

Abounding Triumphantly in the Work of the Lord

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and we'll be reading verses 50 through 58.

1 Corinthians 15, 50 through 58. The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Listen, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory.

[1 : 27] 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 yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Come preach to us. What a treat to be with y'all. Did you catch that, y'all? It's really a blessing, and we'll be in that very text here as we go to the Word of God.

Just want to say a big, great, big thank you. A whole bunch of great, big thank yous. Stan and Kevin, thank you for picking us up. My goodness, what a wonderful reception.

Roger and Carol, thanks for all your working with us and planning and things, and thank you for that. And Max, where's Max? Max here? Max, there he is.

[2 : 40] Sourdough bread and cinnamon rolls. We made a dent in all that, brother. It was great. And of course, Colin and Casey and Dan and Catherine, thank you for wonderful meals.

And can't say enough about my dear, dear friend, Pastor John Heaney. And all y'all that have put up with us and dealt with us and helping us with different ways to minister here this weekend.

Thank you for your kindness to us. By the way, I really was blessed and impressed with your Scripture memory program. And Kathy and I, I asked if I could swipe a couple of these.

I took one, Kathy took one. And you know, Pastor John, Kathy and I, we're talking, we'd like to participate with you. Can we do that? And if we could work it out, anybody, I mean, someone call us maybe once a month or every other week or something and let us say our verses to them.

Zoom us to the whole church. Okay, I hadn't thought of that one. But yeah, I was thinking that if somebody could work with us and like I say once, and we'd take anybody, older person, teenager, even kids.

[4 : 08] I'd test us on our verses. We'd love it. So that's a great idea. Kathy and I don't have that going with any particular church. And we'd just love to be more connected with y'all on a regular basis.

That would be a blessing. So you could serve some missionaries, somebody, by just encouraging us in the Word of Christ. Let us go to the Word of God.

And this message is entitled, Abounding Triumphantly in the Work of the Lord. Not just surviving in the Work of the Lord, but abounding triumphantly in the Work of the Lord.

And we saw this passage from 1 Corinthians 15 and how that it's a passage about the second coming of Jesus Christ. Well, let's turn now over to a sister text.

Will you go with me to 1 Thessalonians and chapter 4? 1 Thessalonians 4 and verse 13.

[5 : 31] But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren. By the way, you're going to see a lot of brethren. Paul wrote his letters and he's constantly referring to the churches as brethren.

And there's a reason for that. We've all come out of the same womb. That's the Greek word, *adathos*. Out of the same womb. We're brothers and sisters in Christ.

We have the same father. We have the same elder brother. We have the same spirit of God in the lungs of our soul. We have the same inheritance. We have the same name. We are brothers and sisters in Christ.

And he's constantly making this reference. But I don't want you to be ignorant, brethren. Concerning those who have fallen asleep. Those who have died. Lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who sleep, those who have died in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, by the word of Christ, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep or in the state of death.

[6 : 50] Their bodies are in the grave. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, with the trumpet of God. Sound like 1 Corinthians 15?

The dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

We are to be comforters like the Holy Spirit is the comforter. He's the *paraclete*. We are to be with the Holy Spirit. We are to be with the Holy Spirit. We are to be to one another what the Holy Spirit is to us.

And of course, with his heart and mind and life, we do speak to one another and bring that kind of comfort. Let's go back to 1 Corinthians and just kind of take a survey of the letter that Paul wrote to this Corinthian church.

[8 : 05] A church that had all kinds of sin struggles, all kinds of trouble, because that's what churches do. We have trouble. In the first three chapters, if you want to just flip through, you might even see headings and subheadings in your Bible.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3, there was problems with division in the church. And one of the primary problems were the people were exalting certain preachers.

Some of the folks said, I like Peter. Now, Peter can preach. And when he preaches, he's a man's man. He's got calluses on his hands.

He's got a blue collar. He's a man of man's. He's a leader. I like Peter. We need more Peters. Others said, what about Paul?

