

“Transformed: More than Meets the Eye” (1 Corinthians 15:50-58)

Do you like *Star Trek*? Are you a “Trekkie?” If so, you have probably seen *Star Trek 2: The Wrath of Khan*. You may recall a conversation between Admiral Kirk (William Shatner) and an aspiring young Starship commander facing a difficult and dangerous test. Kirk uttered these powerful words: “How we deal with death is at least as important as how we deal with life.”¹ Although no one would accuse Admiral Kirk of being a great theologian, he nailed it on this point! How we deal with the reality of our inevitable death radically affects how we deal with our lives in the present. We could say, “*Live in the present with the future in view.*”

In 1 Cor 15:50-58, Paul concludes his glorious resurrection chapter. These closing verses are a climactic song of victory, a kind of symphony. (A number of composers down through the ages have set this text to music. Brahms’ Requiem and Handel’s Messiah quote from it.)² It’s a symphony in three movements. The first movement celebrates the future transformation of our bodies while the second movement celebrates the future termination of sin. The final movement celebrates the future compensation of our work.

1. Celebrate the future transformation of your body (15:50-53). In these first four verses, Paul explains that an earth suit, a natural human body consisting of flesh and blood as we know it, is unsuitable for heaven. Hence, those believers still alive when Jesus returns at the rapture will receive their new bodies by transformation rather than by resurrection. Paul introduces this section in 15:50 like this: “**Now I say this, brethren [believers],³ that flesh and blood [one’s physical nature]⁴ cannot inherit⁵ the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.**” Paul makes it clear that you and I can’t go to heaven just as we are today. No matter how healthy, strong, and beautiful we may be, we are unfit for heaven. You can’t have a decaying body in a permanent home. You have undoubtedly seen a restaurant sign in the front window that reads something like this: “No shoes, no shirt, no service.” This means that one’s appearance and attire has to meet certain standards, or he or she is not welcome. That is the way heaven is. Heaven is a place where there is no pain, no sorrow, no sickness, or death. These perishable bodies that we possess here on earth are not suited for heaven. The death and burial of our earthly bodies is not an unfortunate circumstance; it is a necessity.⁶ In order to go to heaven, we must receive “imperishable” or “ageless” bodies. They must be changed into a glorified state so that we can live in God’s presence before His perfection, holiness, and beauty.

Paul has explained that our earth suits are unsuitable for heaven. That’s the problem! What’s the solution? In 15:51, Paul grabs the reader’s attention with the word “**behold.**” It is a dramatic word, for it is like pulling a curtain aside to reveal a new truth. In our contemporary vernacular, we could translate this Greek word “look” or “listen.” Paul continues “**...I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep,⁷ but we will all be changed.**” This verse “we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed” is often posted as a motto in church nurseries; however, I do not think that Paul has in mind diapers. On the contrary, he has physical bodies in mind. Paul speaks of a “mystery,” however, he does not have in mind a Sherlock Holmes tale. Rather, in the Bible the term “mystery” refers to a truth not revealed until it was disclosed by the apostles.⁸ The Old Testament predicted the bodily resurrection and the second coming of the Messiah,⁹ so Paul is not referring to either of these events. The “mystery” is what is called the rapture of the church. The rapture is a newly revealed truth. Paul informs us that there will be a generation of Christians that will inherit their glorified bodies without having to “sleep” or die.¹⁰ This is the great hope of the Christian. That all Christians will not die was a new revelation.¹¹ Whether we as believers die and are resurrected, or whether we are caught up to meet the Lord without dying, we shall all be changed! It was Benjamin Franklin who famously said, “There are two certainties in life—taxes and death.” While taxes are certain, death is not certain for the believer. The last chapter in life for the believer is not the cemetery, the casket, or the grave. No, the last chapter is transformation.

A little boy asked his mother what death was like. She said to him, “Do you remember when you fell asleep in the living room? Your father picked you up in his big strong arms and took you to your bedroom. When you woke up, you found yourself in another room. Death for the Christian is like that. You go to sleep in one room and wake up in another.”¹² Thus we do not need to ever fear death, whether we sleep or take part in the rapture. We can have supreme confidence that we will be with Christ.

