

I. The Resurrection and Christ's Lordship

It is the resurrection that really makes Him Lord. There is an interesting thing in Matthew 28:6 that most people have never seen. When you get down to the level of the Bible where you really start paying attention to every detail, and many of you are getting there, these are the kinds of things that I love about the Bible.

In the Bible, there is a story being told, and that story is told by the person who writes it. But you also notice that there are times in a particular book where what the person is saying is not a firsthand account; he was not there. In many places in the Bible, the Holy Spirit of God takes over the narrative and gives us something that, if you really pay attention, you realize, "Well, this couldn't be Matthew saying this, Matthew wasn't there."

Matthew saw a lot of things and wrote about the things that he saw, but there are places in Matthew, and in every book in the Bible, where the writer was not there to see the event. It is a time when the Holy Spirit of God takes over the narrative and makes a statement that no man is making.

One of the most unique things I have ever found in Matthew 28:6 is that it is the first time the narrative of the Bible in the New Testament—which in this case is the Holy Spirit of God—the first time the narrative calls Him Lord. Many people called Him this, and you do not want to confuse that with people and their appreciation of the Lord Jesus. But the first time that the Holy Spirit of God in the narrative calls Him Lord, the very first time that the Holy Spirit in the narrative of the book of Matthew calls Jesus Christ Lord, is in Matthew 28:6, and it does not take place until after the resurrection. Do you know why? Because He was not Lord until He came up from the dead.

That is one of the great keys of the Bible. This is why the church at Corinth is having such a problem accepting Him as Lord, because ultimately, we know that they are confused about the resurrection. So far, we have seen how this great chapter is one of the two definitive chapters in the Bible on the resurrection of Christ. There is so much in this chapter. We have now seen and defined for you the Gospel of Jesus Christ; we know what it is now. We have seen, and on a weekly basis, add to what we already know about the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. Last week, we began to look at the detailing of the resurrection of you and I, man, based on Christ's resurrection.

II. Review of Resurrection Doctrines

On a side note, this is a great example of how the Bible really works. The church of Corinth has an issue in every chapter. As Paul deals with their problems chapter by chapter, you see that not only does he straighten them out, but he also gives us all the great truths that go along with the issues they have. It is chapters like 1 Corinthians 15 where they are confused about the

resurrection. Paul is dealing with them on that, but what comes out of it is our defining and understanding of all the great truths that go along with the resurrection.

As I have said, 1 Corinthians 15, along with Romans 8, are the two definitive chapters in your Bible on every aspect of the resurrection of Christ. Our resurrection from the dead is laid out through the issues this church had with someone teaching them bad doctrine.

Last week, we saw that there is a difference between man and animals. We saw the difference in a basic way, not a real detailed way, between the soul and the spirit. We found out that there are four different kinds of flesh. We also saw that there are two different kinds of bodies. The Bible talks about a celestial body, which refers to angels and all the spiritual heavenly hosts. Then there are terrestrial bodies, which are human bodies, like you and I. Along with that, we found that one brings glory to God—that would be the celestial—and the other one always works at bringing glory back to man—that would be us, the terrestrial.

Now we know that if you are saved, you have a terrestrial body. This is the problem. We now know that if you and I are saved this morning, we have a terrestrial body, which is our flesh, and a celestial body that belongs to God, which is our soul, sealed in the day of redemption. These two want glory: the flesh wants glory for itself, and the soul wants glory for God. This is the battle that you and I are in. It is simple; it is not hard.

Right now, we are going to talk about the deliverance from it today. But right now, you and I are trapped. We are trapped. I have the Holy Spirit of God living inside me. I want to do what is right. I want to love God. I want to do what God wants me to do. I want to be everything that God wants me to be. But on the other side, I am trapped in this vile, filthy, terrestrial body that only lives for one purpose: to serve itself and do what it wants to do, which is always going to be against what God wants me to do. That is my dilemma this morning. That is your dilemma this morning if you are saved. We are trapped. What we are going to see today, as he begins to talk about this, is our deliverance from that.

He also said that there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. We saw how the sun is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The moon is a type of the church collectively, reflecting the light of the sun. But then he brought it down to a personal level and said the stars. He says there is one glory of the sun, one glory of the moon, and one glory of the stars. Then he says, "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." We tied that back to Daniel 12:3.

Now we know that our life is like going out on a starry night. You see bright stars, medium stars, and dim stars. My life and your life today are just like that star. The Bible says that in the resurrection, God is going to bring about, and we are going to see, and God is going to judge the different glories between people that claim to be saved, just like we can walk out on a starry night and see the different glories of the brightness of the stars. Now we have a better understanding of all this.