Nobody knows theology better than Paul. No one works harder as a preacher and a missionary like Paul. We need more than like Paul. Other people say, now, what about Apollos?

[9 : 09] Now, there's a guy that can preach. He can preach down the stars. He knows how to shuck the corn. That guy can preach. And everybody had their own preferences of leaders and styles of pastoring and preaching.

And Paul is saying, stop. You're killing the church. All our pastors are gifts to the church.

And he gives certain men to certain churches at certain times in the way that he, in his amazing wisdom, is able to do.

And it's not for us to have preferences of men and styles. It's for us to thank God for his provision of these gifts.

So, stop with the exalting men. Stop with the personality worshiping. Stop with all that. And make sure Christ. Christ is the one that you revere and love more than anybody, anything.

[10 : 13] Chapter 4, there he has to deal with pride in the church. Because they had become unteachable. They thought they knew enough.

And they thought they were more advanced spiritually than they really were. And they lost that sweetness and that trainability and that teachability.

And it was not a pretty picture. Young men especially have a tendency toward that. It's important to be humble and teachable and trainable.

And stop talking and do more listening than talking. Chapter 5, there's sexual sin in the life of the church. And Paul says this is completely unacceptable.

And he says any sexual activity outside of the bonds of holy matrimony is sin. Stop it. Deal with it. Chapter 6, there were disputes that were going to civil courts.

[11 : 15] They were dragging their arguments before the public. And what a terrible testimony it was. The church was adequate to solve many of the conflicts they have.

So make sure that you don't drag your dirty laundry as the people of God out before pagans. Seek the Lord. Chapter 7, marriages were struggling.

And this chapter is all about marriage. You do it God's way, it works. Nothing wrong with marriage itself. Today marriage has such a bad rap.

But it's not the fault of marriage. It's our selfishness that's at play. Plus, in that chapter he's saying, if God has called you to be single for whatever time, make sure that you do it to the glory of God and you spend yourself in the work of the Lord, you're more free to do that.

Chapter 8, they were into claiming personal rights, calling it Christian liberties. They were eating meat that was offered to idols regardless of how it affected anybody else.

[12 : 24] They weren't loving one another. They were just flaunting their freedoms and insisting upon, hey, I get to do that because I get to do that. Chapter 9, the pastors were not being supported financially in gospel ministry.

The people weren't giving like they should. And folks, we got to give. And yes, it takes sacrifice. But it's the way that God has ordained for the care and the building of his church.

And also in chapter 9, again, he deals with claiming personal rights so that their gospel outreach among the unconverted was being crippled.

We have to care about the lost around us and find ways to connect with them culturally, even if it means self-denial of our personal rights and our preferences.

Chapter 10, they were killing the unity of the church with complaining and criticizing while living self-centeredly.

[13 : 27] And he says, you're grieving the Holy Spirit. In chapter 11, they were having gender issues. The men were not being men and the women were not being women as God designed and ordained.

They had forgotten the God-ordained order of men being leaders in the life of the church. And also in chapter 11, the Lord's Supper was being abused. They had this elite group that was formed so they could have this click of using the Lord's Supper thoughtlessly for themselves and they didn't wait for others.

He said, hey, we've got to take the Lord's Supper at the Lord's table seriously. It's a sacred time for the whole body with Christ right here as the chairman of the board.

Do you know where that phrase comes from, chairman of the board? Well, Kathy and I were in the north of England and we're taking a walk through the oldest, presently lived in castle in England.

And we're going through the different stairways and seeing bedrooms. People live there, would get up in the mornings and put all their stuff away and shove it under the beds or in the closets so that people could be able to walk, tours could go through their house all day long.

[14 : 55] And we're coming down into the dining room, down this huge staircase, into this dining room that was made of huge rocks. Their walls were just amazing.

The fireplace was gigantic. And right in the middle was this table, long wood table made of three long boards.

And on either side of this table were wood benches. But on one end was what you would think of as a captain's chair. It had armrest and a high back.