Paul continues his description of the rapture in 15:52a and explains that the transformation of our bodies will take place **“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet.”**¹³ This transformation will not be a gradual process but instantaneous. The word translated “moment” is the Greek word *atomos*, from which we get our English word “atom.” The Greeks believed the atom was the smallest particle of nature, completely indivisible. The “twinkling of an eye” is at least as fast as a blink. It takes only a fraction of a second. So Paul is saying that this change will occur in an indivisible moment of time, as fast as an eye can twinkle, in an atomic second. It will not be an evolutionary process and it will not occur by gradual osmosis. In other words, what happened to *The Incredible Hulk* on TV is *not* the pattern for the transformation of raptured saints. (And if you don’t remember *The Incredible Hulk*, consider yourself blessed).¹⁴

The reason that the rapture will take place so quickly is given in 15:52b-53: **“For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable [eternal], and we will be changed.”**¹⁵ **For this perishable [temporal] must put on the imperishable [eternal], and this mortal [temporal] must put on immortality [eternal].”** Some (i.e., posttribulationists) equate this “last trumpet” with the seventh or last trumpet of Rev 11:15-18. This does not seem valid. Other trumpets will sound announcing various other events in the future.¹⁶ However, believers living in the church age¹⁷ will not be on the earth, and those trumpets will not affect us. The fact that Paul included himself in the group (“we”) living at the time of the rapture shows he believed the event could take place in his lifetime. If he had believed the tribulation precedes the rapture, it would have been natural for him to mention that here.¹⁸ In these verses, Paul insists that one day we will be given new bodies that will be indestructible. These bodies will never fail us. They will be immortal and fit for the eternal state. In light of this reality, Paul calls us to *live in the present with the future in view*. One great way of doing this is to expect Christ’s return in your lifetime, but plan as if it is centuries away. This allows us to be expectant for Christ’s return, yet also accomplish His will for us while we still have time.

[Paul has challenged us to celebrate the future transformation of our body. Now he says...]

2. Celebrate the future termination of sin (15:54-57). The resurrection of dead believers and the transformation of living believers signal the death of death. In 15:54-57, Paul writes, **“But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP [Isa 25:8] in victory.’¹⁹ ‘O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING [Hos 13:14]?’ 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.”**²⁰ These verses emphasize a sting operation. I don’t know about you, but I love a good “sting.” You may recall the movie *The Sting* where Robert Redford and Paul Newman conned a con man. Everyone likes to see justice served.

The great New England preacher of the 19th century, Henry Ward Beecher, once pulled off a pretty slick sting in the pulpit. He entered Plymouth Church one Sunday and found several letters awaiting him. He opened one and found that it contained a single word in large letters, “FOOL.” In the worship service that morning, quietly and with great dignity, he announced the incident to his congregation with these words: “I have known many an instance of a man writing a letter and forgetting to sign his name, but this is the only instance I have ever known of a man signing his name and forgetting to write the letter.” That was a burn—a royal sting!

But the greatest sting in all of history, and I say it reverently, is one pulled off by Jesus Christ. When Jesus died on Calvary's cross, I'm sure Satan felt he had finally whipped his mortal enemy. All the opposition he had stirred up from the attempt of King Herod to kill Jesus as an infant, to the hatred of the Sadducees and Pharisees, to the kangaroo court He endured in Jerusalem culminated in Jesus' execution on the cross. Satan had finally won, or so he thought. But in fact, *in that very event*, His crucifixion, Jesus purchased our salvation, redeeming us from sin and the Law. By His resurrection on the third day, He demonstrated His own power over death. And at His second coming, when He resurrects the dead and transforms the living, His victory will be complete. That will be the ultimate sting in all of human history. Jesus will STING the STINGER. He will REAP the GRIM REAPER. He will turn the tables on death by causing death itself to die.²¹

A boy and his father were out for a ride when a queen bee²² flew in the car window. The little boy, who was allergic to bee stings, was petrified. The father quickly reached out, grabbed the bee, squeezed it in his hand, and then released it. The boy grew frantic as it buzzed by him. Once again the father reached out his hand, but this time he pointed to his palm. There stuck in his skin was the stinger of the bee. "Do you see this?" he asked. "You don't need to be afraid anymore. I've taken the sting for you." In a similar way, we all suffer under the curse of sin like the little boy from the first sting and the next sting from death would mean our ultimate demise. But we have a Savior that came to our rescue and took the sting for us and we no longer have to fear death. Though death may buzz over us and land on us it can do no harm and one day death itself will die.²³ As Peter Joshua said, "When death stung Jesus Christ, it stung itself to death."²⁴

