

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

1 Corinthians 15:1-58

Mike Davis

September 1, 2023

Mike: Heavenly Father, we thank You for the beautiful morning You’ve given to us to wake up to. Thank You, Lord, that You’ve given us the ability to wake up this morning, to be together here as brothers. Thank You for the opportunity we have to look into Your word. And Lord, as we look into Your word this morning, Holy Spirit, may You come and work in our hearts to teach us, to convict us, to challenge us, to counsel—Lord, whatever You have in mind. May You move us, Lord, in whatever way You see fit as we look into Your word today.

And Lord, I lift up to you our brother Bob Parker. I thank You so much for him. I thank You, Lord, for the mentor he’s been to me. Thank You, Father, for the opportunity that is ours to pray for him, when we find out things at lightning speed compared to years ago. And Lord, we thank You that we can do that. And we lift him up to You, that You would give him strength in his inner man. And Lord, as he deals with end-of-life issues, as he deals with difficult days, we pray, Lord, that You would strengthen him and give him the ability to keep his focus on You, and what lies ahead for him in eternity. And Lord, we thank You for the doctors there. We ask that You would give them wisdom and insight as well.

Lord, we lift up Tabitha. We lift her up to You as well; thank You for her. Thank You, Lord, for the love she has for You as well. Thank You, Lord, for the doctors that are around. Lord, we pray for her as well, that You would give her the ability to be at peace, to look ahead, to know the end goal, to know the end destination—Lord, that it would give her hope, that it would give her a real sense of real purpose as long as she has breath. Lord, we really thank You for her and ask Your hand upon her, that You would bring healing to Bob, that You would bring healing to Tabitha. And Lord, we give You praise and we give You thanks for those that are around those two people. We ask for Your hand upon each of them today.

May You encourage Jeff and his family. May You encourage Bob’s family. And Lord, may there be a great time of rejoicing as we see them get better, or go home to be with You. Either way, we give You thanks, Lord. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Mike: All righty. Well it’s exciting to have an opportunity to stand in front of you this morning. And I’m really hoping that the Lord shows up in strength. And I’m really hoping that as we get into God’s word that each one, including me, is challenged by what we think about and what we talk about this morning.

1 Corinthians 15 is where we’re going to be. And I have a disclaimer—not too big of one—I lost my sword; I lost my Bible, the one that I’ve used—

Transcriber’s Note: Don Maurer reaches out to give Mike his Braille Bible.

Don Maurer: Here, Mike. *(Laughter)*

Mike: Thank you, Don. *(Laughter)*

Ted Wood: That would be a miracle. *(Laughter)*

Mike: I was gone for a week. I took a different Bible with me when I was gone for a week in Florida. And then I came back and started looking around and I said, “Where is

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

my Bible?” And so a couple of weeks ago was when I lost it. I don’t know where I put it. It might still be at my cabin; I might have left it there the last time I was there; I’m not sure. So now I’m doing this electronic thing. And I’ve never taught a Bible study off of an electronic thing before. *(Laughter)* I’ve got to use this electric Bible hickey. But I’m sure it will go all right. *(Laughter)*

To me 1 Corinthians 15 is one of the most complete chapters of the Bible. You could take that one chapter of the Bible and really lay out the gospel, Christian living, the end goal, all of that. It’s one of my favorite chapters of the Bible. And of course all the chapters in the Bible are my favorites. But this one stands out a little, all right? *(Laughter)* So I thought that maybe we’d get into 1 Corinthians chapter 15 today. And what I’m going to do is take you to the very end of the chapter. And I’m simply going to read verses 57 and 58. So go to 1 Corinthians 15, and we’re going to start there first of all. Then we’re going to jump back to verse 1. Chapter 15 verse 57; I’m teaching out of the ESV. I’d better get to the ESV. There we go.

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 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.”

So when we look right there in verse 57, it uses the word “victory.” And in fact, a couple verses previous to that, in verses 54 and 55, again it says “victory” two more times right there. We see the idea of victory in Christ.

I’m pretty excited about that. When I sign an email with my name or a letter that I’ve written, or anything like that, at the very end I always write “On the victory side, Mike Davis.” I said it’s one of my favorite chapters in the Bible, right? as anyway, the victory is ours.

