



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Corinthians 15: 20-28

"Paradise Regained"

1 Corinthians

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Mark, and good morning. We are in 1 Corinthians 15. In God's providence, He brought us to this point in our study and this time of the year when we celebrate the resurrection. And we're going to look at verses 20 through 28, which is not a lengthy passage. It's 9 verses, but it is filled with Christian doctrine. And so, I think we can cover it adequately in the time we have, but we could really preach three sermons out of this brief passage.

Paul writes, verse 20, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all." May the Lord bless this reading of His word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You for this time together. It is a privilege to gather with the saints on a Sunday morning as the church has from its earliest days.

It's testimony in itself that the first day of the week is the day we together. It's a remembrance of the very things we're studying, the resurrection of Christ, which is the hope of our own resurrection. And so, we remember that every Sunday, but we should remember it every day. It is our hope, and I pray, Lord, that as we consider it this morning, that You would bless us with a perspective on life that's proper, that we're not to be living for the moment. It's so easy to get caught up in the moment and in the things of this world.

And of course, there's a place for all of that. We're responsible for our place in this life and our place in this world and the duties that You've given us to perform in it, the temporal responsibilities. But, they should never become so weighty in our mind that we're distracted from what is really important, and that is eternity, and living in time for eternity. So Lord, among other things, like reconfirming our hope that we have in Christ, set our perspective correctly for the week, that we would live for You. Encourage us through the encouraging words that Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Bless us with an understanding of the things that we've read and what we'll consider. Open our hearts to receive it and minister to us spiritually.

We have needs that are material as well, Lord. We have a list of prayer requests. We can't read all of them, but Father, we place them before You and pray that You would bless, and we pray that You would give healing to those who are recovering from surgeries or those who are sick, those who need Your healing mercy. We pray for that, Lord. We pray for encouragement in the midst of it. We pray that You would give these individuals a sense of Your presence. And not only them, but others as well, Father.

You know all of our needs. You know our place, and where we are in our experience. Some are struggling with just the pressures of life at work, in marriage. Some are without employment, Lord, encourage all who are in these circumstances, and may they see Your hand of blessing as You open doors for them, as you bring healing, as You bring encouragement. Sometimes that's a long process, but in the midst of it all, Father, You can give encouragement, and You can give strength, and You can give perseverance, and I pray that for all of those here who are in need, and that You'd bless them. We give You thanks for all that we have in Christ. We're reminded of that again in our passage, and we pray that we would take that very seriously and learn much from what Paul taught so long ago. It's as relevant today as

it was then. So we pray that You'd bless us and prepare our hearts for a time of study and worship through our hymn, and the special music we'll enjoy. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message]A few years ago I had an experience that is so common in households that it wouldn't be mentioning, except that it told a story. I was in my library studying when I heard a crash. I went to the other room and there on the floor was my wife's favorite vase, or vase. And, it was in pieces. I was in the other room; I wasn't to blame. I don't know how that happened, but there it was. And five minutes later, it was in the trash. Now, every preacher is always looking for an illustration, and I recognized one in that broken vase.

Looking at the pieces, I could see the remnants of beauty. It still had beautiful cuts in the glass and beautiful colors. But as a vase, it was a waste. And that's the word in which we live. In fact that's the thing I thought of when I first saw it. That's a picture of the world. It's full of beauty, but the world is not what God created it to be. It is a wasteland. And mankind is only a shadow of what God intended us to be. The old Anglican preacher Robert South said, "An Aristotle is but the wreck of an atom, and Athens is but the rubbish of an Eden."

Why is that? What happened? We know what happened. It's what happened to our vase. A fall occurred in a garden. Things were shattered. Paradise was lost, but not for good. And the story of the vase ends there. I threw it away. God has not thrown away this ruined world. He has a plan for it. It will be remade. Paradise will be regained and we will be resurrected. That is the message of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 verses 20 through 28 where the apostle reveals God's plan for the world and for His people. 1 Corinthians 15 is the classic chapter in the Bible on the resurrection. Verses 1 through 11, Paul lays out the proof of it.