We must always remember that only on this side of the curtain is death our enemy. Just beyond the curtain the monster turns out to be our friend. The label "Death" is still on the bottle, but the contents are "Life Eternal." Death is our friend because it reminds us that heaven is near. How near? As near as a heartbeat; as near as an auto accident; as near as a stray bullet; as near as a plane crash. If our eyes could see the spirit world, we might find that we are already at its gates.²⁵ Death is not the *end* of the road; it is only a *bend* in the road. The road winds only through the pass through which Christ Himself has gone. This Travel Agent does not expect us to discover the trail for ourselves. Often we say that Christ will meet us on the other side. That is true, of course, but misleading. Let us never forget that He walks with us on this side of the curtain and then guides us through the opening. We will meet Him *there*, because we have met Him *here*.²⁶

This reality ought to cause us to break out in thanksgiving, as Paul does in 15:57. Again, Paul exclaims, **"but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."** The verb "gives" is in the present tense. Literally, God keeps on giving us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. What that means is that every morning when we wake up, it's Easter morning. It means that we can continually lay hold of the resources of Christ. We can go to Him for forgiveness when we fail. We can trust Him to meet our needs. He is available to us as our risen Lord. He is not a long-gone historical figure who died and then was purported to have been raised from the dead. We celebrate a risen, living, victorious Lord! We have the "victory" through our Lord Jesus Christ! Robert Louis Stevenson once said, "The person who has stopped being thankful has fallen asleep in life."²⁷ May you and I be filled with gratitude today for all that the Lord Jesus has accomplished for us. *Live in the present with the future in view.*

[What an appropriate place to end this beautiful resurrection chapter, and indeed, the entire theological portion of this epistle! But Paul is not quite through. He's never through when he has only provided the doctrinal facts, even such profound and far-reaching facts as these we have seen today. He is never satisfied until he has written, "THEREFORE." Paul is intent on telling us *how* these truths relate to our daily lives. And so we come finally to...]

3. Celebrate the future compensation of your work (15:58). Paul concludes his discussion of the resurrection with an exhortation to be faithful in the present.²⁸ In 15:58, he answers the concerns expressed in 15:1-2 with these motivating words: **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”**²⁹ The word “therefore” wraps up this entire passage.³⁰ The phrase “my beloved brethren” demonstrates Paul’s love for the Corinthians, despite the deficiencies in their theology and their behavior.³¹ This ought to compel us to love one another despite our theological differences. Paul was dealing with Christians that were waffling on their own bodily resurrection. This is a fairly significant doctrine, to say the least. Yet, despite their erroneous theology Paul continued to love his people. My prayer is that the Lord continues to give me this type of love for you and vice versa. Together, we are “beloved brethren!” Even when we are misled in our theology, if we have believed in Christ for salvation we will spend eternity together.

After affirming his readers, Paul launches into one command (“be steadfast, immovable”) with two participles (“abounding” and “knowing”) used as imperatives. This grammar leads to a simple three point conclusion: what we should be, what we should do, and what we should know.

- 1) ***What we should be.*** Paul commands us to **“be steadfast, immovable.”**³² Like the Corinthians we are prone to be impatient, easily discouraged, and lazy. We let the circumstances of life blow us out of the water. We allow financial setbacks or job problems to depress us. Yet, Paul says, “Get a grip on the resurrection and on God’s final plan for believers, and you will not be so readily shaken.” We will be firmly rooted in what we know to be true about life and death because we have confidence in the resurrection. It gives solid footing. We won’t be swayed by every idea that comes along about this life and the afterlife. We can stand firm. We know who we are, why we’re here on earth, and where we’re headed in the future.
- 2) ***What we should do.*** Paul urges us to be **“always abounding in the work of the Lord.”** The verb “abounding” pictures something flowing over the edges on all sides.³³ No one gets to the Olympics, much less walks away with a medal, who did not give himself or herself fully to their sport. The commitment of those athletes is phenomenal. They give up privileges, educational goals, relationships, sleep, favorite foods, anything, because of the goal that is before them of securing a place on the victor’s stand. So also no one will hear Jesus say, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” if he does not give himself fully to the work of the Lord.