So let’s jump back. As you think about *“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,”* let’s jump back to verse 1. And as we begin to look here at verse 1, what I’m going to do through here is that there is no way to hit every single verse. Chapter 15 has a lot of verses; we just saw that there are 58 of them. And so as we get through here I’m going to be jumping from theme to theme through this passage. We could probably spend three months just on this alone once a week on this chapter. But we’re going to look at this fairly quickly, because you are pretty well educated individuals, and none of this is going to be new to you. It’s just a reminder for Christian living as we look at it.

So verse 1; *“I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel that I preached to you which you received.”* #1. You received it. *“by which you have taken your stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.”*

So it’s “the gospel that you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved.” And we’re to hold fast. And so as we look at this and really think this through, each of you have heard the gospel many, many, many times. And I don’t assume anything. I try not to assume that anybody is saved; I sure hope everybody here is. But anyway, I don’t assume that; that’s between you and God. On the outside I can’t see that looking in. But if you are saved, what you’ve done is that you’ve received this gospel. You’re standing on this gospel.

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

So think of taking a stand and standing firm. We’re told through the Scripture in many places to stand firm in what you believe. Stand firm; we’re told that in many, many places. And so we think about standing and what we’ve received, and holding fast.

Verse 3: *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received.”* And here is the gospel: *“that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James and to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me.”* Paul says this.

Yesterday I had a conversation with a gentleman. He was telling me, “Well, I really have a hard time believing the Bible. I have a hard time believing all this stuff about Jesus; I have a hard time with that.”

And I said, “Well, do you believe that George Washington was the President?”

And he said, “Well yes, obviously.”

And I said, “Well then, the story about Jesus is that there were over five hundred witnesses that saw Him alive after He rose from the dead. It’s written about, it’s in history; it’s in the Bible. It’s written in a variety of places. And you’re telling me you don’t believe because why? There’s the testimony of many people. You believe George Washington. Why don’t you believe the testimony about Jesus?”

And he said, “Well, those things could have been written by anybody.”

And I said, “Well, the history of George Washington could have been written by anybody too.” *(Laughter)* I said, “The bottom line is that you just refuse to believe.”

And so as we look at what we have in front of us, as we look at the testimony of who God is, as we look at the testimony of who Christ is, right here it tells us that we have more than five hundred witnesses who saw Him alive. That’s pretty amazing when you think about it. In a court of law it only takes two witnesses, all right? And so here we have more than five hundred. And Paul says, “Last of all He appeared to me.” And there’s a reason why he said that separately.

But anyway, as we think about the more than five hundred witnesses, “we preached it and you believed it.” But the important thing here, as we think about it, is that I’m going to jump back here to verse 4: *“that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day.”* And then what does it say?

Brave Man: “According to the Scriptures.”

Mike: “According to the Scriptures.” All right, so we’re tying this all the way back through the Old Testament, Old Testament prophecies. Paul is bringing the Old Testament in. And again it’s a connection as far as what the previous Scriptures in the Old Testament had talked about. And he’s saying that was true. And he’s bringing that up to them and saying that we’re anchoring on these things: first according to the Scriptures, then five hundred witnesses. We’re seeing that that’s true.

So as we look at verse 11: *“Whether then it was I or they, so we preached, and so you believed.”* And so we see a belief there. People believed; he’s talking to the Corinthians. You believed this.

And I’m talking to you. I think Scripture is talking to us as well, because we believe this same gospel. It’s been preached to us and we believe it. Yes, Don?

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

Don Maurer: I think it’s interesting. Paul says “according to the Scriptures.” And the only Scriptures they would have had at that time were the Old Testament Scriptures.

Mike: That’s correct. So yes, it ties directly back through the Old Testament. We see it in Isaiah, we see it in Hosea. We see it in a variety of different Scriptures that we tie back into.

So first of all, *“if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.”*

I’m going to stop right there for a minute. If Christ has not been raised, if there is no resurrection, why is our faith in vain? Anybody?

Don Bishop: Because it’s the cornerstone of our faith.

