



Message Transcript

Death Defeated

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And as we continue to worship and prepare our hearts for the word of God, let's go before him again. Let's pray, and let's ask the Lord to do a work in and through each one of us. So, Jesus, we come before your throne right now, Lord, as we've sung songs of praise to you, as we prayed to your name, Lord, now we're going to hear your living and active word, Lord, we want to hear you, Lord, drive back every power of darkness in this place, Lord, so that your light might shine. And, Lord, you would have your way with each and every one of us. Lord, we believe that you have a word for everyone here and everyone who's listening.

And so, Lord, we just pray that I would be clear as I preach your word, and that we would all be receptive to hearing it. And that, Lord, we'd not only listen to what you have to say, but we'd be willing to put into practice everything that you show us for your great name so that you'd be more glorified. And so, Lord, with that, we give you all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise in Jesus name. And all God's people agree by saying, amen. Amen.

On November 2 of 2016, close to midnight, Mountain Standard time, something happened I didn't think I'd ever see in my lifetime. The Chicago Cubs won the World Series, right? And the very next day in the paper, it says, cubs win the World Series.

Now, for anybody that grew up as a Cubs fan, you know that we waited 108 years. I'd waited my entire life to see something like that.

So I kind of hoped that it would happen, but didn't know if it ever really would. And the more that I lived, the more I thought, man, this is never, ever going to happen. So when it did, and it was realized, I was excited as I'd ever been. But I want to tell you something. There's a headline that's coming someday that you're all going to be aware of, and it's going to say this death defeated.

And while you may not care about the Chicago Cubs, and that's fine. You want to know about this headline, and you want to be prepared for it, because God wrote his word to us to let us know that Jesus Christ is alive. He's alive as he's ever been. And as Paul's been taking us through first corinthians 15, he's been highlighting that over and over again, and he's going to culminate all that by showing us how death is ultimately defeated, and how we can yearn and look forward to that day. So if you'd open up your bibles to one corinthians, chapter 15, beginning in verse 50, we're going to finish the chapter this morning.

And as we go through this, I'll read these verses, and then we're gonna take a look at three things that Christians need to be because of this coming headline of death being defeated. And here's what Paul says about the resurrection. So now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you, a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will 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 will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 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 in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?

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. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain. Now, in this text, Paul is going to highlight three things that Christians need to be because of this coming headline. And for the last three or four

weeks, we've been talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and all that that's entailed.

And Paul is culminating this understanding by saying this. First and foremost, Christians are called to be and need to be expectant, because Christ's soon return will certainly transform our bodies. We need to live expectant. We need to be expectant, because Christ soon return will transform our bodies. He says.

Now I say this, brethren or brothers and sisters, here's what he says. That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. We spent all last week talking about this very fact. Paul is culminating all this. We took a look last week at how we put different seeds into the ground and how there's a continuation of the seed, but it's different than the actual seed.

And we took a look at our bodies and how there will be a resurrection of the body, the body that you're currently in will be resurrected and be part of your glorious resurrection body. That's what we spent all last week talking about. And Paul is saying this, there's a necessity for it, because in the coming kingdom, flesh and blood, our

current bodies, cannot inherit what God has for us. This perishable body cannot inherit what is coming. We need, or this perishable body, we need an imperishable body.

We need a body that will last and stand the test of time. And so that's what he's talking about. There's coming a day where everybody's body will be resurrected, some for eternal life with Christ and some for eternal judgment apart from Christ. But there is a resurrection of the body because the eternality that is coming requires an eternal body to accommodate what you're going to enjoy or endure as a result. Now, let me just say a couple things about this passage.

When it comes to talking about what it's going to be like at the end, I think it's really important that we talk about what Christians agree upon. Because we agree upon a lot more than we disagree on. And because the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most glorious event in our future, we need to align on what we agree on. So I wrote down seven things this week as I was studying that. I believe all Christians believe, and this is what's coming.

So we can all agree on that. One is the full bodily, physical return of Jesus. Jesus

Christ is coming back in all of his glory. When Jesus ascended into heaven after his resurrection, two angels were there, and they were looking down on the apostles who were standing there gazing up into heaven and saying, men of Galilee, why do you look into heaven? This Jesus who left will come back in the same way in which you saw him go.

All christians believe the Bible spells out in no uncertain terms, Jesus will return fully, bodily and physically in a glorious body. He's coming, okay? Jesus Christ is coming. Second thing is, all christians believe in the judgment of unbelievers, the judgment of unbelievers, okay? So when Jesus Christ comes back, okay, when he returns, those who have not placed their faith and trust in Christ will be judged by God.

Okay? You don't get a second chance after Jesus Christ gets here, there is no purgatory, there is no waiting period. There is no soul sleep. Non believers will be judged by God. Third thing all christians believe is there's rewards of the saints, right?

