



Steady & Sturdy in the Lord's Service New Covenant Living Series #31

1 Corinthians 15:58

Pastor David Sunday

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Just one verse will captivate our attention this morning; it's [1 Corinthians 15:58](#), the last verse of this chapter. It's Paul's word of application to all the glorious doctrine of the resurrection that he has expounded throughout this chapter. Paul is the great master of theology, but he's also the champion of practical Christian living. That's the way it should be.

[Spurgeon](#) said that "the practical should ever flow from the doctrinal like wine from the clusters of the grapes." We should never consider ourselves masters of the doctrine until we have seen its practical bearing upon our lives. And we should always be praying as the Word of God is taught to us that the Holy Spirit would be working in us and causing us to experience its sanctifying, life-transforming, practical effects in our lives.

So, we come now to the end of this most-exalted exposition in all of the Scriptures about the doctrine of Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of all those who belong to Christ. We find in verse 58, this consequential word, "therefore." And it's cluing us in to the fact that everything Paul has been saying ought to have an impact on the way we live. Let's read about the impact this truth of the resurrection should have on our lives in [verse 58](#). *"Therefore my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."*

Now, we can break this verse down into an outline of four points, and for those of you who find jotting these things down helpful, I'll give you those four points right now. First, we have the tender salutation. Second, a firm foundation. Third, a three-fold exhortation. Fourth, a stirring motivation.

First, the tender salutation is in the second clause there. *"My beloved brothers and sisters."* Secondly, the firm foundation is indicated by the first word of the verse, *"therefore"*, cluing us in to the fact that what he is about to say here hinges upon or builds upon the foundation that he has laid in the first fifty-seven verses of the chapter.

“Therefore,” is the firm foundation. Thirdly, there's the three-fold exhortation in this verse: we are to *“be steadfast,”* we are to be *“immovable,”* we are to be *“always abounding in the work of the Lord.”* That's the three-fold exhortation. And then fourthly, there is a stirring motivation, which is *“knowing.”* We know something: that in the Lord, our labor is not in vain. That's what we know. And that should motivate us to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

1. A Tender Salutation

Let's work our way through those four points this morning. First: the tender salutation. I want you to notice, friends, that Paul speaks very affectionately to the Corinthians here. He calls them, “my beloved brothers.” My dearly loved brothers and sisters. It's a word of great affection. There's warmth here. There's love here. And that's remarkable in light of the fact that Paul has been dealing with immense problems in the church at Corinth.

These are people who are divided; they are competing amongst which teacher they prefer. The truth of the matter is they don't have a whole lot of regard for Paul himself. It's hard to imagine how you could have the apostle Paul preach to you and not be impressed, but these people were not impressed with the apostle Paul. They weren't impressed with his eloquence. They weren't impressed with his appearance. And they weren't very respectful to him. Furthermore, they weren't very obedient to his teaching.

There was sexual immorality being tolerated in the church. People were filing lawsuits against one another. They were proud of themselves and thinking of themselves as superior to others because of their spiritual gifts. Things were a pretty big mess here, and Paul has had to speak some strong words of correction to the people. But here at the end, as Paul reaches the climax of his argument, we are reminded that he has not ceased loving these people.

Everything he has said to them in this letter, has continued on in that same tone that he has set forth in chapter one. There, he reminded them of the grace of God that is at work in their lives. He pointed out the evidences of God's grace in their lives and said,

“You’re not lacking in any spiritual gift.” He encouraged them that God was going to keep them firm, steadfast and sanctified until the end.

Paul continues throughout the letter to speak the teaching of the gospel in a tone of love and affection. He loves these people. They are his beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. He models for them the kind of love he spoke of so eloquently in [chapter thirteen](#): A love that is patient and kind. A love that does not envy or boast. A love that is not arrogant or rude. A love that does not insist on its own way. It’s not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrong-doing, but rejoices with the truth. A love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. A love that never ends.

Paul has this love for the Corinthians. As we look at the kind of love he has for people who are not very easy to love, it should cause all of us to ask ourselves, “Do I love the people to whom God has called me to minister?” If I am not ministering in love, I am not ministering the gospel. Gospel ministry is a ministry that is to be bathed in love. It is to be dripping with love. And so I need to ask myself, “Do I have this kind of love?”

If I find in my heart that there is a lack of love, or that I’m getting impatient and frustrated with people, I need to stop right there and say to the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ:

May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self-abasing,
This is victory.