The last thing we talked about last week was in 1 Corinthians 15:43, and it is connected with the resurrection. Here is what he said, talking about our terrestrial body:

1 Corinthians 15:43-44

It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power;

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

III. The First and Last Adam

That is really where we are going to be today as we carry this on. I want to show you some great truths about the spiritual body, the terrestrial body, the celestial body, and how it all affects us in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says the natural body is sown in weakness and in dishonour, but someday it is going to be raised in power and glory.

In 1 Corinthians 15:45-50, he begins a detailed examination of the raising of the spiritual body, the celestial body, our resurrection. Keep in mind, we cannot come up until Christ came up. That made Him the Lord over the living and the dead. Let us read these verses and see what he says here. In these lessons and these verses, you are going to learn all the material you need to understand this.

1 Corinthians 15:45-50

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

1 Corinthians 15:45 says, "So it is written." What he quotes here is Genesis 2:7. You will want to put some of this in your Bible as we are going along; it will save you some time. But this is not a direct quote; this is what we call in Bible study an added quote. You are going to find places in the Bible where he quotes what the person says directly, word for word. Then you are going to find places where he says, "This is a quote; it was written," and the quote is not exactly what he said, because what he does is take the original quote and give you more information. So you have to get the two quotes together to really understand the concept. This is very important in understanding your Bible. What he says here in 1 Corinthians 15:45 is, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

In your Bible, in reference to you and I, for those of us in Bible Basics, I told you how the Bible is really based on two lines. It is a line of light versus darkness. One line represents God; the other line represents the devil. I told you that all history is based on this: once you understand the plan of God, once you see God moving down through history to accomplish that plan, then you see the devil moving in opposition to stop that plan. That is really all history is; it is really all the Bible is. But within that story, you have two lines for you and for me. One line represents death; the other line represents life.

The one that represents death would be Adam's line. When you go back to Genesis 5:5, where the first man in the Bible dies in a natural way, you find where the Bible says, talking about Adam, "and he died." You are going to find from that point on that everybody in Adam's line dies. Everybody, when it starts giving the genealogies of who is who, everybody in that line of Adam dies.

Then you have one line that represents life, and that will be Christ's line. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die," there is one line. "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive." There is your second line, you see. The Bible says, "The first man Adam was made a living soul." You know the story of Adam and Eve. It is not a complicated story; it is a very good story. God made Adam a living soul and gave him dominion and a mission, and gave him all that He wanted him to do. For those of us in Bible Basics, we understand God's original plan now, do we not? And we should. We know that God started something with Adam that He wanted Adam to carry on. But we also know that the devil stepped in and thwarted that plan and brought Adam down. Then God just moved right on with the next part of the plan and overstepped that.

My point is this: God, the first man, was made a living soul, and God had a plan for Adam, but Adam failed. By his failure, by him disobeying God and doing what he did, he brought death upon all mankind—spiritual death. That is why his line represents death. That is why the Bible says in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death;". That is the concept.

When Adam sinned, he lost the image of God. Now Adam is in a fallen image. He lost the ability to communicate with God. That is why they ran and hid. That is why, before that, they were naked and were not ashamed. Now they know they are naked. What do they do? They run out to a fig tree and try to make aprons to cover their nakedness. They know now they have lost their innocence, and Adam had a perfect nature where he had fellowship with God, but now it is gone. Because death came to Adam due to disobedience, you and I are in the line of Adam coming down through this. That is why death passed upon all men. That is why you and I were born sinners. We were born with our father's likeness, but the devil's image. That is why the Bible says in John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth."

Somebody said, "Well, I do not like being told I am in the devil's family." Good, get out of it! Get saved and join God's family. It is simple. No reason to get your nose out of joint. But God said that you can't. Why is your countenance fallen? You do not like being in the devil's family?

That is offensive to you? Get saved, get out of that stupid family, and get in the good family. That is all you have to do.

You see, we are dead in trespasses and sins. If you are going to study your Bible, you are going to find out from here on, in Genesis 5:3. If you are watching very carefully from here on, remember now the Bible says that before the fall, Adam was made in God's likeness and in God's image. If he had gotten the tree of life and had eternal life, and that thing would have worked out, then he would have had kids because the woman came out of him. He would have had kids and produced kids in a sinless environment. Those kids would have been in God's likeness and God's image. Ah, but when sin came in, you lost the image, and now the earth is thrown into a curse, is it not? Now death is passed upon all men because the wages of sin is death.

So what Genesis 5:3 tells us is that after the fall, from here on, Adam produces kids, and it says it very clearly. He produces kids in his likeness, after his image—the fallen image. That is why you and I were produced in the image of our physical father in the likeness. The image is our spiritual father, the devil, because of what happened with Adam. It is simple because you have two lines in the Bible. One line represents life; one line represents death. Adam's line will always represent death. God's line will always represent life.