Mike: It’s the cornerstone. Keep going; let’s discuss this resurrection thing for a minute.

Gary Craig: One key reason is that Christ said He was going to be raised. So if He wasn’t, He would be a liar.

Mike: That’s right; excellent. What else? If there is no resurrection from the dead, if Christ hasn’t been raised,--

Ted: I think that every other faith or philosophy is based on life improvement and life enhancement. And the resurrection makes it absolutely distinct from that, in that every religion is telling you how to be a better person. And the resurrection contains a completely different category; we’re talking about something totally different. I’m not quite sure that you’ll be a better person, but you will be raised from the dead.

Mike: Yes, we will be raised from—

Gary: You’ll be a better person when you’re raised from the dead.

Mike: What’s that?

Gary: I said that You’ll be a better person when you’re raised from the dead.

(Laughter)

Mike: Amen, amen.

Ted:*(Unclear)*

Mike: Well, we start out with the gospel at the beginning of this: death, burial and resurrection, right? Go ahead, Don.

Don Maurer: If Christ were to die and stayed dead, He would be no different from anyone else; we all die and stay dead. And He would not have been vindicated. His work would not have meant anything.

Mike: Exactly. And so think about what we read at the very beginning when we started this morning about victory. We don’t have victory if Jesus was the same as everybody else. We don’t have victory unless He is risen from the dead. We don’t have completion to be able to go on to the next life unless Jesus was raised from the dead.

Don Maurer: Mike, I’m sorry.

Mike: Go ahead.

Don: I think that the resurrection is a very neglected doctrine among many people, because people will say, “Okay. Well, our souls are going to heaven. Isn’t that all that matters?” The body is just this useless thing that we’re freed from at death. And that’s pagan philosophy; that’s not Christian philosophy.

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

Mike: Yes, that’s right.

Don: And without the resurrection, death and the grave would have the ultimate victory.

Mike: That’s exactly right. That’s where we get ultimate victory, and that’s where we’re headed to at the end of the chapter: ultimate victory, okay?

So look at verse 15. Paul says: *“We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testify about God, that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.”* Verse 16: *“For if the dead are not raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”*

So if we’re serving Christ today, and He is not raised from the dead, if we’re serving Christ and the Resurrection has not happened, then our faith is futile and we’re to be pitied. So one of the anchors, one of the pillars of the gospel, is the Resurrection. One of the pillars of the gospel is that as we look forward, in our hope looking forward, that we are also going to be resurrected, either when we go on to heaven or when Jesus comes back. When Jesus comes back, if we’re still here, we go on to be with Him. And the dead will be raised at that time as we go into the Great White Throne judgment that we read about at the end of Revelation. We’ll be reigning and going to be with Him. I’m just thinking it through a little bit as we go through here.

Verse 20: *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”* Verse 21: *“For as 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 shall all be made alive. But each in his own order.”*

So there’s an order to things, okay. So think about it as we go forward here. We’re seeing that the first man, Adam, brought us death. The second Man, Jesus—the second Adam—brings us life through the Resurrection. The first man failed. The second One came as the Son of God and He succeeded in what we needed to have for us to go on. But there’s an order to things.

Where am I at here? I’m not used to this electronic stuff. *(Laughter)* So the order: *“Christ the first fruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.”* That’s us. *“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father.”*

So think about this. The end comes when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father. He’s going to take the kingdom and place everything under God. So just think about that for a moment; that’s the end, all right?

But before the end is what we’re talking about now. *“After destroying every rule, every authority and every power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”*

And so we’re going to see that He’s got to reign after He destroys every rule and authority and power. So let’s just talk about that for a moment. I think of what it says in Ephesians 6. It talks about “putting on the full armor of God.” Why? What’s the reason it gives us in Ephesians 6 about why we put on the full armor of God?

John Gratner: To stand against the schemes of the devil.

Mike: To stand against the schemes of the devil. To stand, right?—to be in a defensive position, to be unbeatable to stand before the spiritual forces of evil in the high places,

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

controlled by Satan himself. And so we see here that Jesus is talking about destroying every rule, every authority and every power.