My own heart is blessed when I see individuals in this church giving themselves fully to the work of the Lord. I’m not talking about our pastors; they get paid for being good; I’m talking about people who are good for nothing. Such members serve God out of the love and gratitude of their hearts. I’m literally amazed sometimes when I see men and women who work fifty plus hours a week then devoting hours to working in Awana, kid’s choir, or teaching a children’s Sunday school class. I’m likewise amazed when I see a mother with three or four children keeping house, serving as a taxi driver, holding down a part-time job, and then, on top of all that, volunteering in Women’s Ministries, MOPS, or our military ministry. That’s something of what it means to be “always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

- 3) ***What we should know.*** Someone once said, “I’m learning more and more about less and less. Now I know everything about nothing.”³⁴ Paul urges us to **“know[ing] that your toil is not in vain³⁵ in the Lord.”** The word “toil” used here means “working to the point of exhaustion.”³⁶ When I was a Bible college and seminary student, I worked at Neptune Swimming Pool Co., in Clackamas, OR. During the summers, I would unload pallets of 100-pound bags of filter sand. This was labor! Initially, it was a manly job but after a while these awkward bags, which were prone to slip, became heavy. It was back-breaking work. And the exhaustion actually felt good.

That's the way it is when you've exhausted yourself in meaningful work for Christ. Have you ever been worn out because of your work for the Lord? I'm afraid many Christians would have to say they have never been. And too many look forward to retirement as an opportunity to do even less, though in reality it's a fantastic time to do more ministry than ever before. Reasonable rest is important and necessary, but if we err Paul is saying it should be on the side of doing more work for the Lord, not less.

When I was at Ecola Bible School this past week, I met a couple in their late sixties that have been serving the Lord as volunteers for years. They live in a small camper and travel around serving campgrounds and churches. When I asked Don and Susie if they ever grew weary, they both insisted that while their physical bodies grew weary at times, they were energized by doing God's work.

Have you ever heard of Epaphroditus? Paul mentions him in Philippians 2, calling him a "dear brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier," but a few verses later Paul adds that he "almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life" (Phil 2:25, 30). Epaphroditus is not the patron saint of many in the church today. Many more voices are calling out, "Pace yourself, take care of your family, abandon the rat race, smell the flowers." You know, there's nothing wrong with any of that advice, and every one of us needs balance in our lives, but time has a way of getting away from us and we may one day end up wondering, "What difference did I make?" Of all the work a person can throw himself into, work for the Lord is the one kind that we are assured is not in vain, because the resurrection and the transformation lie ahead for all believers.³⁷ Because of the certainty of the resurrection, we're confident that our lives will count. The hope of the resurrection keeps us from despair and feeling useless. We know that the things we invest our time, energy, and resources in, if they're done for the Lord's glory, will accomplish something. Nothing will be wasted. That is tremendously motivating.

Let me challenge you with this truth: you cannot grow spiritually unless you are serving the Lord and others. It is absolutely impossible. You might say to me, "I attend church, I am reading my Bible, I am praying." That is all wonderful! But that does not suggest that you are growing spiritually. Spiritual growth takes place when the Bible changes us and we begin to bless others. The Bible teaches that servanthood makes a man or woman more like Jesus. Additionally, the Bible promises us great eternal reward for serving Christ in this life. It has been said, "The highest reward for man's toil is not what he gets for it, but what he becomes by it."³⁸

A 62-year-old British man was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and told he only had a short time to live. Consequently, he quit his job, sold or gave away nearly all his possessions, stopped paying his mortgage, and spent his savings dining out and going on luxurious vacations. After his spending spree, he was left with little more than the black suit, white shirt, and red tie that he had planned to be buried in. It was at this time that he was informed that his suspected "tumor" was no more than an inflammation of the pancreas. In another bizarre case, an 80-year-old great grandma from Iowa decided to get a tattoo with her last wish inked across her chest: "DO NOT RESUSCITATE."³⁹

What would your final wish be? What would it say? What is the message of your life that you want to leave as your legacy? What kind of service will you offer Jesus Christ? How will you spend the days you have left, before you meet Jesus Christ face-to-face? I urge you to *live in the present with the future in view*.

