

**the ALREADY - JESUS IS RESURRECTED
&
the NOT YET - YOU WILL BE TOO**

As I began to write this sermon, it is *Holy Week* here in America. I was meditating on the purpose of *Holy Week* in the heart of God, rather than only a descriptive message on the means to fulfill God's purpose: Jesus' suffering sacrifice....agonizing beating, crucifixion, and death of our Saviour Jesus. We must never forget to recall in our hearts and minds what He did for each one of us on what is for us, *Good Friday*. This leads to our weeping in our hearts; but, Jesus' desire is for us to allow the Holy Spirit to turn our weeping into joy because Jesus finished His work ...and He did it for us! His joy now in Heaven is seeing those, for whom He travailed on the Cross, to be now living in freedom from guilt and sin.

Anything in any society that points to the historical truth of Jesus is good. Christian Holidays are intended to do just that. The problem is us, not the holidays. We tend to lose the deep meaning of holidays that repeat year after year. There is an American expression: *familiarity breeds contempt*. [keibetsu, unzari suru] This message is being shared with you all about three weeks after Easter. We Christians prefer to remind the world of it with the label Resurrection Day. I intend it to feed us with God's Word to help us, without a holiday, to experience our Risen Lord. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:8 that "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*"

Now let us read 1 Corinthians 15:1- 28 ; 15:51-53(Williams translation) TOGETHER

The Apostle Paul begins his discourse in 1 Corinthians 15 on Jesus' Resurrection with a humbling, but tactfully put, statement in v.1 "***Now let me remind you, brothers.***" We need to remember how Paul in 1 Cor 1:4 had previously praised the Corinthian Believers: "*I am always thanking God for you, for the spiritual blessing given you by God through union with Christ Jesus...*" and his list of praises continues with *richly blessed, perfect expression, fullness of knowledge*. Now, as the Missionary - Pastor who correctly calls himself their spiritual father, he gently embarrasses them for they never should have needed this reminder.

"Now let me remind you, brothers, of the first importance of the Good News." Please note that I prefer to replace the word "**essence**" as in this translation by Williams, with by the original Greek New Testament word **protos** which means, **First Importance or Priority**. Now Paul divides the first importance of the Good News into three primary principles – or **priorities**. For Paul is repeating the Good News which he and other preachers had already made known to the Corinthians. They already knew it, or should have known it, and been applying the three principles in it to their Christian living. A few languages for **protos** (Greek) - **priority** (English); **yusen jun i** (Japanese); **ma o o na** (Tagalog); **kicumbele** (Swahili); **priorite** (French); **okuquala** (Zulu).

In 1 Corinthians 15:3 Paul will explain to the Corinthians the **priorities** or **primary principles** within the Good News as being CHRIST DIED, WAS BURIED, WAS RAISED. But first, Paul reminds this church in **1 Cor 15:2** that if they continue to stand, ***on which you are now standing***, on these three primary priorities then they will be **saved** from the wrath of God stored up for all sinners "*who will not listen to Jesus' Good News.*" as Paul would write later in

2 Thessalonians 1: 8. Paul knew that we too easily can forget the most important things which God has revealed. Thus, this embarrassing reminder out of Paul's love for the Corinthians.

Now Paul, puts in a negative, a test of self doubt, if you please, into their thinking.

1 Cor 15:2b says "***unless your faith at first was spurious (in vain).***" Why not just encourage these Christians whom he loved? Because love often means helping a Christian whose faith is wavering, to not just sit back and let

it happen! If you see a tsunami coming to the coast, you tell those you love “Don't go to the Beach today!” As a preacher-pastor he must do all he can to keep professing Believers *in the faith*. Some Christians seem to think that they don't have to fight their own sinful nature or the Devil, to keep their faith. This brings to my mind, Jesus' parable of the sower. Jesus uses a sower's work on the farm to plant seeds. ((**Raise your hand if you are or were farmers ???**)) The seeds are analogous to Jesus' Good News Message. The various qualities of the soil represent the understanding and responses by people upon hearing the Message.

