

Change is Coming - You Can't Stop It! **1 Corinthians 15:51-58**

Introduction:

1. Have you ever heard the expression "He is set in his ways?" In other words, that person is resistant to any type of change. Many people are this way. They don't like change.
2. But God's Word teaches the believer that change is coming for every member of the body of Christ - big change.
3. We spent three weeks studying what our resurrection bodies will be like in heaven. Verse 35-50 is the most detailed account in God's Word about this subject.
4. But then Paul emphatically states in verse 51, "*we shall **all** be changed.*" Again in verse 52, "*we shall be changed.*" Nobody is excluded. This change is for every member.
5. In verses 35-50, Paul told you what your new body would be like, and in verses 51-52 Paul tells you **when** you are going to get it. We commonly call this event the Rapture (which means to catch up). **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**
 - At the first trump, the dead in Christ are resurrected. **1 Thessalonians 4:16**
 - At the last trump, those who are alive at the time of the Rapture will be caught up and changed and also given new bodies. **1 Corinthians 15:51-52**
6. Both of the trumps will happen so quickly, Paul describes it as happening "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*" This is much faster than the blink of an eye.
 - You won't have time to pack any bags or call anybody on the phone or finish the TV program you're watching. We won't sail away slowly waving goodbye to everybody. It will happen instantaneously.

When we are changed on that day, what will this change mean for the believer?

It will mean that death will be forever a thing of the past.

1. Our present bodies are both corruptible and mortal. vs. 53
 - Corruptible - subject to decay
 - Mortal - subject to death
2. Our bodies are in a constant state of decay which will eventually lead to the death of these bodies. We can stretch skin, tuck tummies, replace body parts, etc., but we can't fool death. Death is an enemy that won't be deterred by any such tactics. It just keeps marching on.
3. But, at the Rapture something quite marvelous happens. God changes our bodies and gives us new ones that are incorruptible and immortal. vs. 52-54
4. I love the end of verse 54. Paul quotes **Isaiah 25:8** and declares, "*Death is swallowed up in victory.*" This means "to gulp entire." **Illustration:** If I gulp down this piece of fruit, it's gone!
 - This is a creative way of describing the truth that when the Rapture takes place, death is gone - swallowed up, gulped down, drowned forever!
5. Death may win a temporary battle over one of your loved ones or even you, but we have a personal guarantee that death will lose the war. It is as if Paul taunts death and the grave in verse 55.

It will mean that we will never sin again.

1. What is it that has caused our bodies to be bodies of death? Why do they corrupt and deteriorate? It was the entrance of sin back in Genesis 3. cf. **Romans 7:23-24**
2. This is why Paul says in verse 56 that *"the sting of death is sin."* When you have been bitten or stung by sin, the consequences are death.
3. Paul says the strength of sin is the law. God's written law is what gives sin the strength and power to demand death of its victims that it stings. God's written law proclaims that *"the wages of sin is death."* The law condemns us all and sentences us to death.
4. But there is a cure! There is a remedy to the deadly sting of sin. It is the finished and completed work of Jesus Christ. vs. 57
 - The moment we trust Christ, *"we are more than conquerors through Him."*
Romans 8:37
 - Sin may win some temporary battles, but it will lose the war!
5. And when the Rapture occurs, we will receive incorruptible bodies. This means that sin can in no way ever touch our resurrection bodies. We will never displease our Savior again. We will never sin against Him ever again. And without the corrupting influence of sin, our bodies will be immortal - we will live forever in this state of sinlessness.
6. At the Rapture we will be given total and complete victory over death and sin through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What should be our present response to the future change that is coming?

I love the way Paul ends this very doctrinal chapter about resurrection. He begins verse 58, *"Therefore..."* In other words, Paul says "Based on the doctrine I have taught you on the resurrection, and your eternal bodies that you will receive, here is what you should be doing."

1. Refuse to allow false teachers to move you away from the hope of the resurrection.
 - *"Be ye steadfast (settled)"* and *"unmoveable."* Don't allow anybody or anything to move you away from the sound doctrine and the hope that you have been given in Christ.
 - **Illustration:** A rock from the Grand Canyon.
2. Abound in the work of the Lord.
 - The doctrine of the resurrection should be to us like air to an eagle's wings. It should lift us up and cause us to soar to new heights in our Christian service.
 - Remember what we learned was the secret to Paul's passion in verses 29-34? It was the truth of the resurrection. How could Paul serve the Lord with such passion and zeal and enthusiasm? How could he constantly even put his life on the line for Christ? It was because he knew there was a resurrection day!
 - If this life is it, then eat, drink, and be merry, and don't worry one bit about serving Christ. But this isn't it, eternity waits. There is a resurrection day coming. Time to serve the Lord and impact lives could soon be over.
3. Keep your eyes on the prize.

- Paul says, "*...as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*" How did they know? Because Paul just spent 57 verses explaining to them the doctrine of the resurrection.
- Sometimes, as you serve the Lord, you can get tired and weary. Doubts can creep in and discourage you. That is when we must go back in our minds to the empty tomb and remind ourselves there is a resurrection. The resurrection of Christ guarantees it!
- This life isn't the end. It is just the pregame warm-ups.
- We will have all eternity to serve Christ and to see the impact our lives made for the cause of Christ while on earth.
- Satan says, "Quit, give up, it's no use. Live for yourself." That is when we look at the empty tomb and say, "No way, I'm not quitting. I'm not giving up. I serve a risen Savior and my labor is not in vain." **Philippians 3:14**