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Scripture Reference

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Isaiah 25:7, 9

Hosea 13:14

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

2 Peter 3:14-15

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Study Questions

1. What currently disappoints and frustrates me about my earthly body? How does the thought of a new resurrection body encourage me (15:50-53)? What fellow believer can I share this future hope with today?
2. If Christ may return in my lifetime, how should I live my life today? Would I like to be a part of the generation that does not die but experiences simultaneous rapture and resurrection? Why or why not? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. What would I say if one of my children asked, "How should I prepare for eternity?"
3. Do I fear death? Why or why not? What specific issues and circumstances cause this fear? How do Paul's words in 15:54-57 comfort me as I contemplate my own death and that of others? What principle or illustration could I share with those that may be wrestling with their own immortality and death?
4. How often do I spend time expressing gratitude to God for what He has done for me through Christ's death and resurrection (15:57)? Why do I give thanks so infrequently? Am I busy or distracted or is there another reason? How should Christ's "victory" affect every area of my life and ministry?
5. Why should the reality of the resurrection prompt me to serve (15:58)? Would those who know me describe me as "steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord?" Why or why not? How do I want to be remembered by my spouse, children, grandchildren, and fellow believers? What would I want my pastor to say about my life and service at my funeral? How can I live that kind of life today? What am I doing today that I will be glad I did 10,000 years from now?

Notes

¹ Star Trek 2: The Wrath of Khan (Paramount Pictures, 1982); screenplay by Jack B. Sowards, directed by Nicholas Meyer; submitted

² Doug Goins, "The Victory Over Death" (1 Cor 15:50-58): <http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/6484/4539.html>.

³ I like the way the New Revised Standard Version begins 15:50: "What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this..."

⁴ See Matt 16:17; Gal 1:16; Eph 6:12; Heb 2:14. Morris points out, "Some commentators see here a reference to two groups: flesh and blood signifies those still alive when Christ comes again while 'decay' signifies those who have died. 'Neither the living nor the dead at the coming of Christ will go into the kingdom as they are. Both must be changed.'" Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, [1958] 1990), 227.

⁵ Eaton understands the term "inherit" (*kleronomeo*) to always refer to "heavenly reward." However, this is one clear case where this understanding does not fit. See Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: 1 Corinthians 10-16* (Kent, England, 2000), 112.

⁶ Bob Deffinbaugh, "A Refresher Course on the Resurrection of the Dead" (1 Cor 15): http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=810.

⁷ The word "sleep" (*koimao*) is used several times to denote death for Christians (e.g., 1 Cor 11:30; 15:6, 18; cf. 1 Thess 4:13-15).

⁸ Cf. Matt 13:11; Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; Eph 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:26; et al. Garland states, "'Mystery' refers to something that was formerly hidden and undiscoverable by human methods, but now has been divinely revealed" (Rom 11:25; cf. 1 Cor 2:1, 7; 13:2). David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 742.

⁹ E.g., Dan 12:1-3; Zech 12:10; 14:4.

¹⁰ "Sleep" is a euphemism for physical death. The soul does not sleep.

¹¹ This same truth is expressed in 1 Thess 4:16-18.

¹² Kent Crockett, *The 911 Handbook* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 216.

¹³ Paul may have in mind Zechariah 9:14, a prophecy about the Lord's appearing: "The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet." David W.J. Gill, "1 Corinthians" in Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Biblical Background Commentary: Vol 3 Romans to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 181.

¹⁴ Michael P. Andrus, "Some Will Never Die" (1 Cor 15:50-58): unpublished sermon notes.

¹⁵ *Contra* Morris who writes, "Some think that Paul means that the second coming will take place in his own lifetime, but this is to press his words illegitimately...[compare 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:8; Phil 3:11] ...Paul often classes himself with those he is describing without any implication that he is one of them (cf. 6:15; 10:22)." Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 228. See also Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 319.

¹⁶ Cf. Matt 24:31; Rev 8:2, 6, 13; 9:14; et al.

¹⁷ The "church age" begins on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and extends through the rapture of the church.