There is rewards for the saints in order for, in other words, in terms of how we live for God in this life, there are rewards in heaven, and we don't know exactly what

those rewards are. There's differing opinions on what they're going to be or how they're going to be distributed, whether it's greater enjoyment of God or certain tangible rewards. But there are rewards for those who have trusted in Christ. Fourth, all believers believe this. Believers will live with Christ forever and ever and ever and ever.

I mean, there will never be a time that you stop living. There will never be a time where you and Jesus are apart. We will always live with God forever. Okay? All believers believe this.

There's a new heavens and a new earth, okay? The earth as we know it now will be transformed. It'll be a perfect place. There will be a new heavens that will be created. It's a perfect place in a new heavens and a new earth.

6th, all Christians believe this, that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit will reign and rule and be worshipped forever. All Christians believe that Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Godhead, will reign and rule and will be worshiped forever. And then the best news of all, here's what all Christians believe. There's no more sin and death

when Jesus gets back. There's no more sin and death.

There's no more dying. You don't die again, you're alive with Christ forever.

That's what all Christians believe. Where we disagree is on one word chronology. We differ on how it's going to happen and when it's going to happen and what's going to take place first and all this kind of stuff.

And it's okay to hold those convictions, but I'm telling you, hold it loosely, because here's what I've discovered. In 30 years of studying end times events, my opinions flip flop change. I see certain scriptures that tend to highlight one thing and certain scriptures that tend to highlight another. And godly men and women that believe the inerrancy of the Bible that believe differently. This is where we all agree.

And if we agree that he's coming back, this is how we should live expectant. We should live expectant for Jesus Christ to come back. Now, one of the things when I think about the word expectant, I think about as a pastor, when I'm standing near a groom and we're about to walk out towards the podium or the platform, and he's about ready to see his wife open the doors and come down the aisle, okay? There's an

expectation when I'm talking to that guy before we walk out like, hey, man, are you looking forward to this? If he says no, which has never happened.

We would leave. Right? I mean, you don't want to be a groom and be standing there like, I hope this works out. I'm not really looking forward to it. That's bad.

That's just free dating advice. Okay. Every groom I've ever talked to is, like, eagerly expecting, looking forward to. Can't wait until the doors fly open and he sees his wife dressed in white, walking down. I mean, there's this excitement.

There's this expectation, or maybe you've seen it with kids. Like, I saw a YouTube video recently with a child whose dad had been serving overseas in the military for a year, and the dad showed up at this kid's school. The kid didn't know dad was coming back, but had waited over a year to see his dad. And they have a video of the kid when he recognizes his dad in the cafeteria, and the kid just runs up and embraces his dad. It's hard to watch the video, even not knowing the kids, without having tears in your eyes.

Like, you see the love and the expectation for what that's like. Some of you who are parents who send your kids off to college, who in some ways are like, thank goodness it's time that they go about Thanksgiving or Christmastime, you will be eagerly expecting and hoping that they will come back and share in the holiday with you. That's the kind of eager expectation we need to have when it comes to Christ. Regardless of what your chronological convictions are, if your chronological conviction is Jesus Christ could come back at any moment, then you know, you should live with expectation. If your chronological conviction is probably not today, but could you still need to live with that expectation?

God wants us to live with this earnest expectation that the state that we're in right now is not the ultimate state that we should be yearning for what's to come. Because if God gave us a glimpse this morning as to what was to come or took you to the future, new earth and new heavens and let you walk around it for five minutes, there's not one of us that would want to come back for even a minute for any reason in the world. It's that good what is coming. And he says earnestly and eagerly await with great expectancy. Because why?

Verse 51. Because, behold, I tell you a mystery. Now, when you see the word mystery in the Bible, as we've said many times, mystery means something that was not clearly revealed in the Old Testament, that we clearly understand now, that which we didn't totally understand, that now we can clearly know. And here's the mystery that we didn't understand. But now we clearly know.

We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed. Here's what Paul says. There's a time when Jesus Christ comes back. Not everybody's going to die. There will be a time when Jesus comes back, and there will be people who are alive when he comes back.

We will not all sleep, but notice this, we will all be changed. Everybody's going to change. Everything's going to change. I mean, whether you want to or not. And let me tell you how quickly this is going to happen.

In the next verse, here's what he says. He says, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, okay, that understanding in the original language is a timeframe that's indivisible. The smallest amount of time. It's the twitch of an eye. It's a blink.

If a nanosecond is a billionth of a second, it's shorter than that. When Jesus Christ comes back, you won't even have time to think. Some of us have this idea. Well, maybe if he comes back, I'll call my neighbor and see if I really missed it. Or is he coming?