And that was the man of the house. And that's what these three boards became known as what you think of going to college.

You pay for room and board. Food. Well, this man that sat at the head of the table was the chairman of the board. He was the leader.

[16 : 02] When we come to the Lord's table, we need to understand that we have a chairman of the board. His name is Jesus. And we need to show up at the table when he feeds his family.

And we need to observe it in a holy, sacred way because he is guiding. That's his table. He's the chairman of the board.

And we folks in Corinthians, in the church there, you're not doing it very well. You're treating it like it's your table. Or you can come or not come and do it however you want.

But that's not the way the chairman of the board wants it to be. Chapters 12 to 14, they were abusing the gifts of the Holy Spirit and using these wonderful gifts that God gave for self-promotion.

And they're causing confusion. These gifts were given for the good of the body, not for the showing off of one's spirituality. But they were given to love and to serve one another.

[17:13] And then chapter 15, even the doctrine of the resurrection was being denied. What? Take away the resurrection of the body and the coming of Christ?

Take that away? Take that away. What hope do you have then? Of course Jesus rose. And of course he's coming again. And the graves will be opened. And we shall be changed.

And our eternal home is in heaven. And we will see our loved ones again. And we shall see Jesus and forever be with him. So here's a church with a whole bunch of problems.

29 chapters are devoted to this church. From the pen of the apostle Paul. 29. Philippians. 4.

How many Ephesians? How many Thessalonians? 5. And? How many Colossians?

[18:18] Come on, folks. 29. 29. 29. 29. A church with a lot, just need for all kind of admonishments and exhortations.

Because they had a lot of problems. But they were still a real, true church. And Paul is so gracious to them to teach them. And he knows that Christ is going to work in them to the end.

And he is, Christ is going to present them faultless to God before the Father in the last day before the throne of God. And he says, All that to say, churches have problems.

And we faithfully serve and participate and are committed to serving and laboring in the life of the church that Christ has given to us. Even though there are problems.

Now back to our text in chapter 15 and verse 50. We cannot get into heaven in this body.

[19:26] This body is perishable. It is corruptible. This body has an expiration date. Just like those vegetables and those cartons of milk you buy at the store, they are perishable.

So is this body. It's perishable. We are running out of time. We better use the time we got while we have it.

Verse 51. But not all saints are going to die. Death as we know it. But Jesus is coming again. And when he does, all are going to be changed. Paul believed that Jesus would come in his lifetime.

And every generation since has as well. But in verse 52. When he comes, this will happen. In a moment. That word means in an atom of time.

That is a portion of time that is so short, it's incapable of further division. When Jesus comes, you won't have time to think about it.

[20:40] In the twinkling of an eye, we are going to be changed. General Electric has timed that at three one hundredths of a second. There's going to be the sound of a trumpet.

It's the last trumpet. Trumpets were used for various purposes. Especially for gathering people. And this will be the last trumpet. For the last gathering.

And we'll hear the voice of the archangel. We'll hear the trumpet of God. And it will wake up the dead. We saw in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. That there will be a loud summons.

This triumphant, authoritative shout. The graves will open. The bodies will rise. And they will be reunited with their spirits. That have gone to heaven before when they died.

There's going to be a summons. When Jesus comes again. You will be there.

[21:39] I will be there. No matter what you're doing. You may be at school. You may be at the office. You may work outside on the crew. You may be at the ball game.

No matter what. No child of God is going to be left behind. You have lived for your Christ. You have fought for your Christ. You have served your Christ. And when he comes again.

You will be there. We and we will be changed. Notice verse 53. The nature of that change. This perishability. We'll put on imperishability.

This mortal will put on immortality. Because right now. We're living in a fallen. Perishable state. In a state of continual deterioration.

You can tell that. Because. Your hair keeps changing colors. And there's a whole lot less of it.

We've got issues with our eyes.

[22:39] And our ears. And our teeth. We've got issues with our bones. We've got all kinds of issues. We know. We are in a perishable state.