Here we are, sitting here this morning as believers in Christ. Here we are this morning, sitting here with the Holy Spirit of God living in me, living in you. We have the power of the Spirit of God, the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, living in us.

Brave Man: Amen.

Mike: And so I’ve heard people say, “God walks beside me.” God doesn’t walk beside me. God is in me.

Don Maurer: Amen.

Mike: All right. God is not walking out there somewhere, although He prepares the way. But He is walking in me. And as we get together we’re a temple, all of us being built together, beating against the gates of hell. The church will not fall as we stand and beat against the gates of hell. We’re walking together by the power of the Spirit of God in unity, accomplishing the same purpose. And part of that purpose is defeating—through Christ, not through me; through Christ—boasting in Christ, boasting in the Lord; we heard about it last week—through Him we are able to accomplish great things as we stand and as we pray.

You know, there’s a church of witches down on State St. in Coraopolis. The old Greystone Presbyterian Church is a church of witchcraft.

Ted: Only in Coraopolis.

Mike: No, it’s not only in Coraopolis; it’s all over the place. On State St. right in Coraopolis, the Greystone Presbyterian Church is now a church of witches. And so what’s the problem with going down and saying, “You know, we really don’t like that?” And what’s the problem with standing on the sidewalk in front of that church, a group of us going down and beginning to pray against the spiritual forces of wickedness that have brought that into being?

Have you ever thought about doing something like that? Who are we that we have to be afraid? Who are we that we need to stand back and to hide and just talk about it? We need to be men of action in the way we live our lives because of who we are in Christ. We’re headed towards victory here. We’re headed towards victory at the end of our lives.

And so as we think about prayer, do you believe that prayer works? Do you believe that God answers prayer? Do you believe that these things are true that we’re talking about as we go through this today? I’m just challenging you to think about it. That church is down there, and I’d be happy to join anybody who wants to go. And we’ll stand on the sidewalk and begin to pray against that church—

Jim Hamilton: Do they worship on Sunday?

Mike: What’s that?

Jim: Do they worship on Sunday?

Mike: I don’t know. It doesn’t matter. We can stand there anytime, right? And so we confront the spiritual forces of wickedness in high places that surround that place.

All right. What about the bar in your local neighborhood, where there’s a troubled bar? What about the crack house that you know is down the street? I could just keep going. Can we stand against those things as individuals, getting together? “*Where two or three are gathered together,*” right? Two or more are gathered; that’s what we do on those things. And we take a stand against the spiritual forces of wickedness in high places.

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

So there is an order to things.

Jim Hamilton: So close.

Mike: What’s that?

Jim: So close.

Mike: So close; that’s right. It’s very close. So as we think about that order of things, in verse 24, *“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and every power. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For God has put all things in subjection under His feet.”*

And so when we think about everything in subjection under Jesus’ feet except God the Father Himself, aren’t They equal? And so God the Father doesn’t put God the Father under Jesus’ subjection. And God the Father doesn’t put the Holy Spirit under subjection. They’re Three in One, right? We believe that They are equal: one God, one equal place.

Somebody asked me this one time. Well, does that mean that God put Himself under Jesus’ subjection? Well no, that’s not what that means, okay? He goes through and talks about those things. We’re going to jump over a little bit further.

We’re going to jump back to verse 42 next. But wait; I’m going to kick back. Before we go that far, I’m going to kick back to verse 35; let’s go to 35.

“But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’” This is of interest to us, right? *“‘With what kind of body do they come?’ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same. But there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, another for fish.*

“There are heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies. But the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There 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.”

And in verse 42, what we’re going to see here starting in verse 42 is that we’re going to see a kind of a going back and forth. We’re going to see the perishable and then the imperishable. We’re going to see comparisons all the way through here. And so stick with it and think about what this is saying as we’re going down through it: the perishable and the imperishable. We’re going to see these comparisons coming at us here.

Verse 42: *“So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable”;* that’s our bodies. In the resurrection for us *“what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.”* These are our bodies. *“It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written: ‘The first man, Adam, became a living being. And the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.’”*

So just look at those comparisons for a minute. I have them written on this note sheet. Perishable, imperishable. Dishonor compared to in glory. Sown in weakness compared to sown in power. In verse 44, sown natural, raised spiritual.