He gives us basically two proofs. First of all, it's biblical. The Scriptures teach it. Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. He was buried and raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures. Read the Old Testament. It prophesied these things. These things were to be expected. That is basic Christianity. Those verses, verses 3 and 4 give us the fundamentals of the faith. And you'll notice each one of them is an event. Christ died, was buried, He was raised. Christianity is about events of history.

J. Gresham Machen made that point in his book, "Christianity and Liberalism," where he distinguished protestant liberalism from Christianity. Liberalism is not Christianity. The two are the opposites, he goes on to explain. Now, what he said there can be applied broadly beyond simply liberal Protestantism. But in 1922, I believe that was the date that he wrote his book, that was the big issue, and it was an issue in the mainline denominations. They were denying the very things that Paul states in 1 Corinthians verses 3 and 4. So, Machen wrote, "Liberalism is all together in the imperative mood, while Christianity begins with a triumphant indicative." I know you all know grammar, but nevertheless, the imperative mood in grammar is a statement of command, and the indicative mood is a statement of fact. On the one hand, you have: "Do that." That's a command. The indicative is: "He did that." Christianity is that way.

Christianity is not like liberalism. It's not like religion today. Religion is all about doing. Christianity is about what has been done. It begins with God's gracious act in the cross in the empty tomb where Christ obtained salvation by His sacrifice, and sealed it with His resurrection. God has done it all. There's nothing for us to add to what He has done. Christ has accomplished salvation. That's been sealed through the resurrection. It certainly is, as Machen said, a triumphant indicative. God was victorious. Salvation is not about what we do, but about what He has done.

So, for the gospel to be true, for the message of salvation to be real, these events must have actually occurred. They must be historically true. According to the Scriptures, they are. And according to Paul, there is much evidence to support the claim of Scripture. The events were witnessed by many people. He's explained that to us. Over 500 people saw the resurrected Christ. That doesn't account the apostles. That doesn't count himself. A multitude of people had borne witness, and he told the Corinthians: if you doubt this, many of them are still alive, go talk to them. Christianity is an historical faith.

In verses 12 through 19, Paul develops the importance of the resurrection of Christ by explaining that if Christ was not raised, then there is no resurrection for anyone, and that means we are all, without exception, without hope in this world. He developed that quite thoroughly in those verses. But in verse 20, Paul cuts off any further discussion of the hypotheticals of gloom and doom. If Christ is not raised, because He was raised. But now, Paul writes, Christ has been raised from the dead.

The evidence for His resurrection is irrefutable. That's clear from the proof that Paul has given in the first 11 verses.

That's the testimony of many others outside of Scripture. Over a century ago, Charles Hodge, the great Princeton theologian of the 19th century, made the statement that there never was an historical event established on surer evidence than that of the resurrection of Christ. The evidence we have for Christ's resurrection is absolutely sure, and nothing can compare with it. God's given us an abundance of evidence. We have evidence, but people reject the resurrection not because of a lack of evidence. They may say that, but that's not the reason they reject it. They reject it because of a lack of faith. They reject it because of their naturalistic perspective and presuppositions about life. It's the way they think that excludes all of that.

For example, Matthew Arnold famously said: "Miracles do not happen." Well, if miracles don't happen, then none of this happened, because miracles don't happen. And that's the way he thought. In fact, anyone who thinks like that, who has that perspective, is absolutely closed to this from the very beginning. But that's an act of faith. That's to say, here's all the evidence, but I don't consider the evidence because I don't believe in what you're proving. As I say, that's an act of faith. Naturalism. Those who believe in it. Those who have that worldview. They are just as much individuals of faith as you and I are.