Now the Bible says in our text that Christ, the Second Adam—it is very important that you see that He is the Second Adam—He represents life, and this will be eternal life. 1 Corinthians 15:45 says, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

Now this is where you are going to get a little Bible work in. In your Bible, watch the words 'quicken,' 'quick,' 'quickenings.' 1 Peter 3:18 says that Christ "was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:". Here it says, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Wherever you find the word 'quicken,' 'quick,' or 'quickenings' in the Bible, it will always be a reference to your salvation. It will always be a reference to you getting saved; it always will.

In Acts 10:42, 2 Timothy 4:1, and 1 Peter 4:5, you will find the same basic verse, and it says that God is coming and is going to be ready to judge the quick and the dead. The quick will be saved people; the dead will be unsaved people. Hebrews 4:12 is a great verse talking about the Bible. It says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is quick. Colossians 2:13: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,". So when you find those words in the Bible, they mean salvation. So it is talking about in 1 Corinthians 15:45, "the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." He not only resurrected Himself from the dead, but now He also has the power to quicken us and to raise us from the dead. When you got saved, you were quickened spiritually. We will talk about that here in a moment.

➤ The Principle of the Second

➤ Incredible Parallels Between the First and Second Adam

IV. The Two Adoptions and the Groaning for Redemption

The second part of our text, once we get that under our belt, now focuses on the resurrection body that you and I are going to get. We are going to pick it up now in 1 Corinthians 15:46. We just talked about 1 Corinthians 15:45: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." Now we understand all this, you see. The First Adam represents earth, earthy, terrestrial. That is you and me. The Second Adam represents life. He is the Lord from Heaven there in 1 Corinthians 15:47. Now here it comes: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy:" That is you and me before we were saved. "And as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." That is you and me now after we are saved. Now here it comes: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

That verse says that someday, just as you and I are trapped in this terrestrial body, but we are saved on the inside, there is coming a day when God is going to resurrect us, and we are going to get the glorified body that Jesus Christ had. We are going to have everything that God wants us to have.

The great chapter that goes along with this is Romans 8. This is the other of the two chapters that define this. You will remember the book of Romans; when we taught it to you, I told you that Romans is the handbook of Christian doctrine. It is everything that you and I need to understand about everything God is trying to do and accomplishing through the Church from beginning to end. In Romans 8, Paul teaches us about two resurrections, does he not? Two adoptions. We talked about it in great detail. Romans 8 shows us two adoptions, which are the two resurrections.

Romans 8:15 is the first adoption. This is the day you got saved. He says, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;". See that? He is talking to saved people. He is saying you have not received the spirit of bondage. You see that 'spirit' is a small 's' spirit; that is man's spirit. That is the human spirit that we all have that wants to take the glory from God and put it on man. He says, now that you are saved, "ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;". You see that spirit, your human spirit, that is where your problems are. That is where my problems are. That is where our fears are. That is where our failures are. That is where all of the things in life that we yield ourselves to that are endless and dead-end streets and bring us disappointment and heartache. He says, you have been delivered from that, and you should not go back to that kind of bondage. "But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Now 'Abba,' mark this in your Bible, is a title like 'Great Father' or a great title of distinction and greatness. He is saying that this adoption is a spiritual adoption, and it is the day you and I got saved. The day you and I got saved, your soul was sealed (Ephesians 4) with the Holy Spirit of God, and God separated you from your flesh, and He adopted your spiritual nature, and He gave you His image sealed within your soul. But you still have your old nature, do we not? That is what he is talking about there. He knows that, and he is telling them, "Look,

why are you letting anybody or anything put you back under the bondage of your physical spirit once you have been set free and delivered by the Spirit of God?"

Now folks, I want to tell you something very honestly and very plainly today, and I know you are probably all saved and most of you are all going to Heaven, but I want to tell you something, saved or not, there are two roads you go in life in a physical way. One road is going to be to go with the world and the things of the world and the people of the world. Some of them are saved people; some are unsaved people. Hey, God's people, if there is anything I have learned, I have learned that there is no difference with most of God's people between the sacred and the secular. You find some of God's people that do the same thing that the unsaved people do. That road is going to lead you to spiritual disaster. You get on that road with them, and the Bible says, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" You go down that road, and it is a road of disaster in your life, disappointment, and at the resurrection, you are going to shine with no brightness whatsoever. The other road is the road of the new nature, the road of the Spirit that sets you free from that bondage that quickened you. This is why it is so vitally important to see this.