We know. We know. We know. My friend. Raymond Perron calls it the avalanche. For those of you that don't speak French. That's avalanche.

I used to be an inch and a half taller than I am now. You've heard of the five B's. Let's see. Balding. Bifocals. Bridges. Bulges and bunions. Those are signs. That we are aging.

And we are perishable. Maybe you heard C.S. Lewis say. About aging. He says. First you lose your shape. And then you lose your mind.

[23 : 38] These are signs we're heading for the grave. But on that day when Jesus comes. This death will be swallowed up in victory. And we says in verse 51.

This transformation of our bodies. It's a mystery. Will you turn with me to another sister text. In Philippians 3. Philippians 3. Philippians 3. Philippians 3. Philippians 3. Philippians 3. Philippians 3.

Philippians 3. We're going to start in verse 17. And notice how he starts brethren. Oh you see that in verse 13 brethren.

Oh you see that in verse 1 brethren. Oh look at chapter 4 in verse 1. Therefore my beloved and long for brethren. My joy and crown so stand fast in the Lord.

[24 : 36] Beloved. You see how we ought to talk to one another. Always ought to be talking to build in one another. And assure one another of our loving affectionate bonds in Jesus Christ.

It's important how we greet one another. You know five times we're told to greet one another with a holy kiss. Not that we need to go around kissing now. But it's important how we greet in an affectionate way.

So that people know. Maybe it's a firm handshake. Maybe it's a hug. Maybe it's just a face that communicates. I really love you.

And I really receive you. And rejoice in you. And make everybody really feel that family bond of love. But notice as he goes on in verse 17.

Philippians 3.17. Brethren. He says join in following my example. My example. He begins it this way. Note those who so walk.

[25 : 42] As you have us for a pattern. Those that walk like we do. And they walk according to the description of a Christian. For many walk.

They live their lives. In such a way. I've told you of them often. And now tell you even weeping. It breaks my heart to tell you about those.

Who are enemies of the cross of Christ. What is it to be an enemy of the cross of Christ? Is it that. You say terrible sacrilegious things about the cross.

Not necessarily at all. What it could mean is. When it comes to the cross of Christ. You really don't care. It means nothing to you.

It doesn't have any impact upon you. There's nothing in your heart. Whereby the cross of Christ is precious and sacred. There's no sense of faith and dependence.

[26 : 41] Upon what happened on that cross. As far as you're concerned. It never happened. It doesn't matter if it did. It never happened. And Paul says it breaks my heart to have to tell you.

See the heart of the apostle. Whether they are people in the church. Out of the church. When he meets up with folks. And they have no clue about what Jesus did on the cross.

He says it breaks my heart. And there's weeping. I'm weeping. Thinking about their souls. Thinking about how they're estranged from God. How they're under his condemnation and wrath.

How that they're missing out on everything Jesus is about. And why he was on that old rugged cross. And he goes on to say.

Their end is destruction. They've gone through that wide gate. And they're marching down that broad way. And it leads to destruction.

[27 : 40] They are headed for an eternal hell. They don't know. And they don't care. But they're gone. And he goes on to say.

Their God is their belly. They live for what satisfies their senses. What titillates their flesh. They live for their appetites.

That's all that matters. What pleasure they can get out of this life. They live for their belly. And whose glory is in their shame. They're proud of the fact.

When they can cheat others out of money. Or they can take advantage of people. And get away with it. They boast about that. They're proud of those exploits. And their mind is on earthly things. All they think about is what's in this life. What I can do to serve myself. And what I can suck out of this life. That's where their mind is set.

[28 : 43] And their focus. That's what's important. That's where their values are. In this world. And that's all they have to live for. Is this life. They don't get the fact that they're living in a perishable body.

And not too soon. Grim Reaper's coming. And going to take them. Out of this world. To an eternal destruction. But what a contrast in verse 20.

And here's Paul saying. Here's what I've sought to teach you about. My example. And walk after that example as a pattern.