Let's look at the question of spurious or (in vain) faith and Jesus' Parable of the Sower---

Paraphrasing from **Matthew 13:3-9 and 13: 19-24** :

- 1) Seeds that missed the ground, fell by the road..birds ate them. *Like a person who hears with no understanding, and what he heard gets stolen by Satan.*
- 2) Sown on rocky soils, grew up fast, but no rich soil to feed the plant. The hot sun scorches and kills the plant. *Like a person who receives the Message and bubbles over with joy. But when persecution and troubles come, he falls away from the faith.*
- 3) Sown on soil but amongst thorns and the thorns grew up and choked the plant out. *Like a person whose worries about the world and pleasures of riches chokes out the Word..and he bears no fruit.*
- 4) Sown on rich soil and yields a crop (100X, 60X, 30X). *Like a person who hears and understands the Message , and yields fruit in his life as a Christian (100X, 60X, 30X). This implies having impact in his world with many others in the making of disciples for Christ.*

Whether Paul was thinking of Jesus' Parable of the Sower, or not, the spiritual principle is clear. Paul knows that a Christian who professes Christ, but whose life indicates no commitment to the Good News Message...to the Lord Jesus, might be one who heard the Gospel *in vain*. The Corinthians had heard and responded to the Good News Message; but , they seemed to have forgotten the three main principles of that Good News. Thus they may be, *spurious or in vain*, professors of the Faith; possibly Rocky Soil Professors, or Worries of the world and Living for Riches and Pleasure Professors. This would mean a dead or dying faith in Christ.

Paul, will now detail these three principles of the Good News of Jesus. Paul must be wondering if those who were questioning the Resurrection were seeking a deep walk with Jesus, or had really started to walk with Jesus at all! Paul knew that the Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven to help Christians keep the faith and stay focused on the truth in his preaching. The Bible in the Older Testament makes it clear that when a believer sees himself growing cold to the LORD, all he has to do is call on Him. As King David said in (**Psalm 23: 3**) “***He restores my soul.***” We can be sure, Paul wanted to revive any such Corinthians from this path to death and perishing.

Brothers and Sisters here at O.I.C. if any of you sense your faith in Jesus is pointing to an *in vain Faith remember Help by the HELPER SPIRIT is available to you Today*. In **John 14: 16 -17** Jesus promised : “ ***I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.***” We all, including your pastor, needed Holy Spirit to bring us to faith in Jesus' Good News to begin with; and we all continue to need the same Holy Spirit to help us to keep walking through life with Him. As the Older testament makes clear in (**Psalm 127:1**) “***Unless the Lord builds the house they who build it, build it in vain.***” Therefore, God's desire is for us to depend on His Spirit to become mature Jesus followers.

Now Paul summarizes the Good News as he likely presented it to Corinth years before, emphasizing those three necessary principles for a real faith in Jesus:

He says in **1 Corinthians 15.3** “***For I passed on to you, among the primary principles (essence) of the Good News, what I had received,***” Paul did not invent Christianity. He met the risen Lord on a road. He emphasized his apostleship back in **1Cor 11**; but here, it is the power of the Gospel itself, not the person preaching it, that he keeps simple and clear. He is truly just a *messenger*.

“that Christ DIED for our sins, in accordance with the Scriptures,

(v.4) that He was **BURIED**, that on the third day He was **RAISED** from the dead, in accordance with the Scriptures,

(v.5) and that He was seen by Cephas (Peter) , and then by the Twelve. (v.6)After that, at one time He was seen by more than five hundred brothers, most of whom are still living, though some of them have fallen asleep.”

Then Paul **reminds them** that they had accepted the Good News of Jesus substitutionary sacrifice for their sins; and, this News is a historical fact with many witnesses. Accepting the Good News of Jesus really demands accepting these three primary principles when they confessed Christ as believers. Paul will also show how one of these principles, **Resurrection from the Dead**, cannot be left out. If it is omitted or left-out, the whole Gospel building crashes to the ground and means nothing.