Romans 8:23 is the second one. This is really what we want to talk about today. This one here is a great one. This one here basically says in Romans 8:23, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit,". Let me talk about that. If you put this note in your Bible, here is another term you find: 'firstfruits of the Spirit.' You are going to be discipling somebody. You are going to be doing something, or somebody is going to ask you, "What are the firstfruits of the Spirit?" And here I am, wanting to give it to you. And you are not going to write it down. You are going to say, "I will do it later." And you will not do it later because the Chiefs are playing this afternoon. And so what? You are going to forget about it, and you will not get it down instead of putting it in right now.

The 'firstfruits of the Spirit,' that little term simply means that you and I, Church Age Christians, are the firstfruits that the Holy Spirit of God produced after Christ resurrected Himself. So you and I are the firstfruits of the Spirit. You see, the Holy Spirit of God's job is twofold. It convicts of sin and it bears fruit. The first legitimate fruit the Holy Spirit of God bore after the resurrection was the Church. You and I are in that Church. So it says, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption,". See, there was the second adoption. The one in Romans 8:15 is one, and the one in Romans 8:23 is the definition, "to wit,". Here it comes, this adoption: "to wit, the redemption of our body."

If you are really on fire for God this morning and in fellowship with God, I do not know how else to say it. You ought to just be chomping at the bit for that thing to happen. If you are really plugged in today, I will tell you what the devil does. I know it is true. This is not a criticism toward anybody, but I am just telling you, it is true. We live in this God-forsaken world, and we hang out with the filthiest things and the filthiest people and all kinds of things that try to drag us down and kill our zeal for God. I am telling you, everywhere you go, everywhere you look, everything you get involved in, you have to be careful of, because the design today is to stop you and me from doing whatever God wants us to do. I am just telling you, that is what you and I have to look out for. You ought to be absolutely what he is saying right there. It ought to be the

thing that you are looking for to live here. He says that "we ourselves groan within ourselves." Do you know what that means? That means you are dying to get out of this filthy world and home to Heaven.

Now, if that is what we should be doing, how come you and I are enjoying it so much? How come the things we talk about, if God would put all our words at the end of a day in a category, we would find 5,000 words about everything else and about three or four words or maybe nothing about Christ? See, that is the problem. One adoption is for your soul; that is in Romans 8:15. Romans 8:23 is the adoption coming for your body. It is a great thing, and that is what we need to be looking forward to. We are going to talk about that more in a minute too.

V. Living in Light of the Resurrection Body

In Christianity, you have heard me talk about this before, you have a heresy of what we call predestination. I am not going to get into it in a long disquisition this morning, but basically the heresy of predestination is the fact that God predestined some people to be saved and some people to be lost. Stupid. I have never met anybody who believed in predestination who knew anything about the Bible past the ABCs of the Bible. We do not have time to mess with it this morning, nor should we even give it the time; we have talked about it before.

Romans 8:29 is your definitive verse on predestination in the Bible. It simply says this: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,". You see, in the Bible's definition, predestination had nothing ever to do with salvation. You are not predestined to be saved, but after you are saved, Romans 8:29 says, then from that point on, you are predestined to get God's body just like Jesus Christ. That is predestination in the Bible from a biblical sense. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be saved?" No, "to be conformed to the image of his Son." See, there is a difference in getting saved and being conformed to the image of His Son. How do you know that? Because there are two adoptions in Romans 8. You missed them. Predestination has to do with the adoption of your body getting conformed to that image.

I know we all struggle with things in life. I do, you do. We are human. We are living in a tough time; I am just telling you that. But I want to talk to you about what he said here. When he said that "we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption," the deliverance in the preceding verses that I did not even get into it. He talked about how the animals themselves groan because, you know, animals are an incredible thing in the Bible. Of all of God's creation, the only ones who disobey God are man. Do you know why when you hunt deer, you get up in a deer stand? Because deer never look up. Do you know why they never look up? Because in the Bible, looking up is associated with a proud look. We look up. They never look up, so they are stupid and run into your bow and arrow or your gunfire. But the bottom line is God made them in a submissive form. Do you ever see a mama deer or a mama bear leave her family and leave her cub for somebody else to raise? You mess with a mama she-bear, boy, I will tell you what, you will find out what it is all about. It is only man that does those things. I have seen geese when they mate up and they partner up, and one of the geese gets shot. I have seen that other goose just

stay there where that other one was and not leave them. They understand what it means for better and for worse, but God's people never figured it out.