He says in verse 20. For our citizenship is in heaven. What a contrast. Our citizenship. Where we belong is heaven. Where we're at home is in heaven.

Where we have our destiny is in heaven. Our focus is in heaven. Our confidence is in heaven. The first thing we think about in the morning.

[29 : 45] And the last thing we think about at night. Is Jesus Christ and Him exalted in the heavens. And that's my eternal home. And I don't let my heart be troubled. Because I know that my Savior has gone there to prepare a place for me.

And if He's gone there to prepare a place for me. He's going to come again and take me there to be with Himself. And I'll be forever with the Lord. That's my focus.

My focus is not on this world. My focus is on heaven. I'm not living for this world. I'm living for that kingdom. Where my treasures are not going to be ruined.

By those that seek to break in and steal or destroy. They will not ever canker and rot. I'm living for another world. Because that's where my citizenship is.

And from which we also eagerly wait. For the Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ. I live my life waiting to see His face.

[30 : 52] I live my life building the kingdom of God. For the glory and pleasure and honor of my King. And I can't wait to see Him break through those clouds.

I can't wait for the trumpet or the summons. I can't wait. Because my citizenship is in heaven where my King reigns. In verse 21.

Because He's going to transform these lowly bodies. He's going to morph these lowly. Or bodies of humiliation.

Or vile bodies. Depending on your translation. He's going to give them a complete renovation. In a moment. In the twinkling of an eye.

He's going to change them. To be conformed. Verse 21. To His glorious body. According to the working. By which He is able.

[31 : 50] To subdue all things to Himself. And when He says subdue all things to Himself. By the word of His power. He created all things. He spoke. And it became. And by the word of His power.

He subdues and subjects. And controls. So you have the earth. That's turning on its axis. And it's revolving around the sun. Every turn is a day.

And every revolution around the sun is a year. And you have it tilting just right. So you have seasons. That's all by the power of Jesus Christ. The fact that it's going to rise tomorrow.

And set tonight. It's because Jesus Christ. Is making it happen. And at any point. He can withhold His power. And it's done. I can't wait to see Him.

One day He's going to be done. With this present heaven and earth. He's going to make a new one. One day. One day. And.

[32 : 53] We're going to go home. Right now we live in a perishable body. It's temporary. It's like when you go camping. You may not like this.

But it's like living in a tent. Dad might get mom to go out. For a few days out in the mountains. You know for the kids sake. And. You pull down the tent.

Out of the attic. Or the basement. You put it in the. In the. And you take every possible comfort. You can possibly load the. The. The. Your car truck with.

So that everybody's going to be just as comfortable. As they can be out. In the boonies. And you spend those days. And you build family memories.

And that's all cool and good. But the final. Maybe you have to promise mom. Hey. You come and do this for a few days. I'll make sure. I can make it up to you later. But. On that final day.

[33 : 50] It's time to go home. And you start folding things up. And putting them back in the car. And you take a broom. And you sweep out the tent. And you fold it up. You put it in the car. And you take it home.

And put it away. You live. We live temporarily. In these tents. And. And. There's going to be a day. When they're going to be folded up.

They're going to be swept out. They're going to be folded up. And they're going to be put away. We're going home. And home is waiting. My father's house. Is waiting. And that's the amazing hope. And confidence we have. In the Lord. That one day. Every one of us. Our perishability time. Is going to run out. Or Jesus is going to come. And he's going to make our bodies. To be a glorious body. Like his. Glorious body. A body where there's no more decay. Or sickness. Or pain.

[34 : 45] Or tears. Or arthritis. Or migraines. No more viruses. Or disease. All the incurables. Will be a thing of the past.

Relics that won't exist anymore. Kathy and I's parents died. The four of them. My two. And her two. They died. One of cancer.

One of heart failure. One of emphysema. And one of Alzheimer's. No more. No more. Not in heaven.

There'll be no doctors in heaven. I've got a son-in-law. He's a doctor. He's a godly man. I'm not saying he's not going to be in heaven. He's going to be in heaven. But he won't be doctoring in heaven. No need for doctors.