Speaking of historical facts...sumimasen...Please Pardon my digression to an historical note that illustrates the Omnipotent Power and Wisdom of our God's sovereign rule over a sinful world. We frequently don't realize it when it is happening, and often escapes our understanding. But the Holy Scripture is true about God: **“Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”** (Ephesians 1.11) This is very evident in the life and conquests of Alexander the Great.

In remarkably rapid pace, he conquered the civilized world , Western Europe, Asia, Egypt and India , between 336BC until his death in 323 B.C. This event paved the way for a single business language, **Greek**, throughout the empire. Even the Roman conquests of these areas could not displace the popularity and Greek effect on culture and language. This Greek, called koininina Greek, was the most complicated and accurate language that ever existed. The Apostles knew it well and the Holy Spirit inspired them to write the New Testament in it. God wanted His Son's Good News articulated to the highest degree, the most complexity possible, yet, preached, with the utmost simplicity so that a child could understand the *primary message of Jesus' Good News* as Paul reviews here in (**1 Corinthians 15**).

Oh the Greatness, Wisdom and Power of God to orchestrate all of History for the Coming of His Son, Jesus, and for the continuing Safety of all His Children who would and do believe in Jesus says Pastor Bruce

Now back to our TEXT, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, recalling the illustration from history of God's unstoppable plans to save sinners.

This summary of the Good News is summed up in three short clauses with the key words : **DIED, BURIED, RAISED**. **This is quite simple and yet, every man's Eternity depends on believing it.** At the same time, the complexity of the New Testament Greek language is seen in these same verses:

These verb tenses in the original Greek, speak a sermon on their own. The English, shown here, tells us that “Christ **DIED**” (past tense), “was **BURIED**” (past tense). But the single Greek verb, **egegeirtai**, for “was **RAISED**” is the *perfect past tense* for an action **that continues after the event itself has occurred** ; therefore, Jesus is thus **forever raised from the dead**. Anyone (except maybe the children) in the civilized world of Paul's time would notice this Greek detail and the Holy Spirit would have another potential communication of saving faith. He is Risen, **INDEED**.

Bible students, which I trust and pray will be everyone hearing this message to some degree, will find Paul goes into wonderful detail about the Death of Jesus to take away our sins in his Letter (Book) to the Romans. Here, he wants to keep the simple Gospel at the front of the discussion. His main theme, isn't theology about sin per se, but **Resurrection as a fact of life**.

Also, I must note that The “**Twelve**” Apostles (**v.5**) are mentioned here as a group to whom Jesus appeared after His Resurrection. That there were really only eleven (Judas, the traitor, after the Passover Supper, committed suicide that sent him to Hell) doesn't change the impact of the **idea of the group**. These were the only people who ever shared intimate life with Jesus, seeing up close His Deity and His Humanity, as He approached His purpose for Coming to Earth, The Cross.

After Paul recounts those who saw Jesus after His Resurrection, he expresses his shame , not guilt.

1 Cor 15:9 says "*I belong to the lowest rank of the Apostles, and am not fit to bear the title Apostle, because I once persecuted the Church of God.*"

"But by God's unmerited favor I have become what I am, His unmerited favor shown to me was not bestowed for nothing; for I have toiled more extensively than any of them (the other Apostles) , and yet it was not I but God's unmerited favor working with me."