Well, Matthew Arnold and multitudes of others say miracles do not happen. But the Bible says this miracle happened, and has a lot of evidence to support it. Paul said, "Christ has been raised from the dead, and we can believe it with a completely reasonable faith." But more is needed than evidence of the resurrection. We also need an explanation of it. Otherwise it's just another event of history. After all, Julius Caesar was born and died, and we can seek to find some evidence for that. We don't doubt that, but there's less evidence for that than the evidence for Christ.

But what does that mean to us? Now, if Christ is simply a historical person whose life and death and resurrection was an historical event, then it's just another event of history. So, we need explanation, and that's what Paul gives us in these verses we consider this morning where he explains the resurrection and its meaning for us. And in doing that, he moves from history to theology. He gives us doctrine. And what doctrine really is an explanation of how God is working in history, how He is acting, the things that He is doing, and in time and space. And here, Paul explains

the significance of these events. He's already explained the significance of Christ's death back in verse 3. He said that Christ not only died, but He died for our sins. Well, that makes His death wholly different from any other death that's occurred. That makes His death unique. His death was more than a death. His death was an atonement. It was a sacrifice that satisfied the righteous, just demands of God's character and law toward the sinner. It paid for our sins. It removed our guilt. That's the meaning of the cross.

Now, Paul gives the significance of the resurrection, when he calls Christ the "first fruits of those who are asleep." He's the first one of more to come, and the guarantee of our resurrection. Now, as I said, preachers are always looking for illustrations, and we've got two right here in just that simple statement that Paul made. First of all, about sleep. That's his picture of death. And secondly, about the resurrection as a great harvest. But this description that he gives here of death is a magnificent description for the Christian. Sleep, because when the Christian dies, he or she goes to be with the Lord, and is at rest. It doesn't mean soul sleep. We're very active in that rest. But nevertheless, that's heaven. That's death. It's a time of rest. But it's not a permanent state. It's like sleep. When we have that experience, it's a pleasant experience, but it's temporary. We lie down at night. We rest. We rise up refreshed in the morning. And in death, the believer's body is laid in the grave, and his soul is with the Lord, or her soul is with the Lord until Christ returns to this earth. And then, the graves are opened, and those who have died in Christ will rise, like one rises in the morning. It will be like a great harvest, Paul says. Christ, he said, is the first fruits of the harvest.

Now, the Jews in the Corinthian congregation would immediately have recognized the point that Paul was making, or the illustration that he was giving, because he was drawing this from the command that Moses gave in Leviticus chapter 23 and verse 10, that at the harvest between Passover and Pentecost, the Israelites were to bring a sheaf, a bundle of the first fruits of that harvest to the priest at the tabernacle, or later at the temple. It was presented to the Lord as a thank offering, and it had been received by those farmers as a pledge and assurance of the ingathering of the whole harvest. And that is what, Paul says, the Lord's resurrection was for us. It is the first of a great harvest of glorified souls and bodies at the end of history. Christ is the guarantee of that. He's the first fruits of that. And our resurrection will be like

His. That's also the implication here. You remember His resurrection from John's description of it in John chapter 20 and chapter 21. The disciples are huddled in fear behind closed doors, locked doors. That doesn't keep the Lord out. He simply walks through the closed doors. He could walk through walls. Nothing was a hindrance to Him, and yet it wasn't some ethereal kind of body. It was a substantive body. He could hold things. He could touch things. He could eat fish as He did at that breakfast that He fixed for the disciples on the Sea of Galilee.

That's what we'll have. it doesn't give us a full picture of things, but it gives us a hint of this supernatural body that will be ours. What He experienced, we will experience. We'll have the same resurrection. He's the first fruits of it. But we will have a glorified body like His. Now that, very simply, is the explanation of the resurrection, what it means for us. It's not just an event. It has an effect upon us. It's very significant for us personally. But that of course raises other questions for us, such as why we need to have a resurrection, and why we have a certainty, a certain hope of a resurrection. And that's what Paul gives us in the next verses.

