

Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church of Beaumont
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March 31, 2026, to April 05, 2026

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Unit II: Fulfilling Our Obligations to Family and Community

Subject: Thoughts on Life and Death

Printed Text: 1 Corinthians 15: 13-20, 51-58

Key verse: Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15: 20, KJV).

Lesson Pointers:

The Point of Preaching (1 Corinthians 15: 13-20)

The Mystery of Faith (1 Corinthians 15: 51-53)

It Pays to Serve Jesus (1 Corinthians 15: 54-58)

Introduction:

The early church had one of the most challenging challenges of their time; how to teach and affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now do note that there were several post-resurrection appearances; for example, the sighting by the disciples of Lazarus resurrection (Read John 11:1-44), the testimony of more than 500 witnesses (Read 1 Corinthians 15: 1-12), the Upper Room encounter (Mark 14: 12-18), and the dramatic calling of Saul (Read Acts 9: 1-19); still remains and issue of debate. Christians at that time (better known as the Followers of the Way) faced intense opposition from the Romans, and the religious leaders, such as, the Pharisees, and Sadducees (Read Matthew 16: 1-4; Mark 8: 10-13; Mark 12: 18-27). Now it was and is still important for followers of Jesus Christ to teach on life and death. Paul addressed this issue in 1 Corinthians chapter 15; Paul wanted to reassure believers of Jesus Christ about their own resurrection. Paul explained how this would occur, the events of the last days (Read 1 Corinthians 15: 51-52), and the most important is that life for the believers continues beyond the grave (Read 1 Corinthians 15: 54-55).

Lesson Pointer # 1

- **The Point of Preaching (1 Corinthians 15: 13-20)**

Now, false witnesses say that there is no resurrection, but do know, and understand that the central focus of the Christian faith is Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15: 13). When Christians hold Jesus Christ's resurrection as their central focus of their lives, they are saying that GOD can do anything, including overcoming death; despite what false witnesses may say. So if Jesus Christ be not risen, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain (1 Corinthians 15: 14). Therefore, our preaching is false because we preach and testified of GOD that he raised up Jesus Christ; and whom you false witnesses say, that he was not raised up, if this is so than the dead rise not (1 Corinthians 15: 15). So if the dead are not raised, than Jesus Christ is not raised (1 Corinthians 15: 16). So, know that if Jesus Christ be not raised, than your faith is vain; and you are still in your sins (1 Corinthians 15: 17). And also they that have fallen asleep in Jesus Christ are perished (1 Corinthians 15: 18). But we Christians have this hope, that

Jesus Christ conquered death, and we Christians have a blessed hope that we eagerly awaits Jesus Christ's return in glory. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable (1 Corinthians 15: 19). Now we Christians know that the faithful first fruit is Jesus Christ, and that He (Jesus Christ) being this first fruit demonstrates GOD'S love and commitment to humanity; But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15: 20). Now, this is the heart of preaching the Gospel not self help or prosperity, but that Jesus Christ died and was raised from the dead, and that all believers will do this, even those that are asleep.

Lesson Pointer # 2

- **The Mystery of Faith (1 Corinthians 15: 51-53)**

Now as Paul noted that the Christian faith is a mystery; the mystery that Paul speaks about is a changed people; Paul says, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed (1 Corinthians 15: 51)," Paul goes on to say that the change will happen suddenly. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Corinthians 15: 52). For this corruptible must put on incorruption (1 Corinthians 15: 53a). This means that our physical bodies are perishable, our bodies are corruptible. So our bodies must go through transformation; the corruptible will give way to incorruption. Now this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15: 53b). Now our mortal bodies must put on immortality which means that in order for believers to live eternally, there must be a change of self; why, because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of GOD.

Lesson Pointer # 3

- **It Pays to Serve Jesus (1 Corinthians 15: 54-58)**

Paul now speaks of the Victorious Promise, saying, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15: 54). Paul now highlights Jesus Christ's triumph over death, saying, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory (1 Corinthians 15: 55)? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law (1 Corinthians 15: 56). Sin ensures us that we can never measure up to the standards set by GOD'S law. But thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15: 57). It is only through the death and resurrection of our LORD Jesus Christ who gives us victory. So let us Christians work to hold fast our belief of the resurrection of our LORD Jesus Christ. Therefore, my brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD (1 Corinthians 15: 58).

Thoughts on Life and Death!

Nuggets of the Lesson:

- 1) **Jesus Christ died and was buried.**
- 2) **GOD raised Jesus Christ from the death to redeem humanity.**
- 3) **Jesus Christ gave HIS life as payment for human sin; for your sins and my sins.**
- 4) **Jesus Christ is coming back again.**