Paul here expresses a certain sadness and humility regarding his pre-Christian years of persecuting and pressing Christians to blaspheme their Saviour. But Paul had met Jesus in His glorified body...and believed. Paul wasn't about to allow guilt, cancelled by the blood of his Saviour, to mar his confident walk close to Jesus. The humility was appropriate to a "title", Apostle, but, Paul would not allow his evil past to give him any excuse to not work to find and save the lost. 1 Cor 15.10b says "*for I have toiled more extensively than any of them, and yet it was not I but God's unmerited favor working with me.*"

I use the literal "**God's unmerited favor**" here, as Charles B. Williams did in his translation of the New Testament. In American culture, even in the Churches of Jesus, the word "**Grace**" MAY HAVE become less powerful...maybe an overused word without the deeper significance...or maybe just our tendency to *familiarity breeds contempt. [keibetsu, unzari suru]* I believe it is helpful for us to occasionally think: **The God of the universe made it a point To Find Time in His Busy Schedule to find me and save me from Destruction...with my doing not one singular thing to deserve such LOVE...such unmerited favor...Such Grace.**

The degree of difficulty, dangers, afflictions somehow don't change His promises if we learn to live by God's Grace, His *unmerited favor*. There is a Christian tune that I like to sing as I go along...often on days when feeling like I can't do anything right ...*His Grace Is Sufficient For Me*.

(1 Corinthians 15:11) But whether it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

(1 Corinthians 15:12) Now, if we preach that Christ has been raised from the dead, how is it that some of you are saying that there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised,

Paul seems as perplexed at the Corinthians lack of belief in the Resurrection similar to what when he would say about 1 year later as he addresses King Agrippa at his second trial before a Roman Court. **(Acts 26: 8) "Why is it considered incredible by all of you that God should raise the dead?"**

Let's look at some Old Testament history before we look at Paul's focus on the Resurrection, of Jesus and Christians, the reason for this part of his letter, **Chapter 15**.

We know that even in the Older Testament, that faith in the resurrection is not unique, but in God's power and plan, a "**Fact of Life**." Paul did not refer to these Older Testament statements of Resurrection. He stayed focused on Christ's resurrection, eternally special for His Atonment on the Cross for Mankind's sins ; and how it reveals God's plan that **all men shall be resurrected**.

The Resurrection of all men is stated as a **Fact of Life** in the Revelation of Jesus to John in the New Testament Bible(~ 100AD , about 40 years after Paul's Letter to the Corinthians) ---

As the Bible says in (Revelation 20:11-12 :

Then I saw a Great White Throne and Him who was seated on it, from whose presence earth and sky fled away, no more to be found. I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. And another book was opened ; it was the book of life.

All the dead will have been resurrected for the Great White Throne appearance. The Bible also reveals in the

Older Testament the **Resurrection** clearly in the Prophets. But also, even more dramatically I feel, through the words of Job, the man was given severe testing because God trusted his integrity. In the midst of his severe trials, as his *friends* accused him of sin which they believed caused his agonies, Job stated a most glorious statement of Faith in his God, his Redeemer:

(Job 19:25-27) I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;

“The marrow of Job's comfort lies in that little word 'My'--- 'My Redeemer', and in the fact that the Redeemer lives. Oh to get hold of a living Christ!” (C.H.Spurgeon, circa. 1855)

Another famous theologian quote that this pastor likes regarding Resurrection faith---

“No one can give himself to a dead man! No one can expect anything, or receive anything from a dead man.” (A.Schlatter, 1852-1938)

*Thus we see the Biblical record of the **Resurrection** in the heart of Job thousands of years before the Older Testament Prophets revealed God's plan for it to Israel. Although Paul did not allude to the Older Testament in this part of his Love Letter to the Corinthian Church (**1 Corinthians 15**) he knew that Corinth was a sophisticated city. Other Apostles and true believers had been there, **whether it was I or they,.... you believed (1 Cor 15:11)**) But only Paul was given the special Anointing of the Holy Spirit to plant the Church there. Most Corinthians were not ignorant of the Jewish Scriptures. Paul's understanding Greek cultural beliefs is seen in his zealous writings in **1 Corinthians 1:22- 24** ---*

“While Jews are demanding spectacular signs, and Greeks are searching for philosophy, we are preaching the Christ who was Crucified, ---a message that is a trap-stick to the Jews and nonsense to the Greeks,

A trap-stick is a stick to catch birds under a net. I tried this as a kid, propping up a cardboard box with a stick tied to a string in my hand over bread crumbs...with not much success, by the way. But a clear example that the Cross trips up the Jews' arrogant religious notions of what God *should do to save them*. The Cross also *short-circuits* logical philosophical reasoning to the Greeks intellectual mind as well.