I am telling you, keeping our biblical perspective in our lives, that is the key. We talk about victory in Jesus. What a joke that is. I mean, we ought to change the words and play 'defeatism in Jesus' because that is where most of God's people are today. Yet, this is not a criticism. I understand the trials of this life. I do. I understand what many of you go through. I mean, I have been in the Bible for forty years, and sometimes it gets so hard on my shoulders, you just want to scream. So I know what it must be for some of you whose last forty years have been a disaster or whose last twenty years have been mistake after mistake after mistake. I applaud you for the fact that you are trying to claw your way out. Please, this is not a criticism in any way, shape, or form. If anything, this is an admonishment toward you. But I am telling you, I understand how hard it is today to get out of that mess that we are in.

There is a lot of pressure. The devil seems to be at every turn of the corner, does he not? He wants to turn victory into disappointment. He knows just when you come up to bat when to throw you the curveball, does he not? He knows when you are running to second base or third base, first base, and you are going to get on base. He knows when to get that ball there just a little faster than you and call you out. He knows that. I understand the heartache. I understand the heartache that a lot of God's people go through. I understand the trials. I do. I do.

You know, one of the things that I always focus on in my life is the fact that we are pilgrims in a strange land, and I am just passing through here. I know I have a house, and I have a couple of cars, and I have a dog, and I have a backyard, and I am fenced in, and I have possessions, and I have a TV set, but I do not have my roots down here. I do not know of anything I have today or any plans that I have. I am planning on going to the homeless place tonight because I am feeling a little homeless myself this morning, and I am going to a birthday party this afternoon. I am looking forward to that. My week is filled with doing things with people and our church family. I love doing that and all those things when I can, and it is always fun. We have sandwiches out there and cookies out there, and I bought all the water. The ladies did a great job of thinking of all those things. But you know what? If the Lord came anytime now, it would be okay with me. The devil's crowd can have the water, have the sandwiches. They can have the stale cookies—they are not stale, I ate one the other day and they are really good. They can have everything out there. They can have all the Ruckman books they want. They can go to my house. I hope they feed the dog, but they can do whatever they want to do.

You see, there is nothing on my agenda that I would not give up in a flash heartbeat for that resurrection body. Do you know why? Because the source of all my problems is this whole world. The source of my groanings, the source of my disappointment, is this whole world. I am about as sick of it as I can get. I am sick of the world. I am sick of the people in the world. I am sick of God's milquetoast, wishy-washy people in the world. I am just sick of the whole thing. The only thing that is going to fix this is a good toilet flush, and that is going to be the Judgment Seat of Christ. But I understand. I understand why good people suffer.

You see, God's grand plan, from Bible Basics, we now know, was, do we not? God's great overall plan was never about this life, was it? See, kids, when you know these things, when you grasp these truths, you do not ever want to make the mistake of deceiving yourself to ever try to encourage yourself about anything in this life. That is hard, is it not? People get married. Weddings are a joyous occasion. There is not anybody on planet Earth that I have ever met that did not take the wedding to the hilt. I am not saying you should not. I think you ought to have a nice wedding. I think it is supposed to be the only one you have. I think it is to be the best one you have. But it is easy to get caught up in that one and forget about that one.

See, having kids is great. We all get excited when so-and-so is going to have a baby. We all get excited when so-and-so finally has the baby. We all get excited when so-and-so brings the baby, and it is okay. But you know what? In reality, that baby just got born into the worst situation that can ever be born in, not because of your parents, but because of the world that we live in. I have actually had parents—I do not think this is a good reason for not having kids—but I have actually had parents say, "I do not want to have kids because I do not want to bring them into this rotten, rotten world." I understand that. I understand. I understand. My point is you will never have the victory of God as long as you keep looking for things to encourage yourself in this life. At some point in your world, my dear friend, you have to begin to encourage yourself in the next one to come.

Romans 8:17 says, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;". That is us, you and me. See, you can encourage yourself with that. That Bible says I am going to be a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. That Bible says that right now, my soul is sealed and saved—the first adoption—but I am sitting here putting up with all of this filth, putting up with all of this crap, putting up with everything I have to put up with: lackadaisical people, God's people who do not want to do one thing for God, worldly people who hate God and everything about Him, and they stand in stark contrast to everything I believe, everything I love, and everything you should believe and love. But one of these days, we are going to be delivered from that. One of these days, brother, it is going to take place, and those are the things.

One of these days, you know what? I do not expect anything from the Judgment Seat of Christ. I have made dumb, boneheaded things in my life, and I am sure that when I get there, I do not expect to have any rewards. I really do not, and I am not doing it for that. I do not even think about that, but I will tell you one thing I do want. It is the only thing I want, and it is the only thing I care about. He can take all my rewards and give them out to whoever He wants, but the only thing I want is when I walk up before Him and pull out that sword, and brother, it is going to have some nicks on it. It is going to have some rust on it. It is going to have some cuts on it. It is going to be battered and beaten, but all I want to do is lay that sword down at His feet, and the only thing I want, the only thing I want, is for Him to look down at me and just say a couple of short words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." That is all I care about. That is all I am looking for. That is all I want out of life. I want to be able to lay that old battered, broken sword down at His feet, step back and highball Him and say, "I did the best I could." I failed. I failed miserably. I made a lot of dumb things, but at the end of the day, I still had that sword in my hand. That is all it is about.