Do I see him coming? When Jesus Christ comes, before I could snap my fingers, it'll all be over. I mean, if you're not a believer in Christ and you're like, hey, when I see him descend from the clouds, then I'll quickly repent and get right. You won't have time. It'll happen faster than you can even twitch your eye.

When Jesus comes, it's coming that fast. And the world will know, yeah, it's over. Cause what happens is, according to one Thessalonians four, the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, those of us who are still alive will be caught up in the air to be with Jesus forever. And how fast is that gonna happen?

Faster than you can say lickety split. I mean, we will be in the presence of Christ

like that, or you will be separated from Christ like that. That's a twinkling of an eye. That's the moment that he's talking about. And here's what he says.

When's it going to happen? At the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. I mean, you'll hear the bugle call, or whatever the glory call is of the bugle, and that'll be the last thing you hear on planet earth before you're in the presence of Jesus Christ. It will be the most glorious moment in the history of the world, the resurrection of Jesus Christ right now is the greatest thing that's ever happened.

Right when Jesus Christ returns, it will be the greatest singular moment that's ever taken place in world history. Amen. And here's what he says. Earnestly yearn for that. Earnestly yearn for that.

For this perishable must put on imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. Jesus Christ is coming, he says, be ready for this. Be ready for this. Eagerly anticipate this. Now, if you flip back a few weeks ago, when I was teaching on this chapter, when we looked at verses 13 through 19, I highlighted the negative things

Paul talked about, that if Jesus Christ wasn't raised from the dead, here's some things that we need to know.

It goes really bad. In verses 13 through 19 of chapter 15, you can read along, he says, but if there is no resurrection from the dead, not even Christ has been raised, which means Jesus is still dead. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also. So we have a useless faith. Sharing our faith is not important.

Moreover, we are even found to be false witnesses, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise. In fact, the dead are not raised. So all preachers are liars, because Jesus has never been raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our faith is worthless.

So you have a worthless faith, and you are still in your sins, so you are still a sinner. There is no forgiveness for you whatsoever. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, which means everybody who has died is either worm food or in

hell, because there is no hope for eternal life. And if we have hoped in Christ, in this life only, we are of all men to be pitied. In other words, if your faith in Christ centers only on this, I only believe in Jesus because he promises me a better life.

Now you're to be pitied more than anybody. That's not the message of the gospel. The message of the gospel is that God loved you so much that in your sin, God sent his son Jesus Christ to die on the cross in your place. For your sin. He took on your sin.

He was crucified, he was buried. But he rose from the dead three days later and began to offer life to anybody who would confess him as their personal lord. And by doing that, everything in your life changes, not only now that you experience God's eternal life inside of you, but forever and ever. And ever for what's coming. So I thought it'd be important today when we're talking about this death defeated and the resurrection, if this was put in positive terms, because I believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead, does anybody here believe that?

About 13 or 14 of you, I said Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Okay, thank you.

So if he has, then here's what it means. Number one is this, Christ is validated as God's one and only son. Christ is validated as God's one and only son.

There is no other way to God except through Jesus Christ. Jesus rising from the dead demonstrates that, which means this sharing Christ is of the utmost importance. Sharing your faith in Jesus Christ is not a pointless activity. It's of the utmost importance because Jesus Christ is the only way to get to God. And here's why.

You can share your faith, cause your faith is sure, it's certain, you can bank on it. The faith that you have is in a living resurrected Christ. Not in the idea, not in a religion, but in the resurrected Jesus Christ. Which means this, for preachers, preaching the word is the most important messaging on the planet. There's nothing that's better for you to hear in your ears, in your soul, in your will, in your mind, than the word of God being clearly taught.

There's nothing more important you can tune into. It's the most important messaging. You can hear five, let me give you this one. This is a good one. Our sins are completely forgiven.

The four of you that heard that, I'm going to say that one again, your sins are completely forgiven. It means Christian. When you come in here today and you're like, yeah, but I knew that when I came to Christ that he forgave all my sins. But since coming to Christ, there's some things in my life I should have known better or I could have done different, or would have, if I only would have done that. Let me tell you something, they're all forgiven.

When Christ died on the cross, he didn't pay for some of your sins. If you kept walking with him, he paid for all of your sins. The fact he rose from the dead validated that all your sins are forgiven. Done deal. It also means this, the dead in Christ are certainly alive.

Those people that you know who are Christians, who have died, you can grieve, but don't grieve for them. They're happy, they're spending time with Jesus right now, and we are not to be pitied more than anybody. Here's the truth of Christians. We should be envied more than anybody else on the planet. I would not trade what I have in Christ for any amount of money or anything this world has to offer.

I've found eternal life in Christ and I will never ever let go of that. There is nothing that anybody has that I've ever met that I want more than that. That's what it means that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. That's why we can have full confidence to share the gospel. That's why when the world says, shut up, just do that at church.