BUT to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks alike, the Christ who is God's power and God's wisdom.” (Corinthians 1:24)

Thus- those who God has --- prepared their whole life to trust Jesus' Cross to buy their forgiveness with God---it becomes Omnipotent Power and Omniscient Wisdom when they believe Jesus' Good News.

Thus Paul is now now calling out his critics, not just about Jesus' Resurrection specifically, but the general Resurrection of the dead.

Paul learned possibly through Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus, that some church members, likely not true born again Christians, had some part in this Anti-Resurrection theology in Corinth. Now he states the implication that throwing out the Resurrection of the Crucified Saviour is the same as throwing out the Saviour Himself.

In (1 Cor 15:14) and if Christ was not raised, the Message which we preached has nothing in it;” “in vain.” (Greek NT)

Now Paul expresses his and his co-workers indignation, the taking away of his honor (*honno, igen ni kakawaru*), by those at Corinth who deny the Resurrection. In (**1 Corinthians 15:15**) **“...,and we are found guilty of lying about God, for we have testified that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if indeed the dead are not raised.”**

Like a good salesman, Paul builds precept upon precept to convince the Corinthians of the truth. Paul is trying to co-work with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to get the church to make the correct conclusion from the many facts; or as we say in America, *to connect the dots* , like to complete a puzzle. (*chitsujo seizen to*) – in (**1 Corinthians 15: 16 - 17**) **“For if the dead are never raised, Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is a mere delusion; you are still under the penalty of your sins.”**

If Jesus' Cross and Burial is the End, with no Resurrection, then this whole Gospel is a charade, a game, an **animae imagination on a computer screen**---if you please!

(1 Corinthians 15:18) *“Yes, even those who have fallen asleep, though in union with Christ, have perished.”* Jesus defeated death on the Cross, taking the power of Death away from the Devil. For in **Hebrews 2:14** the Bible says-*“That through death, He might render powerless he who had the power of Death, that is, the Devil.”* The fate of all Christians was instantly bound to Christ and the fate of His Body on the Cross. If the Devil still had the power of Death, Jesus didn't defeat the Devil by His own Death. The Resurrection of Jesus is the Resurrection of every Christian who has lived, or would ever live. Christ is the *first of many fruits* from the grave, as Paul would say in verse **1 Corinthians 15: 20**. Thus, in v.18 Paul is explaining that If Christ is in the grave...no one has had their sins washed away by the Blood Jesus shed on the Cross at Calvary. In the Bible, note that the word “perish” means death of the soul, not the physical body.

Also note, that the term *fallen asleep*, became the description of a Christians' departure from his life on earth, implying that the body itself would someday *wake up*, that is Resurrection. You may recall how Jesus astonished those around Him when He said of both Lazarus (**John 11:11**), and Jairus' Daughter (**Luke 8:52**) that they were only *sleeping*. Jesus raised these two, and others, from the dead in the bodies they were born in. This is not **Resurrection**, which is raising the dead with a brand new body from the grave. However, Jesus knew His calling to defeat death and the one who still held the power of Death, the Devil. His authority over both Death and its *ruler* was shown victoriously with these miracles. But Oh, even more so when Jesus was Resurrected from the grave.