One of these days, the Bible says that you are going to be a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. What does that do for you? I mean, you come in and you say, "Wow, I just won the lottery! Wow! I won a car! Wow! I won a trip to here! Wow! I won this! Wow!" Someday you are going to be glorified with Him. It means nothing today.

Then he says, "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Now there is the key: "if so be that we suffer with him," suffering what He suffers, suffering for His sake, not our own stupidity, suffering with Him, "that we may be also glorified together." You see, if you want to share the glorification, do you? Do you want to shine like the sun and the stars of Heaven? There is only one way to be glorified with Him. That is to take the suffering with Him right now.

Here it comes. Romans 8:18, my favorite verse in the Bible that I encourage myself with. He says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." You are supposed to suffer with Him, for Him, through Him. When you stand before Him, the glory that is in you right now is going to be manifested in a physical resurrection of a glorified body. You are going to be glorified with Him. Then you are going to see what you ought to be able to see right now: that whatever you have to go through to fulfill God's mission in your life, whatever you have to do, whatever you have to get out of your life, whatever you have to get away from, whatever you have to quit, whatever you have to let go of, will be worth it when you stand there and look back and see that it did not matter in this life. It was all for naught. It meant nothing. All your money, all your possessions, everything you have is nothing. Only what you did for Him. Amen.

Sown in corruption, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in strength; sown a natural body, raised in a glorious body—the Body of Christ. That is why the Church is called the Body of Christ. This is why God's people, bless their hearts, do not get it. This is why they struggle. This is why they get down. This is why they lose their fire. This is why they let disillusionment and disappointment and all the things that pull them back. And why would we not? We live in this rotten, godless world. It all stands for naught and all against God. There is nothing good in it. The Bible says that life on planet Earth is like a bag with holes. There is absolutely nothing good that comes out of it. Yet we will not focus on this old life and focus on what is coming.

Colossians 3:1-3, probably on many of your prayer cards. It says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Then it says this, and here is the key, folks: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Now there is the key: setting your affections. And there is also the problem, is it not? Set your affections on things. There is our problem. You are either going to set your affections on the things of this world with the natural man, or you are going to set your affections on things of God in the spiritual world. You are either going to set your affections on things that deal with the First Adam, that are the dead-end streets of life, or you are going to set your affections on the endless hope of a glorious resurrection and an eternity with God. And that is the problem. God's things versus man's things will always lead to giving man the glory instead of God. Man's things will always get glory to man. God's things will always get glory to God.

VI. The Hope That Purifies

The last thing I want to say very quickly is that I want to leave you with a great verse. I think this is one of the greatest verses on the body and the resurrection we are going to get at the Body of Christ, Christ's glorified body. I think it is the greatest single verse found in 1 John 3. We will move through this very quickly here, but this is some great stuff. It is these kinds of things, folks, that you have to encourage yourself in.

You see, we are up against it. You go to work all day with the world. Everything you watch on television is the world. Everything you do in life, everything you read, is against God. Even most of God's people that you hang out with are against God. They do their own thing, and they pull themselves up as Christians. All that pulls on you. It all pulls on you. I am telling you, the only way to handle it is to start to encourage yourself with not what is now, but encourage yourself with what is coming. There is something better coming.

He says in 1 John 3:1-3, and you need to mark this in your Bible. I am going to break this down into six points. You need to get these six points out of this verse.

1 John 3:1-3

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1. The first thing he says is: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:". Do you have any idea what it took for your salvation to take place? Do you have any grasp of the concept of what God had to do that, really in essence, if you want to look at it this way, He designed everything in that Bible from beginning to end around your salvation and my salvation? If you really want to take it to the nth degree, God, through the whole 6,000 years of man's history, with all the writers and all the authors and all the things that they had to go through and all the things that they struggled with to put a Bible in form, God had to preserve it through thousands of people's lives for you to have it, that you could actually look at that and think that God just did that for you. Why do we get so indifferent to the One who died for us? Why?
2. The Bible says, "Behold." Do you know what 'behold' means? 'Look at this.' Behold, He is showing it to you. It is like you have some great picture you want to show somebody that you painted, or some great thing that you wrote and you keep it under wraps, or some statue commemorating somebody and you pull it off and show it and bring it for the first time everybody sees it and you say, "Behold!" That is what He is doing. Do you ever stop and behold what it cost? What the price was? What it took for God to get you and me to the place where He would save us? Do you realize that everything in the Bible goes toward that direction? I mean, I know God's people have a tendency, and I myself, to be ungrateful, but