Don't talk to me about that. We want to get even louder and demonstrate they need to hear this because Jesus Christ is alive. Amen. And that's what Paul's pointing out. Paul's summarizing by saying, we're all going to be changed.

You're either going to be changed in a moment with your resurrection body, to be with Christ forever and ever and enjoy the utopia you've always dreamed of, or you will be raised in a resurrection body that will be able to withstand eternal torment apart from Christ forever and ever. But notice this, we will all be changed. We will all be changed in the coming world. You will not have the current state of your body that you have what Paul has been trying to highlight, and you should live expectantly for that. So here's the question.

How expectant are you living? Like, are you yearning for that? Like, do you think about that on a regular basis? Let me make it more clear. How often did you, how much did you think about it this morning before you got to church?

I mean, are you yearning for that now? In our church? I'll notice that when some of our gals get pregnant, as their pregnancy continues, and you get a gal that's about nine months pregnant, and I know my wife was like this, and you talking to a gal that's nine months pregnant, they only have one thing on their mind. Get this baby out of me now. I can't take this anymore.

I'm longing to have this baby removed from my midsection and not just because I want it out of my body. I want to meet this child. That should be the expectation we have when it comes to Jesus Christ. We should be yearning for it now. If you don't yearn for that, it's because you're too comfortable in the world that we live.

But if you start living for Jesus, and if you start sharing Jesus, and if you start making Jesus primary in your life, this world will not have as much appeal for you as it

once did. You will start yearning and say these words, come, Lord Jesus. See, some of us go to church, and we think it's weird that there's people like that. Like, oh, they always want the world to end today. What's wrong with them?

There's nothing wrong with them. Here's the question. Why don't you want it too? What's in your heart that's keeping you, that wants to live here more than meeting Jesus Christ face to face? See, that's the question.

Paul is trying to point out we should have expectation and yearn for that. And as I've told you on several occasions, if today was the day that Jesus came back, I wouldn't be sitting there saying, oh, not today. I was really busy, and I was really looking forward to kickoff in the football season. And I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't say, well, I want to see my kids get married, which I do.

But I want Jesus more. I want to be with him more, live with that kind of expectation. And if you don't have that expectation, here's what you do. Just start living for Jesus more. Start serving him more, and I'll tell you, you'll start yearning for him more.

I promise you that. Second thing he tells us to do is this. When it comes to the death being defeated, Christians are called to be thankful. Called to be thankful? Why?

Because Christ's victory will forever abolish sin and death. Amen. We're called to be thankful because his victory will forever abolish sin and death. Notice what he says. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on the immortality.

In other words, there's coming a day when your perishable body will put on the immortality that you have. There's coming a day. And here's what's going to happen when that day comes. He quotes two different passages. First, he quotes Isaiah 25 eight, and then he quotes Hosea 13:14.

Here's what he says. What will come about is the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? That's what you're going to say.

You know why? Because death has a sting in it. Sting. It hurts. I don't care who you are.

When you're around somebody who's dying or you've been to a funeral of someone that's died, whether you know them or not, sting about it. It wounds because you realize your own mortality when you see that it's very personal. I was talking to my sister just yesterday. Her father in law passed away a week ago and only at the age of 67. Great man.

Loved the Lord, is with Jesus, lived a wonderful, wonderful life. But even as I was listening to my sister talk about him and I was in my car driving here yesterday, I was getting choked up listening to her pain on missing him. And she knows he's in heaven. And that sister of mine is a believer in Christ. She knows she's gonna see him again.

But death is a perversion to everything life has. And there's nothing wrong for

christians to grieve. When somebody dies, you can't put a bandaid on it. You can't say, oh, well, he's in heaven. Great.

I know he's in heaven. The Bible doesn't say, don't grieve. The Bible says we grieve, but we grieve as those who have hope. But we still grieve because there's a sting that has our heart when it comes to the things of death. Notice what Paul says in the very next verse.

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. In other words, the sting of death is sin. In other words, sin causes death. Romans 5:12 said, for sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and therefore, all have sinned.

All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The reason you will die if Jesus doesn't come back first is because you have sin in your life. And there's a sting to that. And we don't like the sting. Earlier this week, my son was cutting some fruit for his sister with his pocket knife and ended up slicing his finger.

And I could hear it upstairs. Not because I knew what happened, but I could hear the scream that went along with it. And so I came downstairs to see, like, how serious is this? Like, is this. Let's rinse it under the sink and put a bandaid on it.

Or is this. We gotta get to urgent care right now and get some stitches. I need to know. He didn't wanna show it to me. Hurt too bad.

No, dad, you can't touch it. You can't touch it. You're gonna make it hurt worse. It stings. He kept saying it stings.

And I'm like, I know it stings, but I wanna fix it. And if I don't run it under the water, if I don't get it to you, it's gonna continue to sting and it's gonna get worse. Let me help you. It took, like, this fight for me to get his hand under the sink. Like, dad, you're making it hurt worse.