[May the Mind of Christ, My Savior by Kate B. Wilkinson](#)

If I am ministering and it is not flowing forth from love, it’s because self is being exalted—and Christ is not.

He is the Savior of love. So ask, “Lord, fill me with the love of Jesus as I seek to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” That’s the tender salutation.

2. A Firm Foundation

Then, we have a firm foundation that undergirds the exhortations Paul is giving in this verse. That foundation is indicated by the first word, “*therefore*.” “*Therefore*,” in light

of all that I've said here, in light of the doctrine I've expounded, in light of the gospel I've proclaimed to you in the first fifty-seven verses—“*therefore*” be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

If you forget the foundation, if you stop delighting in the gospel, if that is not shaping you and influencing you, you will not be able to be steadfast. You will be moved and you will not abound in God's work. Duty in the Christian life flows from delight in the doctrine and if you do not delight in the doctrine, you won't be able to perform the duties. Grace precedes obedience. So, if God's grace is not shaping and molding my life, if I'm not filled with delight in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot keep going in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The New Testament never motivates us to just get busy doing the work of the Lord without reminding us of the work of the Lord on our behalf and without constantly reinforcing in our thinking what God has done for us. God knows that we can't do anything for Him until we're delighting in what He's done for us. So we have this firm foundation. It's throughout this chapter.

As I've been reading and studying this chapter, I've been so moved by I Corinthians 15. I feel that those who say this is the greatest chapter in all of the Bible have a good case to be made for that. I think that if I were to be thrown into prison for my faith and if they were to tell me I could only take one chapter of the Bible with me, I'd want to make sure I had [1 Corinthians 15](#) with me in that prison cell. So, I've been working on memorizing this chapter. I've been reading it over and over and over again through the last few months, asking God to cause it to sink in. I want to ask you to listen as I'm going to try, with God's help, to recite this for you. Not because I want to put on some kind of show but because I've almost felt compelled in my spirit that the Lord wants me to do this.

It's been a couple of months and I've just been feeling like before this series ends, “Lord, You want me to memorize this chapter and to speak it forth to God's people” so you will be encouraged to dwell often on the Word of God, to memorize God's Word so you can meditate on it day and night; so it will [be with you when you lie down and when you walk](#) and when you are with your children and when you're at work.

Take these glorious chapters of Scripture and just feed on them and learn them well and be seasoned by them.

Lord, I ask that You would help us now to delight again in the great truth of the gospel. Lord, aid me in my memory. Lord, enliven my affections. And Lord, fill Your people with joy in the risen Christ. I pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

[1 Corinthians 15](#)

¹Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain.

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

¹²Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸When all things are subjected

to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

²⁹Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf? ³⁰Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! ³²What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ³³ Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." ³⁴ Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

³⁵But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

³⁶You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

³⁹For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴²So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in 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 shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵"O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?"

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Glory to God! We praise You, Lord! [The grass withers, the flower fades, Your Word abides forever!](#) This Word is our hope! This Word will bear us from this life into the next. It will take us through that thin veil, the perishable to the imperishable, the mortal to the immortal; from dishonor into glory; from weakness into power; these natural bodies into spiritual bodies. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. We praise You for this hope and we pray that it would have this intended effect on our lives as a church. In Jesus' name, Amen.

3. A Three-fold Exhortation

So what is that intended effect? What does God want to do in our lives through [1 Corinthians 15](#)? He wants three things from us, according to [verse 58](#).

A. First, He wants us to "*be steadfast*," steady Christians. A steadfast Christian is someone who [puts his hand to the plow and does not look back](#) until the work is finished. A steadfast Christian is one who keeps moving forward—one who is not easily turned aside from following the Lord Jesus. He is steady in his service to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the resurrection of Christ that moves us to be steadfast because the resurrection of Christ proves the truth of Christ's claims and the reliability of all God's promises. We have a God Who has triumphed over sin and death. He has conquered our greatest enemies and given us a hope that goes beyond the grave.