In heaven. And Christ is going to do this great transformation. By the same power. That he holds the universe together. And by which he created all things.

[35 : 42] Notice back in our text. In 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians 15. And verse 54. He gives us the reason for this change.

And he says in verse 54 and 55. That death has been totally conquered. And he says we are. We'll sing a song of triumph. And he gives two Old Testament quotes. And verse 54 is from Isaiah 25. And verse 55 is from Hosea 13.

And these questions are like taunting questions to death itself. Like death. You're nothing. Death.

You're swallowed up in victory. Death. You have no more power. Death. You cannot touch me.

That's the kind of bright hope that the believer has. Both now and forever.

[36 : 39] We have confidence to live. And we have confidence to die. As believers. For me to live is Christ. For me to die is gain.

Don't have to be afraid of death. Verse 56. Paul goes on to explain why death is no longer an issue. And he's saying that death is an issue if it's unpardoned.

If sin is unpardoned. And he's saying sin is the parent of death. And sin puts a terrible sting into death.

There's no greater sting than to stand before God condemned. And to have his eternal justice applied to you. That's why I think the policemen have these sting ops.

They're going to sting. And bring justice quickly and swiftly. And definitely to those. Catch them in sin.

[37 : 45] In Arizona we have a lot of things that can sting you. Yellow jackets. Wasp. Hornets. All kinds of things. But we especially got this furry little creature.

With eight legs. And he walks across the desert floor. And he's got this. Tail that comes up over his back. Anybody know what that is?

Scorpion. And if he gets you. You know you done got God. In fact Revelation 9 talks about these scorpion like figures that come out of the bottomless pit.

And they'll go around tormenting men for five months. What an apt figure. And he says concerning this type of sting.

When these scorpions hit you. They hurt bad. You swell up. You paralyze. You burn. If you're going camping. Especially out in the desert.

[38 : 45] You might sit around the campfire drinking your cowboy coffee. And looking at the stars. And enjoying God's creation. About the time you're heading for bed. And you're going to get in your tent. In your sleeping bag.

Before you put your toes down in that sleeping bag. You might want to pull it out. Shake it out. Because if there's something down there like a scorpion. You're going to come out of it real quick.

Paul is saying there's a type of death that has a horrible sting to it. But this tormenting. This painful death. Is going to last for all eternity.

It's tormenting. It's burning. It's paralyzing. It's a terrible thing. When a person dies in their sins. They have to pay the penalty for their crimes against God's law. And he's referring to God's judgment in the lake of fire forever. What a terrible place.

[39 : 46] But there's a death without such a sting. There's no sting in it. Because there's no sin to pay for. You eliminate the sin.

You eliminate the sting. You eliminate the sin. You eliminate the sin. Because you pull the stinger right out of death. You and I are going to die.

But we just need to ask ourselves. What kind of death are you going to die? And in verse 56. He says the power of sin is the law. And a broken law declares your sin that you're guilty.

Meaning God's law is against you. It condemns you before a holy God. But guess what? For the Christian. The reason we can receive this parakletos.

This amazing comfort. It's because Jesus has pulled the stinger out of death. And he has forgiven our sins. And all our crimes against the law of God.

[40 : 48] He's paid our sin debts. He's satisfied the law's demands. And for the believer. Jesus removes your clothes of sin. He drapes you in his robes of righteousness.

You're no longer guilty. You have nothing to fear. And you can have judgment day confidence. That God's law will not condemn you. But God's law in fact will verify.

And authenticate. And approve you. Just like when you go to the store. And put your credit card in the machine. And you wait. And you wait. And all of a sudden it says approved. When you get to heaven's gate.

And Christ sets his law before you. And Christ's righteousness then connects with that law. There will be a statement of approved. Fully justified.

With no sin whatsoever. No sting in death. Nothing to be worried about. This Jesus. This sinless Lord Jesus. By his atonement.