Verse 47: from dust. Let’s look at that now in verse 47. *“The first man was from the earth, a man of dust. The second Man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are*

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

those who are of the dust. And as is the Man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.”

So here we're talking about the comparison of from dust and from heaven. And here we sit this morning made out of dust. Yet we are men from another place. *“Our citizenship is from heaven.”* We are set apart on this earth. Yes, we are made of dust. But we are going to be resurrected, and we are literally going to be men of heaven. And so that's the already but not yet that we've heard talked about before. It's the already and the not yet; it's a done deal. Once you've accepted Christ, once we believe that gospel that he started with, once we've held on to the gospel, yes, we were made out of dust. But we've been changed. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus. We're new creatures; we're a new humanity. It talks about this in Ephesians; we're a new humanity, set apart to bring glory to God. Peter says that you are *“a royal priesthood, a holy nation.”* And we're set apart, and we're now men from heaven. Today, as you sit here, you are a man from heaven.

We are not physically there yet. But that is our destiny; that's who we are. And nobody can change that; that cannot be changed. No force of evil, no force of wickedness, no demons, no angels, nor powers of hell can change that. We are destined, we are going to heaven no matter what anybody else has to say about that, because of what Christ has done in the Resurrection. Are you with me so far? All right. Yes, Don?

Don Bishop: And according to Ephesians in a sense we are already there.

Mike: Don says that according to Ephesians, in a sense we are already there. Yes, that's right.

Don Maurer: We are already *“seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”*

Mike: Yes, yes. And so as we think about what we are going through here as a man of dust and a man of heaven in verse 48, let's look at verse 49. *“Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust.”* That's who we were, right? We were born, and we still physically look like the man of dust. *“As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the Man of heaven.”* That's Jesus.

We're image-bearers of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's who we are today: we are image-bearers of the Lord Jesus Christ, not after we get there. (Yes, after we get there we will certainly be as well.) But Ephesians 1:4 talks about us being *“holy and blameless in”* God's sight today.

Am I a sinner? Yes, and we don't need to go down that road. But I'm talking about the victory that is ours as we stand here in Christ today. Yes, that's who we were. But yes, that's who we are. All right, it's that kind of idea.

And so, as we look at this, *“we shall bear the image of the Man of heaven.”* Powerful stuff, as you begin to think about this.

Let me look at my notes for a second. I want to look at verses 53 and 54. Why don't I just read the rest of it? I'll start at verse 50.

“I tell you this, brothers: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound.”

Did you ever give that some thought? The trumpet will sound. The whole earth will hear that. You may be going about your business, and all of a sudden the trumpet's gonna sound, okay? And it's gonna be penetrating as we think about that.

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

But anyway, *“The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”*

So whoever is dead is going to be raised imperishable. And whoever is alive is going to be completely changed as we go to be with the Lord when that day comes.

Don Maurer: Wow!

Mike: Yeah, Don, that’s right. Wow! *(Laughter)* It’s definitely one of those wows.

Don Maurer: I can hear the strains of the soloist in Handel’s “Messiah” right now. *(Laughter)*

Mike: It will be better than Handel’s “Messiah,” Don. *(Laughter)*

Don: That’s right.

Mike: That’s just an earthly thing. *(Laughter)* It will be better than Handel’s “Messiah.” So as we think about the dead being raised imperishable in verse 53, *“for this perishable”* body that we have *“must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body”* that we have *“must put on immortality.”*

Don Maurer: It says “must.”

Mike: Whew! Must!

Don: It doesn’t say “maybe,” or “I think it will happen.” “Must!”

Mike: Must, okay? And then 54: *“When the imperishable 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.’”* Whew! Okay, I’m excited about that! “Then shall come to pass: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory,’” as we go through that transformation. *“O death, where is your victory?”*
“O death, where is your sting?”

Verse 56: *“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”* So the sting of death is sin. What does it mean when it says that the power of sin is the law? What are your thoughts?

Gary: The law exposes sin. It convicts us that we are sinners.