We are to be steadfast in this faith, adhering to it without wavering. Not driven aside by all kinds of different ideas. Not confused over the conflicts and the turmoil of life in this present age. We are to be steadfast because Jesus has risen from the dead and triumphed. We are to be steadfast in our profession of faith and in our activity on behalf of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The second thing God wants from us as a result of [1 Corinthians 15](#), is that we are to ***“be immovable.”*** Immovable means “to be sturdy; to be stalwart.” As we sing [“My feet are firm held by His grace,”](#) it means to not be easily influenced by shifting shadows of false doctrines but firm in your confidence in the Word of God; firm in your belief in the doctrines of the faith. Not holding your finger to the wind to see what the prevailing consensus of the day is. Not waiting for others to affirm the truth, but knowing what you believe and knowing Whom you believe and being absolutely persuaded that His gospel is true so when a sudden blow hits you, you stay standing—you keep your balance. So that when the rains come down, the floods rise and the winds blow and beat against your house, you are like a boulder that cannot get washed away. You're like a California redwood that has prevailed in the midst of every storm. You are immovable, stalwart and even a little stubborn when it comes to the gospel—you're very stubborn. But not stubborn so you can be stuck in the mud, but active.

C. That's the third exhortation—be ***“always abounding in the work of the Lord.”*** This is how you are to be steadfast and immovable. It's in your constant involvement in the Lord's work and your activity on His behalf. What is the work of the Lord? Jesus tells us in [John 6](#) that it all starts with believing in Him whom God has sent. *“What must we be doing to do the works of God?”* the Jews asked Jesus. *“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him who He has sent.”* That you adhere to the living Lord Jesus Christ, that you trust in Him, that you are united to Him by faith. Then when you are united to Him by faith, you also receive from Him the mission that He received from His Father. [“Just as the Father sent me into the world, so send I you,”](#) said Jesus to His disciples.

So to do the work of the Lord is to do what Jesus came into the world to do. It's actually His work in us. It is His energy in us, inspiring us to labor on His behalf. It's the Lord's work, not our work. It is work that is done in the Lord, relying on His energy, reflecting His priorities and purposes. It is work that is built upon the foundation of Christ. We read about that in [1 Corinthians 3](#). If we do not build upon the foundation with the precious things of the gospel, the precious things of the Word of God, it's just wood, hay and stubble, and it will not survive the Day of Judgment.

The work of the Lord is that which is done in the Lord, relying on Him and building upon the foundation that He has laid for us. It's God's work in us. Like we sing in this song:

All that we've accomplished You have done for us,
And any fruit we harvest is a gift from your hand.
We are only jars of clay that hold a priceless treasure,
And we exist to bring you pleasure, O God.

[Receive the Glory by Bob Kauflin](#)

It's only as He works in us, [both to will and to do His good pleasure](#), that we can do any work for Him so there's no cause for pride as we abound in the work of the Lord. The work of the Lord is that which is done for the Lord—for His glory. And this encompasses all of our lives. It's not just what I'm doing in this pulpit right now. The work of the Lord is not just the activity that we do in connection with this local church. The work of the Lord is whatever we do in the name of Christ, empowered by Him for God's glory. And this involves all of life. [1 Corinthians 10:31](#) says, "*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*"

The work of the Lord is that which will count for eternity. Only what's done for Christ, in Christ's name, for God's glory, will last. If our labor is not in the Lord, it is in vain. Read the book of [Ecclesiastes](#) to see that truth. Solomon looks at all of his toil and labor, and he says, it's all vanity. It's meaningless. Whatever is not done for God in the name of Jesus, for God's glory, will not survive the judgment.

It's called labor in 1 Corinthians 15:58 because it's hard work. It's burdensome work. It's as one commentator said, "Any activity that you would not naturally do, if it were not for your faith in the Risen Christ." So whatever you would not naturally do, if it were not for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that's the work of the Lord. That's the labor we are called to engage in. And that means sometimes it's difficult and dangerous work for the sake of Christ and for the sake of others; work that we would not be willing to do if it were not for the truth that He has been raised from the dead. And notice, Paul says we are to be "*always abounding in the work of the Lord.*"

What does it mean to be abounding in His work? It means to be overflowing in His work. Not just seeking to meet the bare minimum or the basic quota, but going above and beyond. Spurgeon said,

“We are not only to be “in the work of the Lord,” but we are to abound in it. Do much, very much--all you can do and a little more. “How is that?” asks one. I do not think a man is doing all he can do if he is not attempting more than he will complete,” “Our vessels are never full until they run over. The little over proves our zeal, tries our faith, casts us upon God and wins His help. That which we cannot do of ourselves leads us to call in Divine strength—and then wonders are worked!”