Both the reason for our need and the reason for our hope are found in two men. Adam and Christ. One man ruined us; the other man rescued us. Verse 21. " For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."

Well, for Paul, Adam was a real person. He was an historical person. He is that. But, he was more than that. He's not only the father of the human race; he's also the representative of the human race. All mankind, Paul says, was in Adam. Well, we were in him in a real sense. What theologians speak of as being seminally in him, or perhaps we could even say genetically in him. We were physically in him in a sense. He's the progenitor of the human race. We are the descendants of Adam, and therefore we partake of what Adam was. We partaketh his nature, body, and soul.

But, we're only related to him as our natural father. There's a sense in which he's our spiritual father. We're also united to him as our representative head. He was, in a sense, our champion in the garden. He stood in our place there, and he acted on our behalf. When God put him in the garden, he put him there as our representative to act in our place so that what he did, he did for all of us. His success was our success. His failure was our failure.

Now, people don't like that. In fact, when we come to a doctrine like this here or back in Romans chapter 5 verses 12 through the end, this raises questions and issues that people just do not like to hear and don't agree with. It does not seem fair that we should suffer for someone else's failure. He sinned and I'm a sinner because of him? that just does not seem fair. And yet, we live under that system every day. We send people to Washington to represent us in Congress. When our congressmen and senators vote, we are voting in them, at least in effect. They're casting our vote. That's why we send them there. When the president declares war, he does it for all of us, whether we like it or not. These people are our representatives.

And in much the same way, God appointed Adam to do that for us. He put him in the garden with one prohibition: not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now, that was a probation period. It wasn't a permanent period. It wasn't to go on indefinitely. It was for a set period of time. And in that period of time, Adam was put to the test. Would he be obedient?

Well, again, some think that's wholly unfair. And yet, it's quite fair. In fact, it's more than fair. It was actually a very generous arrangement. Think about it for a moment. We had the very best man representing us. A perfect man. Flawless. No sin in him. His mind was perfect, far better than anything we know today. His body was perfect. No flaw in any way. He was perfect. If we represented ourselves today, we couldn't stand the test. If the best of men couldn't, certainly we couldn't. And God put the best of men in. A perfect man was there in the garden representing us in, by the way, a perfect environment. A garden full of trees, full of fruit. He could eat from any of them. All that he wanted. All the fruit that he wanted, all day long, was there for him to enjoy. Only one restriction was made. Only one command was given. That's all. Can't get less than that. Only one restriction, and he had all of the motivation in the world to obey.

He was representing the human race. He was representing all of his descendants. If he succeeded in this probationary period, he would've been lifted up to glory and he would've lifted all of us with him up to a glorified state. And he knew that if he failed, it would be the opposite. So, all of that was in Adam's favor. All of that was in our favor. We could've have asked for a better situation.

And yet, what happened? He failed. He sinned. He fell. And when Adam fell, we all fell because we were all in him. That's what Paul is teaching here. As a

result, Paul says, all died. We were, at that moment, separated from God. We died spiritually. So you turn to Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1 and he says, "You were dead in your transgressions and sins." That's how people are born into this world: dead spiritually. And, because of that, we die physically. That's the penalty and the result of sin. The beautiful glass vase was in pieces on the floor, there in the garden.

Now, God could've swept away Adam and Eve, and us with them, and started all over. But He didn't. He allowed the race to continue, for you and for me to be born, and to have a future. And here, we see the wisdom and grace of God dealing with us through a representative. Because it allowed Him to send a second man to stand for us, a better man than the first. This is Christ Jesus, the Godman. Verse 45. Paul calls him the "last Adam," meaning the last representative. He too stood for a people, and He is the last representative because He succeeded in His mission, and He restored to us what Adam lost. He regained paradise.