Now Paul makes silent those who think Christians can follow Jesus closely just for the blessings here on Earth. **(1 Corinthians 15:19)** *“If for this life only we Christians have set our hopes on Christ, we are the most pitiable people in the world.”*

I have also shown here the translation by C.K. Barrett:

(1 Corinthians 15:19) /CKB *“If in this life we have hoped in Christ—that and nothing more—then we are the most pitiable of all men.”*

“If Christ was not raised, Christians would be bearing about in their body the dying of Jesus (**2 Corinthians 4:10**), without any prospect that His life might also be manifest in them. They would not be merely **pursuing a figment of their imagination, but embracing death**. Much better, as Paul is to say sarcastically in **1 Corinthians 15:32** /CKB *“Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall be dead.”*

As I prepared this sermon, the above verses in particular, God put this Christian song into my heart as when I had just been born-again...and, I Praise God, for the Spirit still stirs my heart by it and pray He would do the same for you:

**“They say that I'm a Dreamer
with eyes that cannot see
That the principles I live for
Won't face Reality, well..if that's what I am LORD,
won't You care for me
I only want to be like the Man From Gallilee.”**

We cannot follow Jesus only for the goodies here and refuse to allow God by His Holy Spirit to make us more like Jesus. Yes, many people will call us *Dreamers*. But they don't know the Bible nor the power of God! Please note that **1 Corinthians 15:32** does not mean we cannot enjoy anything here on earth. The Pharisees accused Jesus as a *wine drunkard*. Paul addressed Timothy not to over react by excessive self-denial in his stand against the Christians who were living lives *characterized* by giving in to fleshly desires. He wrote to Timothy in

1 Timothy 6:17 *Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”*

Our loving Heavenly Father wants to lavish us with His love. The Holy Spirit and the Word are our Help to know what is coming from Father's Gracious Hand...and what is not, the Already and the Not Yet---such as our Resurrection.

Some more details about Timothy. He was a young evangelist who had been discipled by Paul, and who had a very difficult task as he was assigned to take over as a leader in many churches after Paul had moved on. Paul had filled his mind and heart with the best of the best, as Paul was a great teacher, evangelist, pastor, and missionary. But near the end of Paul's second letter to Timothy, Paul gives a "pep talk" or exhortation with many reminders. But Paul made a special point, it seems to me. After much complicated theology taught to his disciple for Jesus, Paul says

in **2 Timothy 2:7-8** "*Keep on thinking about what I am saying, for the Lord will grant you understanding of it in all its phases. Continue to remember Jesus Christ as risen from the dead,...*"

Church, we would do well if we also continue to remember Jesus Christ as risen from the dead!

As we remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, our communion with Him becomes richer and deeper as the years go by. Our prayers are to the Living Christ (not a dead man) and His Father in Heaven. Holy Spirit will help us even as He did Timothy to remember Jesus, for, as Jesus said of the Spirit of Truth: *That when He comes He will testify of Me.*" (**John 15:26**)

Finally, my brothers and sisters at O.I.C., I want to discuss a few things about **Our Resurrection**. "Never be led astray by those philosophical fools who preach up an impersonal God, and talk of self-existent, selfgoverning matter. The LORD LIVETH and thinketh upon us..." (C.H. Spurgeon). My message this morning based on much of **1 Corinthians 15**, connects our Resurrection with Jesus' Resurrection. You can't really have one without the other!

The previous verses' discussion is given closure by **1 Corinthians 15:20** "*But in reality, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits to be raised of those who have fallen asleep.*"

I will move ahead in Paul's Letter to where he tells Christians what no one ever knew before about their glorious future...a mystery from God revealed to His Church, and you about Your Resurrection.

Since the Resurrection is of the Human Body I thought a few things about it would be relevant:

A GOOGLE search for *The Human Body* – gave me this summary from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Human body- the physical substance of the human organism, composed of living cells and extracellular materials and organized into tissues, organs, and systems.

The Britannica goes on - For detailed discussions of specific tissues, organs, and systems, see : human blood, cardiovascular system, digestive system, endocrine system, renal system, skin, muscle system, nervous system, reproductive system, respiration system, sensory reception, skeletal system.

The list continues with the biochemical systems. The point of my referring to this list of scientific data is that we humans are so complicated, and of course, any doctors here know how many years the body must be studied to practice medicine.