This is not what I wanted. Why? Cause sin has a sting to it. And when we know our sin, when it comes to the cross, we don't want to come to Jesus for healing. We want our hurt in our sting.

Cause it really hurts, and we want to fix it, and we want to get it better. And it took time to get to a place where I could finally rinse it off and realize it's not that big of a deal. And we could put some ointment on it, and we could put a band aid on it. You'll be fine in a day. It's really no big deal.

It took me a while to get him to that place, okay? And then he ended up being okay. And then my wife was asking me, how come he has a pocket knife? And why did you get him that? That was a whole different discussion.

Right? But it had a sting to it, right? And our sin has a sting to it, right? Cause we know that when we see somebody else die, we know that that's our future. There's a sting to death, and you can't get away from it.

I mean, we're allergic to it. I'm allergic to cats. I grew up as a son of a veterinarian. Every time I walk into my dad's office, I would get red eyes and I would start sneezing and doing all that. If you have a cat in your house, I'm allergic to your house.

We've eaten dinner at people's houses. They're like, oh, Jeff's allergic to cats. We'll put the cat away. It doesn't matter. I mean, we've shopped homes before.

If I walk into a home that's completely emptied, cleaned, and vacuumed, I can say, they had a cat. The reason I know that is because my eyes will start swelling up, my nose will start running. I'll feel completely uncomfortable. We're allergic to sin. It has a sting to it.

And if we don't bring that sting to Jesus, we try to come up with all sorts of ways to fix it to make it feel better, but the sting doesn't go away. But here's what Paul says. There's a day coming. There's a day coming where the sting's gonna go away. Where death is swallowed up in victory.

Oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, death, where is your sting? There's gonna come a day where death is not going to have the last laugh. Cause death goes after every single person, and death always wins. But there's coming a day when the resurrected saints of Jesus will stand over that.

Stand over death like a prize fighter stands over someone he's knocked out and said, you thought you put me down, but through Christ you're done forever. Amen. No more death, no more sin, no more sorrow. And can you picture a world like that? I mean, what are the things that hurt us the most?

Sin and death. If there was no sin in the world, nobody to ever wrong you. You can't ever do anything wrong to anybody else. You can't ever hurt anybody else's feelings. Nobody can hurt yours.

Everybody's here to serve Jesus and serve you. Nobody dies. I mean, how good is that? That's what's coming. That's the world you're yearning for inside your heart.

That's why Paul's saying there's coming a day where death will be defeated, where Jesus will be in all of his glory. And he says, the sting of death is sin. And notice what he says. The power of sin is the law. The power of sin is the law.

Now let me say a couple things about the law. The law is good. All the law does is point out that God's perfect, he's righteous, he's good, and there's nothing wrong with him. Ten commandments are good. All the ten commandments do are point out that God is perfect, holy, righteous, and there's nothing wrong with him.

Here's the problem with it. The law points out that we're not God and we don't like that. The law points out, here's the demand that you have to keep and be perfect. And we know we can't do that. So the law actually does some things for us, because the law, the power of sin is the law.

The law actually empowers sin. If you flip over your bibles to Romans chapter

seven, we're not going to do a full study of this today, but I just want to show you a couple verses in Romans chapter five. Let me show you what three things that the law does. Number one is this. It arouses your passions.

It arouses your passions. Romans chapter seven. And verse five says, for while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. So the law actually arouses our passions to do what the law says, don't do. It's like parents.

If you have a kid that's three years old, and they're not even thinking about the cookie jar. But you tell the kid, hey, we just put double stuffed oreos in the cookie jar now, don't take any cookies from the cookie jar. You set the law. You set what's good and what does the three year old do? I wasn't even thinking about the cookie jar before, but now all I'm thinking about is that cookie jar and those double stuffed oreos, and I can smell them, and I want that, and I want to go out.

It arouses our passions. When we see, you shall have no other gods before me. When you see, do not lust. We see, do not steal. It arouses our passions.

It's. If I tell you, don't think about a flying pink elephant. Just don't do it.

Everybody just stop thinking about that right now. What's it do?

It arouses our passions. And you're either thinking about a flying pink elephant, or you're completely tuning out to everything I'm saying. So I'm not gonna think about that. I'm not thinking about that. I'm thinking about something else.

You have to work at it. That's what the law does. The law shows that God's good, he's perfect, he's righteous. But the law arouses your passions. Second thing it does is it informs your sin.

Notice verse seven. What shall we say then, is the law sin? May it never be. There's nothing wrong with the law. On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the law, for I would not have known about coveting if the law had said, you shall not covet.

In other words, it informs our sin. Paul says, I didn't know coveting was wrong, but when I read the law, do not covet, everything in me was like, well, I want what they have. Why can't I have what they have? Why do they get that? Why can't I?