[41 : 47] He has settled the sin question. And by his resurrection. He's settled the grave question. Jesus has conquered death. He's conquered the grave. And he's become our forerunner into heaven.

And if you look at verse 20 in this chapter. He has become the first fruits of all those that he leads into heaven. And in verse 57.

With this triumph over death. Certain. Look at 57. Now the believer's life is one of continual thanksgiving. For the victory that we have in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The battle is won. The debts are paid. The crimes. The crimes. No more exist. And we are free to rejoice. Because Jesus is all that we need.

Now. Brothers and sisters. Every anguishing trial. In our lives. Is seen through this grid of victory in Christ. This bright hope.

[42 : 47] So we can face all our sacrifices. And all our trials. And yes. Even all our griefs. With a joy that's unspeakable. And full of glory.

It's a life of thanksgiving. Even when it hurts. Verse 58. There's four encouragements. In the light of the fact that Christ is coming.

My beloved brothers and sisters. With your life of thanksgiving. Four things. One.

Be steadfast. Be steadfast in your life and walk with Christ. Be firm in your faith. Be solidly planted on gospel truths.

And don't modify them or give them up. Sometimes when the going gets difficult. And it will. Don't. Be governed by moods or emotions.

[43 : 47] But be governed by truth and convictions. In other words. Stay the course. Keep running the race. Grace Fellowship. You're doing a great job.

Keep running the race. Be true to the course that Jesus has mapped out for you. In his word. You may not feel like it at certain times. But you must.

Keep your eyes on Jesus. And keep marching toward him. Secondly. Be immovable. Do not be moved. By anything.

Let's be clear. There's always resistance against us. But don't be moved. Not by an unbelieving world. And not by problems in the life of the church. There are problems in every church.

And I don't know all the problems that are true in Grace Fellowship Church. But I know that since you're a group of sinners saved by grace. You're like any other marriage. That you put two people.

[44 : 47] Say sinners saved by grace. Under the same roof. There is going to be conflict. And I know you all have conflict. You have to. You're sinners saved by grace.

It's normal. It's real. But don't be moved. By those problems. Look at Corinth. A real church.

With real difficulties. Don't be moved by the great disappointments in life. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Don't let anything distract you.

Or weaken your desire to press on after him. If you leave off serving Christ. What else are you going to do? Where else are you going to go? What will you cling to?

What will you live for? What will you die for? Only Jesus has the words of eternal life. Our beliefs in the word of Christ are not just wishful thinking.

[45 : 48] That can change tomorrow. No. No. We have a solid hope built upon a sure foundation upon the word of Christ.

Thirdly. Be abounding in the work of the Lord. He's saying. Brothers and sisters. You beloved ones. Don't give the minimum of your lives in serving Christ.

Trust. But abound. Be like the snowball that's coming off the mountain. The older you get.

Let it get bigger. Let there be more abounding in the work of the Lord. In other words. Pursue growth in your spiritual life like a hunter pursues his game.

With all that it requires. All the sacrifices. And all the self-denial. And all that you've got to do. The expense. The time investment. All that you've got to do.

[46 : 46] It's worth it to abound in the work of the Lord. Pursue Christ's church in the same way. As you do growth in your own life. Pursue growth in the life of the church.

Intentionally. Energetically. And as you get older. I see a lot of gray heads here. The older you get. Don't do less.

Do more. In the work. Of the Lord. Abound. Don't witness less. Witness more. Don't give less.

Give more. Don't pray less. Pray more. Don't serve less. Serve more. John Piper. Pastor Piper.

Wrote an article in 2016. On the occasion of that election. Of the president. The office of president.

And you had. Hillary Clinton.

[47 : 44] Donald Trump. And you had Bernie Sanders. And they're all in their 70s. And Piper.

Wrote this article about. Just think about it.

Here you have three people. In their 70s. And they are. Vying. So. Energetically. And so.

Intentionally. They want the most difficult job.

In the world. They are. Pursuing a corruptible crown. In a very. Transient world.

And that ought to. Encourage us. And spur us on. That the older we get. We just have. A limited number of days.