So, Paul writes, as in Adam, all die; so also in Christ all will be made alive. Just as Adam's sin in the garden wrecked mankind, so Christ's obedience at the cross redeemed mankind. Now, the all who are in Adam are not identified or not identical with the all who are in Christ. Paul is not teaching universalism, that all who died in Adam will be made alive in Christ. Everyone was in Adam; not everyone is in Christ. Only those who believe are in Him. And, we're only in Christ by God's grace, by His sovereign grace, which brought us into a relationship with Him. And you see this other places. For example, read John 17, Christ's high priestly prayer, what He prayed shortly before He was arrested, put on trial, and crucified. And throughout that passage and prayer, He spoke to the Father and thanked Him, and spoke about Him, spoke to Him about those He had given to Him.

We're the given ones. Those are the ones in Christ. It is for them that He stood at Calvary. So, in Christ are believers, are God's people, are His elect ones. And they are a multitude. Don't think that that's a small group. You have this vast group in Adam and this small group in Christ. It's a vast number in Christ. He represented an innumerable multitude. Christ acted on their behalf, on our behalf. And in so doing, He gained life for us. So when we believed in Him, at the moment of faith, we were joined to Him experientially. We received from Him His life, which is eternal life. And, with that life, the certain hope of the resurrection of the body. That is the hope of every believer. The resurrection from the dead.

But, it will happen in a certain order, and that's what Paul explains in the next verses, verses 23 and 24. The word "order" that Paul uses here, "but each in his own order," was almost exclusively a military term, designating rank or company in an army. So, we will rise according to the rank of our company. Christ, the first fruits. After that, those who are in Christ at His coming. Then comes the end. The new heavens and the new earth. That seems pretty simple. It seems, the picture that I get, I don't know that this is altogether correct, but I get the picture of an army marching by. And you have, first of all, the general, and then the captains, and then those beneath them, and on this march goes. There's something of that here. There's a progression. Christ the king is raised first, then the people. Then at the end, the rest of mankind.

I say it seemed simple. It didn't seem all that clear and simple to the Corinthians. That's why Paul is writing this lengthy chapter on the resurrection. They had a lot of questions about the resurrection. They were evidently troubled by the fact that believers were dying and not rising. It seems that that's what they expected. Paul, no doubt, when he had come to Corinth and established the church, had taught on the resurrection. He had explained things to them and how Christ was raised from the dead as our representative. He secured our resurrection as well.

But, they said, we're dying. Friends have died, and they're still in the grave. Where's the resurrection you spoke about? So Paul explains, there's an order to this. Our resurrection will occur in a proper sequence. Christ died, was buried. Three days later, He was raised from the dead. That doesn't mean you're going to be raised three days after you die. There's a certain order that's to be followed. Just as armies march in order, with one division following another division, these events follow an order, and we need to remember that. The Corinthians had a problem with this. They saw people dying and not rising, and that troubled them.

Well, we don't have that problem, but we can have another problem, and that is we begin to feel our age. Some of you are very young, but you will come to the point like me where you feel your age, and you can't do with your shoulder what you used to be able to do with it. You feel a little more fatigue, and it's not that easy to get out of the bed in the morning, and so forth. And so, you begin to feel these things. You begin to experience the infirmities of life. You begin to witness the death of

family members, and then peers, friends. And, it's easy to begin to be discouraged by that, to even despair, I suppose, if people focus simply on these things.

What Paul is telling them, what he tells us is: this is temporary. The time is coming when the resurrection will occur. Our division, so to speak, is approaching. After all, 2,000 years have passed since our Lord's resurrection. So, the order of our resurrection is closer now than it's ever been. It may be something that we actually experience in this lifetime. This generation. We don't know. But it's certainly more close than it was. The Lord's return is near, nearer than it was, and that means our transformation is near.