Because the law informs us of the things in our heart that were sinful already. That's what the law does. And finally, the law does this. It actually multiplies or increases our sin. Notice verse eight.

But sin taking opportunity through the commandment produced in me, coveting of every kind. For apart from the law, sin is dead. In other words, if I didn't know the standard and whatever I do is good, there's no sin, really. I mean, sin is in the world, but I don't know that I'm doing anything wrong. When the law comes out and says, this is who our holy God is, and this is what he demands and this is what he wants.

It arouses passions, it stimulates our sin, and we end up engaging in sin, and then we know that we're wrong. That's what the law does. There's coming a day

where the law will be perfect, but we will be resurrected and perfect as well, and be able to do it and keep it and complete it 100% of the time. It'll be a glorious day. All we'll know how to do in our resurrected bodies as christians is love the Lord Jesus Christ and love one another.

It won't even be a temptation. If that's what God wants, that's what I'm going to do. That's what I'll know how to do. And so that's what it's all about. But until we get there, until we get there, we're not going to be like that.

My wife and I had a chance to be out at the Billy Graham library in Charlotte in 2000. I don't even remember what it was, but Ruth Graham had been buried out there at the time. I think Billy Graham's going to be buried out there. She died in 2007, and her gravestone is there where she's buried. And the story goes that one time in her life, she was driving and she was going somewhere and got caught up in traffic, and the construction was really severe and she was getting frustrated with the traffic.

And at the very end of the construction site, it said, I want to get this right. It said this. It said, end of construction. Thank you for your patience. On her tombstone, it

says, this, end of construction.

Thank you for your patience. We're all under construction here. There is no one that's good. No, not one. There's no one that does everything God demands.

No, not one. Not even one Christian fulfills it perfectly every time. And while we possess the holy spirit inside of our heart and have the ability to choose what's right, there is no one that does it right all the time. Not even this week, not even this day. We are all under construction.

But there's coming a day where we will no longer be under construction. We will be made perfect in the image of Christ, and we will be like him, as he is like us. And it is a glorious, glorious day that is coming. That's what he's talking about. And this is what God wants us to look forward to.

And when we stand over sin, I mean, I just want to give you a picture like what we're fighting right now and what we think is such a big deal is not nearly as big of a

deal as we think. Thing. In Isaiah, chapter 14. In Isaiah, chapter 14, starting in verse 14, we see a picture of a king of Assyria. His name is Sennacherib.

And this king, this was really fulfilled in this king. But it's also a picture, I believe, of what Satan is like and what it's going to be like, because Sennacherib had the same heart as our enemy. And in Isaiah 14:14, he said this, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high. Nevertheless, you will be thrust down to shield to the recesses of the pit.

Those who see you will gaze at you. They will ponder over you, saying, is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook the kingdoms? There will come a day. Like many of us have a bad theology about Jesus and the devil. We view them as almost co equals.

Like, there's Jesus. That's really powerful. And then the devil's kind of powerful. No, I want to tell you something. There's father, son and Holy spirit.

That's God. And everybody else is a created being. And while Satan has been given power, he's no match. He was already defeated at the cross. He can't do anything without asking permission of Jesus.

There's coming a day where the world will look on and say, oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, death, where is your sting? We'll see Satan. And we're like, that's the one who was disturbing the nations. That's the one who was trying to disturb my marriage.

That's the one who was trying to get me confused about my finances. That's the one who said I couldn't be who Jesus wanted me to be. That's the one who was making the earth tremble. That's it. That's all it was.

I was afraid of that. I was afraid of him when I had Jesus in my life. That's what it's going to be like, friends. You have the resurrected Christ on the inside. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

We don't live in fear. We live with wisdom. Okay? We live with wisdom. We're sober minded.

The enemy's looking for someone to devour, so we're sober minded. We realize he has power, but we're sober minded. We don't fear the devil. We fear the Lord Jesus Christ. Because the devil's afraid of Jesus.

Amen. This is what Paul is saying. The day is going to come. Oh death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. I mean, when the Broncos won the super Bowl 50, I heard there were a million people that were down at the parade. Million plus people down at the parade. I'm telling you, there's gonna be millions upon millions upon millions of people at this event, and it's gonna be the most glorious event. Cause there's gonna be men and women and boys and girls from every tribe, tongue and nation who have ever lived to celebrate the resurrected Christ.

And when we get there, I'm talking about. I mean, I don't know what it's gonna be like. I just know it's gonna be greater than any party you've ever heard about or seen. And if you've trusted Christ, you have an invitation, and he's waiting for you. And they're coming today.

Where? That's the thing you want to be in, no matter what. Amen. So if we're called to be expectant and we're called to be thankful, we're called to give God praise and thanks for giving us this already. Then let me tell you what final thing Christians are called to be.

