

11/9/26

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

In 1 Thessalonians 4:18, Paul told us to encourage one another with the hope of being united with the Lord for all eternity, in His presence, experiencing the fullness of His love. Why do we need to encourage each other with this hope? I think it's for 2 major reasons… First, we live in a broken world, and we can become disillusioned and discouraged by the trials of life. Knowing that we have a future and a hope gives us courage to keep going, not to mention that the Lord is with us every step of the journey through this broken world. We always have the Holy Spirit with us, strengthening us today and reminding us of the hope of tomorrow. Second, we need to be encouraged so that we don't keep trying to make heaven on earth and lose sight of the treasure waiting for us in heaven. When we have the hope of tomorrow always somewhere in our minds, it changes the way we see our present circumstances. It broadens our perspective so that even the most mundane tasks like doing laundry can be done for the glory of God. Kids sports are no longer JUST about watching our kids play and taking lots of pictures and videos. Now we also see opportunities to teach our kids how to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" and we see the opportunities to be a light to the world around us while we also encourage other believers in their faith.

So Father, as I look at 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, please help me to take it to heart. Let it change my perspective. I don't know when that trumpet will sound, but I pray that I'll be ready. I pray that I'll live with a view to eternity… an excited view, a joyful view. Please help me not to waste the time I have here on earth thinking only of today.

I'm a romantic. I love stories about love. I love seeing people offer each other their hearts for better or for worse. But I want to be most excited about my eternal groom… I want to be most excited about people offering their hearts to the One who first gave us His for better or for worse.

In this passage, I see that divine love story showing how it changes us. In so many love stories, at some point one of the main characters says, "I love who I am when I'm with you." Well, just

wait. This love story changes the bride like no other love story. And like most love stories in books want to portray, this groom truly IS perfect.

Paul has just been speaking about how our earthly bodies are "sown perishable… sown in dishonor… sown in weakness… sown natural." Even the most beautiful of brides on earth are nothing compared to the glory of God. We who trust Christ as our Savior, His bride, have this hope… We will be "raised imperishable… raised in glory… raised in power… raised spiritual." Well… why is it so important that the perishable is replaced by the imperishable? Vs. 50 tells me the answer.

Vs. 50 ~ "I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

There IS eternity beyond this life and there are only two kingdoms… the Kingdom of God and the domain of darkness. The domain of darkness will be conquered. Flesh and blood, the perishable, cannot enter the Kingdom of God, but they can only belong to the conquered domain of darkness. Choosing not to believe this doesn't change the fact that it's true. But for all who anchor their faith in Jesus Christ, who confess Him as Lord, we will be changed! We must be changed! God Himself will be the one to change us so that Jesus Christ Himself "will transform our lowly (flesh and blood, dishonored, perishable, weak, natural) bodies to be like His glorious body" (Philippians 3:21). As Paul says here in vs. 51…

Vs. 51-53 ~ "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality." As Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God."

This is a mystery. The closest picture my mind can visualize to understand it is in the movie, Beauty and the Beast. At the end of the movie, the beast is transformed back into the radiant young prince. It took a little more than a twinkle of an eye, but it was pretty fast. And then everything changed! We will be transformed from perishable (beasts) to imperishable (radiant royalty restored to the full image of God in us, citizens of the Kingdom of heaven, priests to our God and Father, His kids forever). We will be imperishable and immortal, incorruptible… just like our inheritance spoken of in 1 Peter 1:4, "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading." Forever.

Vs. 54-55 ~ "When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'"

How much pain have we suffered over sin and death in this broken world? Romans 5 tells me that when Adam ate the fruit, his imperishable body became perishable. His strong body

became weak. His honor turned to dishonor. His DNA changed so that sin ran through his veins and corrupted every soul that came after him. He ushered death into the world, and someday God Himself will usher it out.

Right now the sting of death is extreme. Right now sin is rampant. But I can take comfort and be encouraged because this sting is temporary. I'm allowed to grieve. God is so kind and understanding. But I grieve with hope. I grieve knowing that this sting will be taken away someday.

It's like labor pains for a mom giving birth. Yes, the pains are so extreme. They sting! Why would a woman go through that??? Because of what she looks forward to. She looks beyond those labor pains and sees that she's going to be holding a sweet baby in her arms. And it makes it all worth it.

Vs. 56-57 ~ "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."

Because death came into the world when Adam and Eve chose to rebel against their Maker, sin spread like a cancer to every human born in the rest of history, except one… Jesus Christ… fully human and fully God. He was the only human born who did not have Adam's seed. He was "born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law" (Galatians 4:4-5), born to a virgin who would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Miraculous.

To every other human, sin spread, and when the law came, it only exposed how bad the sin was because no man could keep the law perfectly. Galatians 3:10-11 says, "For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.' Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" Romans 3:10 says, "None is righteous, no not one." Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all."

Jesus came to destroy sin and death for all who would put their faith in Him. Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves. By His blood we are saved. His blood was the only blood that didn't have sin running through His veins. "For our sake He (the Father) made Him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). How did He make Him to be sin? Jesus took OUR sins on Himself in order to give us the victory over sin and death. By HIS wounds we are healed. Because of His wounds we who love Him will be raised imperishable, in glory, in power, in immortality… to be with Him forever.

So with that in mind, how should I live? Knowing I have the victory that I could not get for myself, what can I do?

Vs. 58 ~ "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Here's how I think I can be tempted to rewrite God's word. I can be tempted to say, "Therefore, my beloved, just live your life, ask God for help when it's hard, but otherwise let this temporary world determine what really matters to you. The inheritance of heaven is for later. Do nice stuff for people. Do good works, but don't go overboard. Don't make waves. Don't offend people with the gospel. What if they think less of you? Fit God in where you can, but He'll understand that you're busy." At least, that's the way I used to think. And I was miserable.

Let me not miss what the real word of God is saying… God has GIVEN me, a sinner who was His enemy, victory over sin and death WHILE I WAS STILL HIS ENEMY!!! Because of Jesus, sin can no longer rule my heart. If I'm letting it, I'm choosing to be a volunteer to its slavery.

But I HAVE the victory in Christ, and I HAVE the Holy Spirit dwelling in me, giving me strength to be steadfast, to not give up ever! He's giving me strength to be immovable, unshakable… letting no circumstance of earth derail my faith even in this obviously broken world. He's giving me strength to ABOUND in the work of the Lord, not just fit it in where it's convenient. I find that joy and peace and contentment abound in me when I am abounding in seeking to please my God. Why? Nothing I do for the Lord is ever wasted because I am IN the Lord through the sacrifice of Jesus.

O Lord, please let me never take this for granted. As the hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness sings out, I praise You that I have "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow."

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine with 10,000 beside

GREAT, INCOMPREHENSIBLE, INFINITE IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS!!!

Have a blessed day!
Jonna