Now, that's the sequence of events that Paul sets out here. Following the Lord's return, history as we know it will be brought to a conclusion. That's what Paul says in verse 24. And here, he gives us the goal of the resurrection program. This is God's purpose. When the end comes, that is when Christ hands over the kingdom to the God and father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

Now, as we read this, it might appear that the order of events that Paul lays out is first, Christ's resurrection; followed by His second coming and our resurrection; and then thirdly, the end of the world. And you might ask: where's the millennial kingdom in all of that? Where's the 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth that John speaks about in Revelation chapter 5 verse 10, and Revelation 20 verse 4? Well, it's the kingdom that Christ hands over to the Father. And while it's not mentioned in the sequence of events, it is implied or at least allowed in the language that Paul uses. The word "then," which carries on the sequence, "then comes the end," doesn't necessarily mean it comes immediately after Christ's second coming. It can imply an interval of an undetermined duration.

After all, 2,000 years have elapsed since the first order of events, since Christ's resurrection. It may be another 1,000, 2,000 years that follow before Christ returns. So, there is a long gap between the first order and the second order, between Christ's resurrection and His future coming. And so, when He does come, the fact that 1,000 years could intervene fits perfectly with what the Lord is saying here, between the resurrection of the saints and the end of the world. And, it follows from the rest of scripture that it must. Between the Lord's coming and His handing over of the kingdom to the Father is established. The kingdom on the earth, the Lord establishes

His millennial reign, His kingdom here, when He will, as John explains in Revelation 20, reigned for 1,000 years and we with Him.

During that time, a lot will happen. The earth will be transformed. Christ describes His kingdom in Matthew 19 verse 28 as the regeneration. That's an interesting way to describe the kingdom. And what he's saying there is: just as we are regenerated spiritually, we are quickened, we are made alive spiritually by the grace of God. He's going to transform this world. It's going to be a regenerated place. When the kingdom comes, it's not going to look like that, like you see outside on the most pleasant days. It's going to be the worst of days in the millennial kingdom. We won't experience a thing like that. It's going to be a transformed world, a glorified world, a rejuvenated world. It will be paradise regained. It will be Eden renewed and glorified, far greater than it was originally. The world will be made glorious, and God's people will be active in it.

Earlier in chapter 4 and verse 8 of 1 Corinthians, Paul indicated that believers will be kings. And Revelations speaks of us reigning with Christ. We'll judge the world, He tells us in chapter 6 and verse 2 of 1 Corinthians. So there'll be great activity during this time. It's not explicitly mentioned here, but is certainly mentioned elsewhere and fits well in the sequence. It will be a time when Christ is active in subduing His enemies and bringing complete peace to the earth. Psalm 2 says that He will rule with a rod of iron. That's indicated in verses 25 and 26. He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

Now, the defeat of an enemy was often symbolized in the ancient world by the conqueror putting his foot on the neck of the vanquished foe. That's the picture we have here. The Lord will put every enemy, ever human and spiritual power, rebellious men as well as Satan and his minions. He will put them under His feet. Not physically or not literally, but spiritually. He will triumph over every enemy in the universe. In fact, every knee in the universe, in heaven, on earth, under the earth will bow to Him in homage and recognize Him as Lord, as God. And His church will be with Him. The last enemy to be destroyed, Paul says, is death. And what an achievement that is. What a great victory.

Really, that's the reason this chapter was written. Death. It's always looming. Death. It's the king of terrors. It comes to all of us. None of us can withstand it.

Some years ago, I got an illustration of that. I was speaking at a youth camp in Romania. We were up in the mountains in the eastern part of the country, and one afternoon I looked out the window of my cabin and I saw two old men in a field not far away. The field was a cemetery. They were caretakers cutting the grass, and they were doing it in kind of a primitive fashion. They were doing it with scythes, these long sharp blades on a long pole. And they were slowly, methodically, steadily moving across this field, cutting down the tall grass. And as I watched the scythe in the cemetery, I thought of the grim reaper. No one can stand against his blade. We all fall to him like grass. But Christ conquered death by suffering death. His death annulled our spiritual death. He died as our substitute. He suffered our penalty in our place. The sting of death is sin, Paul will say in verse 56. Sin gives death its power. Sin is what makes death so deadly.