come on, man. Now you actually, and I know, right now you grasp it, and right now you probably feel like a sheep-killing dog, and you really feel bad, and that is good. But you know what really bothers me? Fifteen minutes from now, when you get the Chiefs on and you see what the score is, or you get a phone call from somebody, this is all going to be gone. You will be right back into what pulls you down all the time. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." Behold what manner of love? Do you comprehend how much God loves you? Do you comprehend how little we love Him back? We want everything from God; we give nothing back to Him. God made the sacrifice to us and gave us everything. If we do anything for God, we work it into our schedule and make it so it is convenient for us. Behold, behold what manner of love. It all comes back because we do not encourage ourselves. We are not looking for what is coming.

3. Then he says, point two: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." You know there are two kinds of world that hated Christ. Have you ever noticed that? The first one was the unsaved world, and we can understand them. But the second one was the religious crowd, the scribes and the Pharisees, that make up the mixed multitude. They hated Him too. Do you ever stop and wonder why, at the Second Coming of Christ, He is going to come down and take it by force? Did you ever reason it out? He comes down in an army, kicks the snot out of everybody, and takes it by force, kills anybody that is in His way. Do you know why He does that? Because the first time He came, He did not come that way. The first time He came, He came down to reason with people. He wanted them to behold the love that He had for them, and they killed Him. The world hated Him. God's people hated Him.
4. You know, if Jesus Christ came down today and started a church down the street, in three weeks' time they would want to get rid of Him and hate Him and be against Him, just like every other pastor that stands on the Word of God. Do you know why? Because if you are really doing what is right, preaching the Book, He would be preaching the same thing that any pastor ought to be preaching. See, it is nice to talk about, "I love Jesus," it is nice to talk about how sweet He is and, "Oh, He is my Lord and Savior, and yes, I love Him." But it is something else when push comes to shove, that your will has to go up against His Word. That is where it really is. That is where it really is. So He is not coming back the way He did the first time.
5. See, the first time they took His lovely Son who came down and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," (John 1:29) and they took Him and they beat Him and He spit in His face. They ridiculed Him from one moment to the next. They were like dogs after Him in everything that He did. Finally, they took Him, they beat Him, they whipped Him, they spit in His face, they pulled out His beard, and then they took Him and put Him on a cross and put nails through His hands and His feet, hung Him up with a crowd, stripped Him naked, and then threw a spear in His side and then made fun of Him. So He is not coming back that way next time.
6. Why do you work so hard at being friends with the world? May I ask that to you today? He says, "therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." The world knows you not because it knew Him not. Why do we work so hard at being with the world? Why do you

have friends who claim to be Christians that hate everything about God, the Word of God, and you just have to stay in that relationship and just love them so much? When they hate the very God and the very Bible that you stand for, they just have enough guts to say it. Is the verse not plain? Maybe we better go to the Greek. It says, "therefore," what is the 'therefore' for? Because of the manner of love that God hath bestowed upon us. "Therefore the world knoweth us not." Does the world know you as a friend? It did not know Him as a friend. Does it know you as a friend? I mean, we all have friends who are unsaved; I am not talking about that. I am talking about your intimate crowd that, instead of you having a direct impact on them, they have a direct impact on you in a negative form. Why do you work so hard at wanting to be friends with people who want nothing to do with church, nothing to do with the Bible, nothing to do with God?

7. Then he says, point three: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." See, right now, because of your first adoption, right now, because you are saved, right now, because you have passed from death into life, right now, because you have been quickened, right now, because though the First Adam brought sin into the world, you accepted the Second Adam who got through the garden and became the Tree of Life, and now you are saved. Right now, as we speak, if you are saved this morning, right now, based on the love that God has for you, right now, based on that salvation that God gave you, right now, as we sit here, you and I, if you are saved, we are the sons of God.
8. Now, here is the problem, point four: "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Ah, there is the problem. On the inside, I am the son of God, but on the outside, I am that wretched old Bible Alexander. You see, on the outside, I am everything that God wants, but I am still stuck. I am trapped. I am trapped in this old casement of filthy, vile flesh that gives me my problems every day of my life, and I am stuck with it. And you wonder why, I wonder why you would glory in that today. Boy, there is only one thing I am looking for, and that is the resurrection of this old piece of flesh to get that glorified body, and I will be... Do you know what Heaven is to me? Heaven to me is being in a place that for the rest of my life—eternity, that is pretty good, the rest of my time—whatever I say, whatever I think, and whatever I do will only be pleasing to Him. Now, that is what I am looking for. I do not have that today. I wish I could say I did; I do not, and you do not either. But the only way you get to that point in your life is to not focus and fellowship with the things of the old Adam, but set your affections on the things with the New Adam and look at what is coming. Something better is coming.
9. Then he says this: "but we know." Do we? Do you? Do I? "But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." That is the day I am looking for. Now, I brought you up to those five points to give you the last one, because the last one is the key. The last one is the key.
10. And every man, point six: "And every man that hath this hope in him," you see, the hope is not this life; it is temporary; it is the next life. The hope that someday you are going to be glorified with Him as a joint-heir. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Do you know what most pastors would tell you? Do you know why I go into such deep detail on Thursday night and sometimes on Sunday morning? Do you know why I do not ever shun away from most questions that you ask, and I will take you down as

