and you're watching this farmer and he's taking perfectly good seed that the family could eat and He's sticking it in the ground.

What a waste. What an idiot. What a fool. Until the day of harvest. And then the fool is thought the most wise man on earth.

[43:56] And the more he's stuck in the ground, the wiser he was. But that's a picture of your life. Every day, you're sticking seed in the ground.

And the world who lives for the day and for the moment and for the present as if there's no tomorrow and no other world and no eternity and no judgment and no rewards and no punishment

are watching you.

And they're saying, what a waste. Or they go off to church again. I just think what they could be doing with their Sundays. They even give some of their money.

Hard-earned money. It's going down the drain. It's time spent praying. If there's no other world, you see, it all looks so stupid, so foolish.

Your labors in worshiping, your work of the Lord in witnessing, you're serving the body of Christ, you're visiting the sick and shut-in where you have no hope of receiving something back from your ministry.

[45:01] You're fighting against sin and temptation, denying yourself in order to serve others in the Lord. Indeed, everything you do as unto the Lord. That's the work of the Lord. In fact, Paul says it's what a slave does for his master.

In other words, it's what you do 40 hours a week or whatever you work. Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything and do it not only when their eye is on you to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for men. Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward, it is the Lord Christ you're serving.

So I don't care what you're doing. It's not just for preachers, the work of the Lord in preaching. It's for you all in everything that you're doing all week long as you are serving the Lord on your job.

Doing it not just for man, but doing it for the Lord. So you work hard when everybody else is sloughing off. What a waste. You know, you could take it easy too. Looks like you're sticking good seed in worthless dirt.

[46:22] But there is a harvest and that's the whole point of the passage. The whole chapter. Jesus rose. We're going to rise. There's a judgment. There are rewards and punishments.

There's a whole eternity that awaits us. There's the inheritance that awaits those who have served the Lord. But if Jesus is dead, there is no harvest.

It's just wasted seed in the ground. And that's why Paul says these verses verses 29 through 33.

That if Christ has not been raised, then here's my motto. And he takes a motto from the world lane.

Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die. He says, that's my motto.

After all, I've not exposed myself to dangers every day just for the fun of it. I've not fought wild beasts in Ephesus for the entertainment. I've not denied myself and served as we saw last week.

[47:28] Going and going and going. I'm not just doing it for the fun of it. I'm doing it because there's a harvest. And if there's no harvest, then let's party.

If that's all there is, then let's keep dancing. Let's eat and drink and be merry if there's no afterlife

after all. There's something commendable about the Apostle Paul's no-nonsense approach to life.

He says this whole business of the Christian life, if Christianity's true, it's worth everything. If it's not true, if the resurrection is false, it's not worth anything.

It's an all-or-nothing proposition. And that's why Paul gave it his all, because it is true. And that's why he calls on us to do the same. And so he comes to the end of this consideration of the resurrection.

He says, therefore, my dear friends, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you.

[48:40] Don't let all the worldlings around you who live as if there's nothing after this life. This is it. Got to get all we can get here and now. Don't let them move you. Stand firm in your faith.

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know. Wonderful words. Because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

And how do you know it? Because 2,000 years ago, in a tomb outside of Jerusalem, Jesus rose as a firstfruits of all who belong to him who will rise in that final harvest.

I trust, believer, that we can rejoice together in the differences that Jesus has made in our lives because the resurrection is real. and if I could have a word with any who are unconverted among us this morning, you've heard of what difference the resurrected Christ makes in our lives.

But on your own, you're lost. You need this risen Jesus. And that means that the message of the resurrection is a message of great hope and good news.

[49:56] There's a living Savior for sinners. sinners. He lives. And He lives to save sinners. He lives to save completely all who come to the Father through Him.

Isn't that something? There is this wonderful Savior and He's alive this morning in heaven to save all who will come to the Father through Him. He sees your sin. He sees the burden.

He sees the weight. He knows your heart. He knows what you're doing with Him. Whether you're rejecting Him or receiving Him.

And where He sees you receiving Him, He saves you. It's this Jesus, this living Savior. So seek Him at once. Trust in His life, His death, His resurrection.

Bring Him your sin. He delights to forgive it. Bring Him your life. He'll give you eternal life. Don't hold back anything. And He'll not hold back any grace at all for you.

[50 : 57] He's a wonderful Savior as many of us have found Him to be. Think of this as you leave this morning, my friend. What a difference this living Savior could make in your life today.

You came in here lost and on your way to hell. You could leave saved and on your way to heaven. What a difference. And what a difference He would make in your every tomorrow and in the day of your death and in the day of judgment and every day thereafter.

Amen. Father, thank You for the words of life. Thank You that our hope is not dead in a grave but lives because Christ lives.

It's hard for us even to imagine that our names could be on this living Savior this morning as He pleads for us as He's there for us to strengthen our faith to see that our name is written on His hands and He prays for us.

Lord, You know that the day of death and judgment what it will be for us. We all will be there. You will be there. Oh, how blessed for us in Christ that You live.

[52 : 15] Please come and draw others to this Savior that they too might appear in that day as being in Christ and not outside of Him. So send us who are in Christ on our way rejoicing and send those who are outside of Christ running to this Savior.

Thank You for Your willingness to save. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.