It is obvious to a Believer, and should be obvious to all men, that only a Creator God could create such an

intricate invention – the human body.

Nevertheless, Man's sin has placed His creation into the process of corruption including our bodies. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God's heart was broken. To stay Holy, separated from sin, He had to cause all men to return to the ground. In **(Genesis 3:19b/ NIV)** God says: “...*Until you return to the ground since from it you were taken, for dust you are and to dust you will return.*”

God planned to Redeem man by His Son's Sacrificial Death on the Cross. So He also planned a new creation of the human body for all Christians at their resurrection, at the End of Time.

Now Paul clearly details the final step of God's merciful act to redeem mankind. Christians who are alive, or dead, cannot inherit the Kingdom God as they are. The best Christian still has the old nature dwelling inside his body, even if he walks in the Holy Spirit with Jesus and has ceased from all willful sin!

So God does, what only God can do....He creates NewBodies for the living and the dead Believers, a new body fitting for the new creation which a born-again Christian had received inside him by his faith in Christ.

Paul now changes Christian thinking forever with **1 Corinthians 15:52** as he wrote:

“Let me tell you a secret. (Behold, I tell you a mystery /CBK) We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet.”

Paul is continually preaching the single eye of the Good News of Jesus. Christianity is totally an *eschatological, which means End Times, theology*. God's plans for Believers are *forever, with already blessings of His presence to Believers on Earth even now; but also, a glorious future beyond our imagination or description. But He wants us to know it's true.*

An Eschatological or End of Time Focused religion – As I heard a Bible Teacher say when I was a newly born-again Christian, “We must live in light of eternity to be faithful followers of Jesus.” This preacher wasn't emphasizing perfect performance or obedience, but, any chance to have either, depends on this point of view. Christianity means nothing without the Final Chapter told us in the Bible: **Resurrection is a Fact of Life.**

The *last trumpet* (v. 53) **is not the trumpets blown by God's angels during the Great Tribulation** when God's wrath is fully poured out on planet Earth. Most Bible scholars agree that this final judgement doesn't end, or may not even begin, until after the Rapture (taking away of both living and dead Christians) as described here in **1 Corinthians 15. 51- 53.**

Here, the word “last” signifies the *trumpet blast Ending* life in our sinful bodies, with the gift of new bodies...for Believers in Jesus to enter God's Kingdom for their future in all eternity, which never ends. Therefore, **the last trumpet signifies the End of Time for all Christians.** God lives above time, so we will in some sense also, that is for eternity...time unmeasurable. After our Rapture there are events still to come to earth, namely, God's wrath poured out on Earth and all people on the Earth. We may be watching these events next to our Jesus, as we await to return with Him for His appearance to put all rulers, governments, and peoples under His Lordship. Then we will rule with Him on Earth.

The details of exact times of the end times after the Rapture are in the Bible, and I hope to preach more on this in the future. **But it is vital to make note**, what Paul is emphasizing to Christians in Corinth is **FAITH** in their personal Resurrection itself, not timing in God's plan. Paul wants the Corinthians to have a single mind about **Jesus Resurrection and their own**, as promised by God, who cannot lie. Paul is strongly declaring that if you have FAITH in Jesus' Resurrection, you **must also have FAITH in your own. You can't really believe in the one if you don't believe in the other.** Let me emphasize the “word” *believe*. Many statements in the Bible do not require, in a sense may be contrary to, complete understanding. Paul does his best to give complete understanding of what he received from the Lord Jesus. Yet, Paul presents this as a *mystery, or secret until this letter (1 Corinthians 15)*. Jesus' coming the First Time was also a mystery to most peoples until He explained it to the world. God's mysteries are not meant to stay secrets but *believed upon, and, if necessary, beyond our understanding, “You can not please God without faith.” (Hebrews 11:6) .*