[Motives for Steadfastness by C.H. Spurgeon](#)

Now, I grew up in the 70's, 80's, 90's, 2000's, and I've heard a lot in my years of the importance of balance—the importance of not overdoing it. I'm sure there is some wisdom there and some truth that needs to be considered. But I hear much less about abounding in the work of the Lord. I think we're more concerned about protecting ourselves from burnout than we are about overflowing in work of the Lord. The truth of the matter is, if it is the work of the Lord that we're doing, it's Him working in us and He will sustain us and give us the strength we need. Sometimes what we need to do is not worry about whether or not we're going to burn out, but instead, focus on, “Am I being built up in the gospel, in the Word, by the Spirit?”

And if I'm being built up in the gospel and by the Word and by the Spirit, then I will be enabled. I will be empowered—not just to do a little bit, but to abound in the work of the Lord. Then I will find that [Robert Candlish](#) was right when he wrote, “in such a work undertaken in obedience to such a Lord, you cannot abound too much. You cannot go too far.” Any sacrifices you may make, any toil and trouble you may undergo, any pains you may take, you cannot be too busy or too active. You cannot be too zealous or too abundant. You can never go beyond what you owe to Him whom you serve. Do what you may and do what you can, you must still say when all is done, [“We are unworthy servants. We have only done what was our duty.”](#)

Abound in the work of the Lord. You can never do too much for Jesus. You can never be excessive in serving such a great Savior. He is not a harsh, stern taskmaster, but a loving Father, Whom we serve in the name of the One who loved us and gave Himself up

for us, Who gave His all in view of His great, abounding and amazing love. We are to abound in the work of the Lord. Always abounding, Paul says, with no intermission.

You don't get ten weeks-a-year off in the Lord's service. You are to be constantly giving yourself with no hesitation. If you're not laboring in the Lord, it will only be first season with fits and starts. You'll have enthusiastic bursts and then you'll want to scale back and pamper yourself for a while. But Jesus says, ["If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."](#)

Is there ever a day on the Christian's calendar where that call to discipleship does not apply? Deny yourself today! Take up your cross today! Follow Me! Abound in the work of the Lord today! Take on that attitude of the apostle Paul that we read back in the Fall, [that by all means possible, I may save some](#) today! And then, "What are you going to be doing on Tuesday, Paul?" "Well, by all means possible, I want to save some! And on Wednesday, by all means possible, I want to save some;" without intermission—always abounding. This is not your own work that you may take up and lay down at your own pleasure. It is the Lord's work.

I think we had a beautiful illustration of that a couple Sunday nights ago when our dear missionaries, Bill and Rosa Mary Roop spoke. If you remember, we asked Rosa Mary, "How is it that you persevere in the midst of such difficulties?" They labor in North Africa and they've been there for a long time. For many years they saw very little fruit and then they gained fruit and then there's opposition. It seems like the work lurches forward and then goes backwards—forward, backwards, forward, backwards. And there's a lot of discouragement. Do you remember what Rosa said is the antidote for discouragement? She said, "Obedience, obedience." She said, "There are many times when I don't feel like going and ministering to a group of ladies but I decide instead of sitting here and being discouraged, I'm going to get up and I'm going to obey my Lord. And as I open the Word and serve others and care for others, I find the Lord replenishing my own strength."

I think that word is enough to sustain us for months here as a church. We need to be thinking about that example that she set for us of someone who is always abounding —"*always abounding in the work of the Lord.*" Not because I'm driven by guilt, not because I'm surging on a fleeting emotional high, but because I'm motivated by grace; because I

believe that He is risen from the dead and that I'm united to Him in His resurrection glory. That's why I will "*always abound in the work of the Lord,*" because He has given me a stirring motivation. And that's our last point this morning.

4. A Stirring Motivation

We have a stirring motivation to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. This motivation is the last phrase in [verse 58](#). We "know" something. It's an active knowing. There's something that's influencing your thinking. There's something that's transforming, renewing your mind. And as this truth is renewing your mind, it is empowering you to abound in the work of the Lord. [Alistair Begg](#) says that we must constantly be bringing our feelings under the jurisdiction of our knowings. Bring your feelings under the jurisdiction of your knowings.

Paul says there's something we know. If you go by what you feel, you won't always abound in the work of the Lord because this labor is hard. If you go by what you feel, you won't always abound in the work of the Lord because it's spiritual labor. It's often unseen and unrewarded and un-applauded in this life.