Mike: That’s right. The law does that; that’s exactly right. What else does the law do? It exposes sin; what else does it do?

Ted: Well, it condemns us.

Mike: It condemns us. Apart from Christ it condemns us; that’s right. And so *“the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”* The power that convicts us, that condemns us, the power that shows that we are sinners, God put it into place and said, “This is the law.” He’s given us that. We know what the law is, and we can’t keep it. We are unable to keep it. And it brings us to death and destruction apart from Christ.

And so *“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”* Verse 57: *“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Men, we stand in victory. We stand in victory. And as you think about all these things we’ve been talking about so far coming up through here, talking about the gospel which we almost take for granted most of the hours of our day, we almost take that for granted. We just kind of go on: “Yeah, I’m a Christian.” We don’t think about what our mission is in working alongside of Christ—being on mission with Him, being a follower of Christ—or often think exactly what that means and where I should be today and who I should be talking to today, and where I should be placing myself today. Am I going to the Master to find out where I should be today?

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

Jim Hamilton: It happens quickly.

Mike: It happens quickly. Explain.

Jim: My wife passed away at 9:00 in the morning. We sent her to the hospital. I’m not sure when she passed away. But anyway, they revived her. But the doctor came in and said, “I’m sorry, but it doesn’t look good.”

So I said, “Can I see her?” He said, “Sure.” So I walked in and she was on a steel table, and she looked as peaceful as I ever saw her. She’s in heaven.

Mike: She’s in heaven.

Jim: She’s gone, just like that.

Mike: Yes, just like that; it just happens. I was at my house just the other day doing some things. And all of a sudden I realized that the electricity was off.

Brave Man: The electricity was off?

Mike: The electricity, the power was off. And I was just doing some things in daylight, in the daytime. I didn’t have a bunch of lights on. And all of a sudden I realized that the clock was off on the stove. I went to turn the light switch on; no lights; none of them worked. And I thought, Huh! Boy, that just happened quick! And I thought, I wonder if it’s coming back on. Is that power going to come back on? And I thought, I don’t know. It should; I hope so. *(Laughter)*

But that’s the way things happen, right? All of a sudden a life is gone. A friend of Don’s (*Don Maurer*) and mine was vacationing in Aruba two days ago. She and her husband were vacationing in Aruba. And he came back and she didn’t. She passed away in Aruba on vacation; suddenly gone, just like that.

And so life happens quickly. And when the end comes there isn’t going to be a decision time. And so what we’re talking about here today is, I have no idea when I’m going to go home to be with the Lord; I have no idea. It could be today, it could be when I’m a hundred; I don’t know, okay. But what I know is that we need to make every day count for eternity. We need to make every day count for eternity.

Do you think that way? Do you think, I need to make today count for eternity? Do you think that way?

So look at verse 58. After these things are all talked about—what’s going to happen, that we’re going to have new bodies, that sort of thing—verse 58: “*Therefore.*” And so when you see “therefore,” you say, “What’s the therefore there for?” And the therefore is there to make you think about what was just said.

Because of all these things, “*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, be immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*”

Brothers, if you’re following the Lord today, and you’re talking to Him in the morning and saying, “Lord, what is it You would have me do? What is it You have in mind for me, Lord? Put in front of me whoever You want to put in front of me, and just let me know, Lord. I’ll speak whatever You want me to speak. I don’t care who they are, whether they’re witches in Coraopolis or whoever it is; it doesn’t matter, because if You’re putting me there, if You’re putting somebody in my path to speak to, just make that clear.”

Do you ever pray that way in the morning? Do you ever pray that way before you go to bed at night, saying, “Lord, tomorrow morning when I get up,” the same prayer? I’m

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

just thinking about it. I encourage you to think that way. Because of who we are God has set us apart.

I want to talk just a little bit more about being born again and the gospel. We've been transferred from dust to a heavenly man, as we just read. Think back to the Scripture about warring countries. Let's go back to the Old Testament for a moment. With warring tribes and warring groups, when one took over the other, what was the standard practice when one warring tribe took over another?

Gary: Slavery.

Mike: Slavery, yup.