When Christ died, He took that sting of sin, of all our sins, and in so doing, He disarmed death. So, death has lost its power. Lost its sting. And because of that, our spiritual death, our separation from God has ended. Death for us is no longer a penalty; it's a promotion. It's God's way of calling us up to a higher place. It's His way of calling us into His presence. Death is still an enemy. That's what Paul calls it. It still produces pain and sorrow. That's certainly true, but we don't need to fear it.

I say we don't need to fear it. I know that we do sometimes, but we don't need to. God has made death His servant for us, and we will overcome it. We will be raised from the dead. Christ's resurrection is the historical proof of that. It's the proof that God accepted His Son's sacrifice for us. And because He rose from the dead, we too will someday rise from the dead. The grave cannot hold us. Death is with us now, but someday it will be altogether removed. When that happens, when Christ's work is completed and He has defeated all of His enemies, death included, and brought the whole created world and created order back into harmony with God, then the end will come. Christ will hand over the kingdom to His Father. Then, Paul says in verse 28, the Sun Himself also will be subjected to the one who subjected all things to him so that God may be all in all.

When He's finished His mission as the mediator, as the one through whom God the Father presently rules the world. Then, He will turn over everything to His Father. No longer will God rule through the sin. Christ will turn over the universe to

His Father so that God, meaning the Triune God: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, will be all in all, and ruled directly.

Then, the end of the world as we know it will come. The creation and all of its works will be burned up in a fervent heat, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth, a world without end. That's the future. That's the promise here. That is truly paradise regained and remade. And all of that is traceable to the cross and the empty tomb. The death and the resurrection of Christ. That's the meaning of Good Friday and Easter. The defeat of death and the reign of life, forever. We have a glorious future, and it is a certainty. The resurrection is the irrefutable proof of that.

But the message of Christ's resurrection is not only one of future hope. It's also one of present reality. We have a living Savior. He's ruling today. He's ruling right now. And we who have believed in Him are in Him. We are joined to His life through faith. We are sons of God. We're children of God. And we have resurrection life now, presently. We not only have been delivered from sin's penalty, which is basically future. We've been delivered from that. But we've also been delivered from sin's power as well, and that's present. That's our experience today. And because Christ is alive today, and at the Father's right hand, He's presently guiding us through this world, through all of the experiences of life, He's always with us. He never forsakes us. By means of the Holy Spirit, He is there with us, in us, guiding us, protecting us. The believer in Jesus Christ is always in Him. We can never be separated from Him. No one can pluck us out of His hand. We can never be removed from His love and His care. And someday, in the right order of things, at the right time, and in the best way, He'll bring us all safely into our heavenly home. And then the day will come when He returns, and we with Him, and we are reunited with our bodies in a glorified body of the resurrection.

Now, these are great truths, and we know that they are true because Paul wrote, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead." That is, as Machen put it, the triumphant indicative. It's a fact. Christ has conquered the grave. And so, we will too. We will be raised from the dead and inherit paradise. The kingdom to come, the world to come. That's our hope. So, is it your hope? Do you have that hope? Are you one of those, one of the all, who are in Christ? Well, if you don't know, you can know, and you can know by simply believing in Him, by putting your faith in Christ. The moment that you do that, the moment you believe in Him as the Son of God and

the Savior of the world, the one who stood on our behalf at Calvary's cross and took the punishment we deserve in our place, the moment you trust in Him, you are forgiven and made a child of God, and you have the assurance of all that Paul is speaking of here. The glorious promises that he gives here, the promise of the resurrection to come and inheriting this glorious world to come forever. So, come to Him and trust in Him, and you who have, maybe it's everyone here, I hope so. Rejoice in what God has done for you, and what you have to look forward to. And may that be something of a guidance, a lodestar for your life, today, tomorrow, and throughout your life. Life for eternity, not for time. May God help all of us—