In fact, considering what Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15:19** , why would you live for Jesus what may be, if God wills, a life with much suffering on earth, if you don't have your faith looking beyond the here and now? **The Already and the Not Yet, if you please.**

1 Corinthians 15:52 says : *“For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised with bodies not subject to decay, and we shall be changed.*

1 Corinthians 15:54 -55 / CKB says *“But when this corruptible body has put on incorruption, and this mortal body has put on immortality, then shall the written word be fulfilled, 'Death has been swallowed up on victory. (:55) Where, O Death is your victory? Where, O Death is your sting?’”*

This is what Jesus saw for all who would Believe in Him as He travailed in agony on the Cross at Calvary. The creation of a New Humanity with pure Hearts soft to God's Presence , washed in His Blood so without any spot of sin, and with Bodies that can never decay or die, for Eternal Fellowship with God the Father....the New Humanity is the Sons of God....and that is the Church's Future.

God is revealing the complete fulfillment of God's Plan for Redeemed Mankind in Pauls' words here as inspired by Holy Spirit. Paul places himself at the time of the End, he mocks death as already defeated, and no longer able to exercise its old sting. We know that Death still prevails today, but behind it is the God who *“gives, and takes away”* (Job 1:21) *and the keys for it are held and used by our Lord Jesus* (Rev. 1:18). Death, is still our last enemy to be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26) ; yet, the trust in our Resurrected Lord Jesus gives us faith in where Death leads us, to our Resurrection..to Jesus.

In **1 Corinthians 15:56** Paul writes: *“Now sin gives Death, its sting. , and the Law gives sin its power.”* Death is thus perceived as punishment . The Law clarifies that the punishment is deserved. The sting is in experiencing this punishment, knowing that it could have been avoided completely if one never broke God's Law or sinned (impossible, but a tormenting thought, nevertheless). Thus the sting is the torment in a sinner's mind as Death looms over him. NOT SO FOR A CHRISTIAN. The physical pain and suffering *may be* just as great as for the sinner. That is a decision that our Personal God makes. But every Christian can never be punished for their sins, Jesus has already taken all that punishment on His Cross. So physical Death remains, but the Believer without the *sting* can truly *Go To Sleep in Jesus*.

Thus, Paul's exultation in **1 Corinthians 15: 57** **"But thank God! He gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Paul wrote this Love Letter, 1 Corinthians, to the Corinthian Church, a church which the Holy Spirit co-labored with him to plant. He makes it clear that all that he wrote is vital for their walk with Jesus.

This very informative letter includes: Wisdom and Division at Corinth; Fornication; Litigation; Marriage and Related Questions; Food Sacrificed to Idols; The Christian Sunday Meeting; Spiritual Gifts; **The Resurrection**; The Collection of Donations, Tithes. Now, it is somewhat like we preachers wonder after a sermon to a congregation: *Is all they will remember the last few words I spoke?* Here in **1 Corinthians 15**, Paul **almost says, and in a sense did imply---**

“Forget everything else in this letter , but remember the Resurrection from the Dead , Chapter 15, as the center of the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

In **1 Corinthians 15:58** **"So, my dear brothers, continue to be firm, incapable of being moved, always letting the cup run over in the work of th Lord, because you know that your labor in service of the Lord is never thrown away."**

that little word "so" means:

**Resurrection is a Fact of Life! (jissai no tokoro),
the ALREADY - JESUS IS RESURRECTED AND ALIVE FOREVR**

the NOT YET - YOU WILL BE RESURRECTED AND ALIVE FOREVER TOO

So Paul ends up where he started 1 Corinthians 15: 1 with that same word *spurious, in vain, thrown away. But he has thoroughly explained that it need never be so for a true confessing Believer in Jesus Christ.*

Bibles Referenced

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Quotes

Adolf Schlatter (16 August 1852 – 19 May 1938) was a world-leading Protestant theologian and professor specialising in the New Testament and systematics in Germany.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (19 June 1834 – 31 January 1892) was an English Particular Baptist preacher. In England.