And we can. Those of us. That have gray hairs. Many of. Our heads are covered. With gray hairs.

We can see. We can start seeing. The end of the race. Can't we? Our days are limited.

[48 : 44] Should we not be using. Our time. And our energies. And our resources. Not for ourselves. Not to rest now.

Because our day. Will come. When we'll rest. From our labors. Heaven's a place of rest. Let's give ourselves. A hundred and ten percent.

In the work of the Lord. And that's going to look. Differently for all of us. At different points. Of our lives. Because of our physical. And mental. Capabilities. Understand that. But there's always.

If you want to abound. In the work of the Lord. Brothers and sisters. Let's give ourselves. To it. With everything. We possibly can. Our God is great.

And greatly to be. Praised. Because he's worthy. And lastly. Number four. Be assured. Be assured.

And haven't we seen that?

[49 : 41] With these things? Grace. What was that first one? Be steadfast. Be immovable. Be abounding. And be assured.

He says you really do know these things are true. And I believe you all here at Grace Fellowship.

You. You know these things are true. I'm not telling you anything you don't know.

And you've never heard. He's just saying we need reminding. And we need reassurance. And we need encouragement. To make sure our focus gets back.

And stays where it needs to be. Our labors are not lost labors. Your many services and sacrifices and sufferings. They're not for nothing. Sometimes as we serve the Lord.

And give and give. We wonder. What good is it really doing? Is it really worth it? Last verse. Would you turn to Hebrews chapter 6? Hebrews 6.

[50 : 42] And verse 10. Hebrews 6 and verse 10. And Paul. I think. I think Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. I'm sure you.

Many of you might disagree with me. But I'm glad to say that John Owen does agree with me. And Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. Notice Hebrews 6 and verse 10.

For God. Is not unjust. He's not unrighteous. To overlook or to forget. Your work. And your labor of love.

Which you have shown toward his name. In that you have ministered to the saints. And do minister. Brothers and sisters.

All the service you give. To your Christ. You will not be forgotten. You elders. Those long meetings. [51 : 40] Those gut-wrenching meetings. Those discouraging meetings. Those times. When you're away from your families. You deacons.

All those meetings. The frustrations. The difficulties. Families having to have dad away. For an evening. Those of you that prepare children's ministries.

Those of you that come to prayer meetings. When you're tired. You've worked all day. You're tithing. You give of the first of your increase.

And it's a sacrifice. You could have so many more things for you and your family. If you didn't take the top portion of your increase. And give it unto the Lord.

Those of you that keep nursery. Those of you that make visits. Those of you that write notes. And share meals. And give rides. And work at making the music happen.

[52 : 47] And the sound. And the cleaning of the building. And the setting up. And the tearing down. It's worth it. Grace Fellowship. You're on the right course.

You've made the right choice. And in plugging in. And being a part of a family. And a team. To make the work of the Lord happen. You're doing a great job.

Be faithful in loving the Lord. Be faithful in loving each other. Be faithful in preserving the truth of God. And be faithful in spreading the gospel.

Be faithful in setting an example of what true love is. So that this world of unconverted people look at you and say. Oh how they love one another. Truly. There's a Christ.

And he is among them. As a church family. Jesus has gone there to prepare a place for us. And if he has. Don't let your heart be troubled.

[53 : 54] Don't let it be distracted. Just know that your Christ. Is going to come back. One day. And it may be sooner than later. And he's going to gather his bride together.

And take us home. I encourage every one of us. To hook your wagon to Jesus Christ. Love him. And live for him. And make him the priority.

Of your life. Make growing in him. And serving him. And thus the people of God. Those who are his kids. Loving. Supporting.

Encouraging. Being in God's way. Of being a paraclete. Doing the work of the Holy Spirit. In providing that kind of encouragement. To one another.

We have every reason to be encouraged. And to abound. Triumphantly. In the work. Of the Lord. May God. So bless you.

[54 : 54] Grace Fellowship. God bless you.