They're called to be brave. They're called to be brave because Christ's work will ultimately yield a huge return on investment. We're called to be brave. I chose that word on purpose. I'll tell you why in a second.

Because Christ's work will ultimately yield a huge return on investment. Notice, verse 58. Therefore, because of the resurrection of Christ, because we know Jesus is

a lie, because we know preaching is true, because we know our faith is sure, because we know we need to get out and share the message, because we know Jesus Christ is coming back in all of his fullness. Because we know we're going to live with him forever, because he's going to rule and reign on the planet, because we're part of his winning team. Therefore, here's what he says in the present.

My beloved brethren, brothers and sisters, the ones I love with my whole heart, who are going to share this with me, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing this, that your toil is not in vain. Okay. Steadfast. It means this. It means to be resolute.

It means to be unwavering. It means that if Jesus Christ rose from the dead, don't ever veer off course from that. It means if that's your focus, you stay there. Now, I use the word brave on purpose. You'll see this all over the Bible, if you look for it.

We use the word brave at our church to denote a spirit filled life of someone who is bold, resolute, authentic, virtuous and engaged. That's what it means to be brave. That is a spirit filled quality of someone who is walking in the power and presence of

the Holy Spirit. That's what it means to be brave. And here's the word resolute.

It's immovable. Right. I'm steadfast. I'm not. I'm not going anywhere, okay?

Immovable. If I'm steadfast and I'm going the way Jesus wants me to go, why do I need to be immovable? Because there are going to be people to try to throw you off course for doing that. It means you need to be bold. It means you need to be courageous.

Like, if you really believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and you can be in church and you can hear the word and you can celebrate that, maybe you even clap some, maybe even raise your hand, maybe even thank the Lord in your heart quietly and say, I believe that. I believe that. I believe that question. Do you believe it outside our church building? Are you steadfast and immovable outside there?

When a bunch of people are saying, you can't say that here, you can't believe

that here. You can't do that here. No, I'm steadfast and I'm immovable. I'm bold. I'm resolute.

I'm courageous for Christ. You can't get me off this platform. That's who I am in Christ. That's what he tells you to do. Be that.

Why? And he says this always abounding in the work of the Lord. What's the work of the Lord? I mean, the Bible makes clear a bunch of stuff that we should be doing. But what's the work of the Lord?

The work of the Lord is really to love God and love other people. That's the work of the Lord. It's being authentic in my life, being genuine with who I am. It's being virtuous in my love for Jesus and my love for other people. And how about abounding in the work of the Lord?

It means this. I'm engaged. It means I'm all in on what Jesus wants me to do. And let me tell you where he's working. He's working in his church.

That's where he's working. Are you engaged in the ministry of his church? Are you loving the people of the church? Are you using your gifts in and through the church for the purpose of advancing his kingdom out there. And if you're doing those things, if you're living brave, let me tell you something about it.

It's going to be hard. It's going to be really hard. That's why he says, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord, knowing that it's not empty, knowing there's always a return on the Bible makes clear that those who live for Christ always produce a return of 30 or 60 or even a hundred fold. Now, why would God put in the scripture all over the place? You need to be persevering.

You need to be brave. You need to be bold. You need to be resolute. You need to be courageous. You need to be engaged in the work.

Here's why. Because working for Jesus is hard. Working for Jesus is hard.

There's always that whisper in your ear saying, nah, don't do that anymore. Just quit.

Don't do that anymore. You know what? You're more valuable than that church is. You're doing something that's more important than that. Just don't.

Don't do that. Working for the Lord is hard. I've never met a pastor that's pastored more than, I don't know, a month who would say, just easy. Never met that pastor. It's hard, right?

And if you're going to take the, if this goes well, I'll keep doing it. But if this gets really hard, I'm out. You'll quit. If you don't believe me, be in a small group this year. You don't believe me.

Lead a small group this year. You don't believe me. Serve in our kids this year. You don't believe me? Go on the trip to Brazil this year.

I mean, get all in with Jesus through our church, and there'll be a time in your life where you'll hear that whisper in your ear like, this is way too much. This is way too hard. Nobody sees what I'm doing. Nobody sees the hurt I'm dealing with. Nobody sees the pain I'm getting.

Nobody sees the rejection. I got good news for you. There's one who does. And here's what he says. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor is not in vain.

There is a return on your investment. Always right. The one thing Christians, just listen to me. The one thing you'll never be sorry about when you meet Jesus is the amount of time that you've spent loving and serving him. You'll never say, man, Jesus, I'm sorry.

I gave you too much. That won't happen. I was thinking about the scripture when I was reading it this week, and I was thinking about the movie Schindler's List from years ago. About Oskar Schindler, who helped save many of the Jews from

extermination during World War two. And even though he did so much and had saved so many, at the end of the movie, if you remember, he was kind of looking at his watch and saying, wow, this could have been this many more jews.