¹⁸ Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord, Come! A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church*, (Westville, NJ: The Friends of Israel, 1995), 259-69, showed that this "last trump" is not the very last one.

¹⁹ See Isa 25:6-8. Notice also the prophecy concerning resurrection which follows in chapter 26: "Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits" (Isa 26:19).

²⁰ Utley makes these helpful comments: "This reminds me of Paul's cry in Rom 6:17 and 7:25. It foreshadows Paul's great metaphor of a Roman triumphal march in II Cor 2:14, as well as his outburst of gratitude in II Cor 9:15." Dr. Bob Utley, "1-2 Corinthians": <http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/pdf/VOL06.pdf>, 191.

²¹ Andrus, "Some Will Never Die."

²² The queen has a curved, smooth stinger that she can use repeatedly without endangering her own life. In contrast, the worker honey bees are armed with straight, barbed stingers, so that when a worker stings, the barbed, needle sharp organ remains firmly anchored in the flesh of its victim. In trying to withdraw the stinger, the bee tears its internal organs and dies shortly thereafter.

²³ Our Daily Bread: http://preceptaustin.org/1_corinthians_commentaries_3.htm.

²⁴ Preaching Today citation: Peter Joshua, *Leadership*, Vol. 7, no. 4.

²⁵ Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*, 77-78.

²⁶ Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die*, 78-79.

²⁷ David Jeremiah, "Today's Turning Point": 11/22/2007.

²⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 4:16-17; 5:13; 6:20; 7:40; 10:31-33; 11:33-34; 12:31; 14:39-40. See Thomas L. Constable: *Notes on 1 Corinthians*: 2007 edition: <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/1corinthians.pdf>, 181.

²⁹ Mare summarizes Paul's words like this: "Now, my brothers and sisters, in the light of these sublime truths, be steadfast in doing the Lord's work, knowing that he will reward you at his coming." Harold W. Mare, *1 Corinthians*. The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976 [2001]): Electronic Ed.

³⁰ Paul uses the conjunction *hoste* ("therefore") in 1 Cor 1:7; 3:7, 21; 4:5; 5:1, 8; 7:38; 10:12; 11:27, 33; 13:2; 14:22, 39; and 15:58. The NET translates *hoste* in 15:58 as "So then..."

³¹ Paul uses this phrase "beloved brethren" only here and in Phil 4:1. Paul calls the Corinthians "beloved" (*agapetos*) in 1 Cor 4:13; 10:14; 15:58 and he addresses them as "brethren" (*adelphos*) in 1 Cor 1:1, 10, 11, 26; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 5:11; 6:5, 6, 8; 7:12, 14, 15, 24, 29; 8:11, 12; 9:5; 10:1; 11:33; 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39; 15:1, 6, 31, 50, 58; 16:11, 12, 15, 20.

³² It is no wonder, then, that Paul encourages believers to "be steadfast, immovable." He began this section on the resurrection by reminding the Corinthians that they had stood firm in the apostolic doctrine preached to them about the death and resurrection of Christ (15:1-2); now he closes with an exhortation to remain firm in that knowledge and to let it shape their everyday lives.

³³ F.L. Godet, *Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, vol. 2: Chapters 9-16. Translated by A. Cusin (Edinburgh: Clark, 1887), 448.

³⁴ Quote from Kent Crockett's Sermon Illustrations: www.kentcrockett.com.

³⁵ Verbrugge writes, "Paul's use of "in vain" picks up his use of that adjective in 15:14, where he indicated that if Christ has not been raised, then Paul's preaching is in vain and our faith is in vain. But because of the resurrection of Christ and the assurance of our future final victory over death, life even with all its difficulties is never in vain." Verlyn D. Verbrugge, "1 Corinthians" in the *Revised Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming).

³⁶ See Paul's use of *kopos* ("toil, labor, trouble") in 1 Cor 3:8; 2 Cor 6:5; 10:15; 11:23, 27; Gal 6:17; 1 Thess 1:3; 2:9; 3:5; 2 Thess 3:8; cf. John 4:38; Rev 2:2; 14:13.

³⁷ Andrus, "Some Will Never Die."

³⁸ John Ruskin, *Leadership*, Vol. 7, no. 4.

³⁹ These illustrations are from <http://www.sermonnews.com>.