You know how I often feel? At least once-a-week, usually on Saturday night, I feel useless. I feel ineffectual. I feel that what I have to offer is so paltry. This is insignificant. I feel, on a regular basis, am I wasting my time? If I go by my feelings, I will not always abound in the work of the Lord but I am to bring my feelings under the jurisdiction of my knowings. I know something. I know that "[Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.](#)"

Just as I have borne the image of the man of dust, I will also bear the image of the Man of heaven. I know He has conquered my sin and taken the sting out of death and has given me the hope of a glorious life in the kingdom to come, resurrection life—a life of immortality in His glorious presence. I know because of that resurrection reality, my labor in the Lord is not in vain. That's what I know. And knowing this stirs me in the depth of my being to press on and to be steadfast, sturdy, steady, stalwart, "*always abounding in the work of the Lord.*"

You might look at your work—your ministry—and on the surface of things, it looks like there are a lot of unanswered prayers, a lot of unfinished projects, a lot of unhappy results, a lot of uncompleted visions. But this verse and this chapter tells me, I'm not "not" spinning my wheels. I'm not spending my strength for nothing. If my labor is in the Lord (as unto the Lord) that which I do in this life will be rewarded in the life to come.

God's Word tells us in [Hebrews 6:10](#) that God is not so unjust as to overlook our work and the love we are showing for His name in serving the saints. God is not unjust. God's Word tells us that our labor in the Lord is not in vain because it is in the Lord. None of Christ's labor was in vain, though it certainly looked like that when He hung on the cross, did it not? He was raised from the dead and He is reigning at the right hand of the Father. And He must reign there until He has put all His enemies under His feet. Then will come the end and He will swallow up death forever. He's already done this. Christ's work is not in vain and neither is the work of those who are in Christ.

Our Lord will ensure that whatever we have given in His name, whatever we have suffered in His name, whatever we have sacrificed in His name, will not fail to be rewarded. [Even a cup of cold water given in His name](#) will be rewarded. And the book of [Revelation](#) tells us the works we do here on earth will follow us into the new heavens and the new earth. [Revelation 14:13](#) says, *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.'"*

I was with one of our elders this week and we were talking about this longing to be with Christ in heaven. How, if we're not careful, that can suddenly shift into almost an escapist mentality. I don't know if you've ever felt like, "Ah, I just don't want to live anymore. I just want to go to heaven." There's something very right about longing to depart and be with Christ but there's also something very wrong about wanting to escape from the burdens and responsibilities of life in this fallen world because right now you have an opportunity to live for Christ in a world where His reign is being contested.

Right now, every day you live—[from life's first cry, to final breath](#)—you have an opportunity to abound in the work of the Lord. The risen Christ [commands our destiny](#) and we find in this chapter that it's a glorious destiny. What we should see from this chapter is that there is a connection between the life we live in Christ right now and the

life we will enjoy in Christ in the resurrection. And whatever we do in union with Christ now will last for all eternity. That's the impact this truth should have on us. "*Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*" Why? Because you know something. You know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

[Charles Simeon](#) pastored a congregation in Cambridge, England for about 53 years—the first twelve of which were in the midst of great opposition. The deacons hated him so much, they locked the pews so people could not get in. It was because they opposed the gospel (thankfully unlike our deacons here at New Covenant). And they wouldn't let people in and people had to sit in the aisles. And Simeon provided chairs for the people to sit on and the wardens of the church took the chairs and threw them in the backyard. He labored on like that in the midst of great opposition.

[John Piper](#) tells a story how that at age 71, after having served in the same parish for 49 years, Charles Simeon was asked by his friend, [Joseph Gurney](#), how he had endured so much persecution and outlasted all the opposition of his 49-year pastorate. And here's what Simeon [answered](#):

“My dear brother, we must not mind a little suffering for Christ's sake. When I'm getting through a hedge, if my head and shoulders are safely through, I can bear the pricking of my legs. Let us rejoice in the remembrance that our Holy Head, Jesus, has surmounted all His suffering, and triumphed over death. Let us follow Him patiently. We shall soon be partakers of His victory.”

That's what this chapter is saying. Let us follow Him patiently. We shall soon be partakers of this victory.

If Christ has not been raised, forget about it. It's all in vain. Eat and drink for tomorrow you die. But, in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead and so will we be raised from the dead. And so we say, "[Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.](#)" And in that glorious certainty, we become Christians who are steady, sturdy, stalwart, always abounding in the work of our Lord.

Thank You, Lord! Thank You that our labor in You is not in vain! Encourage Your people with this truth as we delight in Your exaltation at the right hand of God the Father.

Steady & Sturdy in the Lord's Service
1 Corinthians 15:58

David Sunday
June 5, 2011

We crown You with many crowns, Lamb upon the throne. We rejoice in You. We worship You, Lord Christ. Amen.



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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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