And he was looking at what he had, and he was basically saying to himself, I could have done more. I could have done more. I'm telling you, friends, when Jesus Christ comes back and you cross that ticker tape, don't have that. Be your mo. Know this.

I gave it my all. And the great news about the kingdom is this, God doesn't grade you on the curve. He doesn't grade you compared to anybody else. The only thing that he grades is what he's given you. And how well did you invest that?

Isn't that good? So if you're here, like, I only got one, like, little gift. If you'll invest that, you'll be greatly rewarded. Or if you say, well, I was given ten gifts, but I'm doing better than most people. I'll just invest five.

You'll be disappointed when you get to heaven that you didn't invest everything you had in the work of Jesus. There's always a return on investment. And, guys, if Jesus could show you the screen as to what's coming, there's not one of us who wouldn't want to give him more than what we're already giving him. So the question becomes, hey, what's the area of my life that God's tugging on my heart to give more? And I promise you this, whatever area of your life that is, you'll wish it was something else.

For some of you, he'll tug at your heart and be like, you need to serve more. For some of you, he'll tug at your heart. It's about time you lead a small group, because you've been in one for a while. For some of you who'll tug at your heart and say, hey, why don't you, like, get in a small group and be part of this community? I know you were hurt before in the church, but it's time to get over that and start doing something.

For some of you, it's serving in a new way. For some of you. He's tugging at your heart saying, yeah, why don't you give the lion's share of your giving to church and do that? And wherever it is that he's tugging at you, I promise you, when the Holy Spirit shows, there'll be that other whisper in your ear saying, nah, don't worry about it. You're doing more than most people.

Don't compare yourself to most people. Compare yourself to Jesus Christ and give him what he wants you to have and be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Don't quit. Why? Because the great commission is really about one thing.

When it talks about going into the world and making disciples, you know what that word is? It's called multiplication. That's what Jesus is into. Disciples are not just people that come and hear the word of the Lord and say, I love that. That was a good message, or, I'm excited about the resurrection now.

I love that disciples are not just people that come and worship and say, I love that. Disciples are people who hear that and realize there's a whole world out there, probably 90 plus percent of our population, that don't know that. And you have opportunity to live it and tell it. With those people. It's multiplication.

How do you take what God's given you and multiply that out? How do you do it

with your spouse and with your kids? How do you do it with their friends? How do you do it in your community so that there's more and more and more people that are loving and serving the Lord Jesus Christ in his fullest capacity? In other words, this don't quit.

Don't quit. Galatians six. Paul wrote that book as well. Highlights pretty much the exact same thing that I just read to you here in Galatians 6:9-10. He says this let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Don't give up. Ministry is hard. It's hard. If I took inventory every single Monday and said, should I stay or should I go?

There's many weeks I'm no longer back here. I don't look at ministry that way. It's always hard. That's what ministry is. There's no harder work than to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

When not everybody else appreciates what you're doing. It's not true just of a pastor. It's true of every single person who calls himself by the name of Christ. But here's Paul's encouragement. Keep going.

Keep doing it. Even if nobody else sees it, there's one who does. And there's always a return on that investment. Amen. And that's the kind of church we want, a group of individuals who have come together as a team to worship the Lord Jesus Christ and build one another up so we can advance the kingdom.

So there's a multiplication of disciples in and through our church, in our city, in our nation, and all around the world. And guess what? That's what God's called you to be. Guys, the victory that is coming is so incredible and so awesome. And for those of you who know Christ, I can't wait to share it with you.

But I want to tell you this. I don't make the assumption that because you come to our church, you know Christ. And so if you're here today and say, man, I'd like to be part on that, I'd like to get in on that, but I know I'm not. Here's how you can pray. First of all, know this.

Jesus Christ loves you with an unconditional love. He loves you more than you ever know. He came to this world, he fulfilled what you couldn't do. He died on the cross, and he rose from the dead. So all you have to do is this.

Admit to God that you're a sinner. Believe that he died and rose for you. And right where you're sitting right now, you can just confess him. Jesus, I want you to be the Lord of my life. And by doing that, God promises that those who call upon him, he will save.

That's what he does. And so would you stand with me as we close in prayer today? Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor and praise. If you're here today and you've never trusted Christ, let's just pray that together. Jesus, I believe I'm a sinner.

I believe that you came to the earth and died for me. I believe that you rose from the dead. Right now I repent of my sin, and I confess you as my personal lord and

savior. Lord, those who prayed that prayer this morning, fill them afresh with your holy spirit and do a work. And, Lord, for those of us who know, you give us just excitement and passion and expectation that you are coming and you are coming soon, and we give you all the glory in Jesus name.

Amen.