deep as they are? In most churches with most pastors, if you would ask them a great deep question, their answer to you would be that you as a Christian ought not to worry about things like that. That you need to just worry about the things that are everyday life, and then you should not have to worry about studying those deep things in the Bible.

11. Now, there is a reason why they tell you that. The first reason is they do not know the answer; that is your first and foremost primary reason. The second one is they do not know the Bible. That Bible says that the very deep things about the resurrection body, you see, the things about what God is doing, the deep things—the Millennium, the Tribulation, all those details, the Antichrist, going into history and all that stuff. Do you know what that does? That just gets my mind off of what the old world is and shows me the whole thing in a package, and that gets me, it purifies me even as I am already pure. What does that mean? You are already pure because you are saved, but you have to perfect yourself every day to stay pure, and the way you do that is to focus on what is coming, not what is around you. The only way you can do it, the only way you can do it. In this life, if you do not learn to use the promises of what is coming, you will never get through the struggles of what you are going through today, and you can write that down.

VII. The Best Is Yet To Come

I preached a funeral a couple of weeks ago. A couple of you were there, and I told this story at the end. I told the story of how when I was a little kid, I used to love to go back to Maryland to my Aunt Nettie's. Aunt Nettie had married a man named Clyde. They are both dead. They had a daughter named Darlene; she is still alive. They lived in Frostburg, Maryland. My family are all coal miners. My grandpa was a coal miner. My uncle was a coal miner, and they worked in the coal mines of West Virginia and Maryland, and they grew up in poverty. Most people would laugh at me when I say this, but my dad was born and raised in a little log cabin, and his mom and dad raised eleven children in that one-room log cabin. I saw it when I was just a little kid. They took me by it one time, and my grandfather died when they were all very young, and that mom raised them all, and it was incredible how eleven kids lived in that little log cabin. No lights, no indoor plumbing, no nothing.

I used to hear him tell the stories, but I used to love to go back to Maryland. I was just about nine or ten years old, and she was a great cook. When we would come there from Ohio, she would make some great stuff, and I always enjoyed eating. My fondest childhood memories are thinking of going back there, and I love Maryland. Maryland to me was like the Wild Wild West, and she would put on these spreads, and she would always do this. She would bring the food in, and we would eat, and then she was very proper. She would pick up all the plates, and she knew we loved coming there, and she was a sweetheart of a gal. So she would pick up all the plates, and she would come over, and she would say, "Now, Bobby, keep your fork, because there is something good really coming." And I knew she made whoopee pies that would put you through the moon. She was great, and I was never disappointed. I thought about that for years and years and years, and I said, "When I die, when I die, there are only a couple of things I want." I hear I am going to be cremated, so.

But I am telling everybody right now, when you walk by my casket, and I am lying in there, I want somebody to put a fork in my hand. Now, when they put a fork in my hand, most of you will probably be there, if you do not die before me—somebody looks like you are halfway there now. When people walk by and look at me in that casket, with that silly smirk on my face, holding that fork straight up, and they say to you, "What is he holding a fork for?" You tell them for me. The reason I am holding a fork? Because the best is yet to come, and there is something better coming after this life. This life is not it. This life just appears to be it. The devil makes it look like it is it. He turns all the lights on, gets some sparkles, gets some diamonds, gets all the things going, so you will believe it is it. It is not it.

Let me tell you something. Just like my Aunt Nettie used to say after the main course, "Keep your fork, Bob. There is something better coming," and there is something better coming, and it is Him and your glorified resurrected body. Someday we are going to... You have to encourage yourself with those things. You have to keep yourself, you have to purify yourself every day, even as you are pure. If you do not learn to focus on the things that are coming, you are never going to come through what is coming tomorrow.