

“Therefore” (1 Corinthians 15:13-17; 50-58)

Introduction

Paul was writing about what Christ had done, what Christ will do, and how Believers are to live right now. He was reminding the Corinthian Church about the eternal hope they have as followers of Christ. This is a personal letter to a spiritually troubled church.

1. There was division within the church.
2. There was confusion about church practices such as the Lord's Supper and the exercise of spiritual gifts.
3. There were matters of personal morality (sex, marriage, celibacy and virtues such as love).

Paul teaches about the futility of our faith if the dead are not raised. If Christ is not raised we are of all men most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:13-17). One thing that is clear from Paul's writings is that to know Christ is be changed or transformed.

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” (1 Corinthians 15:50-58)

1. Perishable to Imperishable / Mortal to Immortality.
 - A. Perishable—bodies that are subject to physical decay and aging.
 1. These bodies are flesh and blood. These mortal bodies are corruptible. They decay.
 2. Paul says these bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.
 - B. Believers who are still alive at the time of the resurrection will be changed. (51-52)
 1. In a moment the dead will rise and those alive will be changed.
 2. Twice Paul uses the words, “we will be changed” (imperishable) (53-54)
 - C. Death is swallowed up in victory. (54-55)
 1. The victory is a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus reigns and He will put all things “under his feet”; he will put death under his feet.
 2. Paul is teaching that just as Christ was raised from the dead, believers will be raised from the dead, into resurrected, imperishable, immortal bodies.
 3. When believers are raised from the dead, the destruction of death will be complete. Death resulted from sin and God had given the law to show us our sin.
 4. The Jews had a saying, “The more Torah, the more life.” The law was given to help us know how to live according to God's ways.
 5. Death is our enemy but God gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 6. That is still true today. You and I have a choice when it comes to sin. Because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we have the ability to say no to sin.

7. Because of what Christ has done, we are a people of hope. And while we wait, what are we to do?

2. "Therefore" (58)

Verse 58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not [in] vain in the Lord."

A. Every Believer has responsibility in the "work of the Lord."

1. We are to be steadfast.

a. Steadfast in faith on the basis of the resurrection of Christ.

b. Steadfastness has a moral quality to it. We stand firm. We stay the course. (Loyal, faithful, committed, devoted, steady, to stand firm)

c. A steadfast heart is a faithful heart that trusts God in all circumstances. We are to be immovable; we cannot be moved in our faith.

2. The work of the Lord is anything and everything that is done to bring glory to God. What is done for Christ is not in vain; it will last!

Colossians 3:17 "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Colossians 3:23 "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,"

3. Our work has eternal consequences. Do you live with the understanding that the child you teach, the friend you listen to, the widow you visit, the hungry person you feed, the thirsty that you give a drink—these actions have eternal consequences.

4. We are to continue in daily, personal relationship with Jesus. "Apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Philippians 2:12-13 "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

5. The Philippian Christians had been faithful, but they were not to be content with past glories. In the same way, our lives are to be lived day to day, "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

B. God is at work!

1. He is working in those who are submitted to him. God is the one who produces fruit in and through our lives.

2. We can faithfully serve God knowing that it brings Him pleasure. Our faithfulness brings glory to God. Be steadfast, immovable!

3. Even the desire to will and to work, to do good, comes from God.

4. We can be steadfast because Christ has been raised, and we shall be raised.

Therefore! How is your therefore working for the Kingdom of God?