Ted: Kill the men and take the women.

Mike: Kill the men and take the women, and whoever is left, make them slaves. They become vassals; that's an old-time word. Ted, what does that word "vassal" mean?

Ted: I don't know. It sounds like a feudal word. I don't know; it's probably Latin.

Don Maurer: It's feudal.

Mike: What's that, Don?

Don: Feudal.

Mike: Feudal

Don: Servants; people that do their bidding, that kind of thing.

Mike: Yes. Subordinate, servants underneath the warring country. We're vassals; we're subordinate. We are those people underneath Jesus Christ. He bought us with a price. We've been bought and paid for. We don't belong to ourselves anymore. We have been changed from here to here. And we are literally subservient to Jesus Christ.

He is the Head of the church, right? We're in the church; we are the church. He's the Head. And so when we think about this whole picture of who we are in Christ, whew! It's not about me.

Michael Rush talked last week about boasting in the Lord, okay? It's because I have nothing to boast about. We can boast in the Lord and what He does, and what He accomplishes, and it's an amazing thing.

Open up to 1 John, and we're going to chapter 5 verse 4. It will take me a second to get there. Jim Britsch, would you please read verses 4 and 5?

Jim Britsch: *“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that overcomes the world: even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”*

Mike: So complete victory is only possible for those who are from heaven. But He gives us that complete victory. Surrender yourself to the Lord Jesus. Surrender to the Lord Jesus; become His vassal. Become His subordinate.

I've titled the lesson this morning "A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory." Whose victory is it? Who brought the victory?

Brave Man: Christ.

Mike: Christ did. He brought the victory. And we surrender to Him, and then He gives us the victory as we move on from today, as we move on from the day that He transformed our lives. He gives us the victory, but it's surrender. It's victory and surrender all in the same passage in chapter 15. Victory and surrender is all put together. It is His victory and our surrender to Him. And then He gives us that victory through Jesus Christ. That victory comes as we put our faith in Christ.

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

Let's do one more: 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20.

Don Maurer: I have it, Mike.

Mike: Okay, Don. Let's do 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20. Go ahead. Read it loudly.

Don: Okay. *“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, and whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”*

Mike: You're not your own; you are bought with a price. I'm going to wrap up right there with this whole section. As far as what we're going to talk about today I'm going to wrap up right there. But as we think about being bought with a price, think about that you've been transferred from a man of dust to a man of heaven. You've been bought with a price. You're going to be transferred as Jesus comes back. We're literally being transferred from perishable to imperishable, from mortality to immortality, all these things. And I'd encourage you to go back and read this chapter about twelve times this week. *(Laughter)* That means between now and tomorrow. *(Laughter)* Anyway, I would encourage you to read this and let this sink into your head a whole lot.

And then at the bottom of your notes I gave you a whole lot of passages of Scripture to look at, and I'd encourage you to look at those. Every one of those has to do with standing firm in who you are.

We get beat up pretty badly these days with people trying to tear us down; we are confronted. If you let people know you're a Christian at all out there, you are confronted, like the guy last night who said to me, “Well, I don't believe the Bible is true. I don't believe all this stuff about Christ.” It's interesting that as soon as people begin to know that we are Christians, there are those things that come out at you that are just challenging you along the way. Sometimes the challenges are great.

And so we need to walk together, brothers. We need to pray together; we need to advance the Kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit of God as we move forward each and every day.

It's God who changes us from dust to permanent citizens of heaven. Serve Him.

I'm going to just jump ship for a moment to 1 John chapter 4. And can someone read the first three verses? I believe that this all ties together; as we take a stand this is what we need to be looking for. 1 John chapter 4, the first three verses. Would somebody read that?

Gary: I'll read that. *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist that you have heard is coming, and now is in the world already.”*

Mike: Thank you. And would somebody read John chapter 1 verse 14? So it says, *“Test the spirits.”* Anyone who believes that Jesus came in the flesh is from God. Anybody who does not believe that Jesus came in the flesh is not of God. Would somebody read John chapter 1 verse 14?

Ted: Is that *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us?”*

Mike: Yes.

Ted: *“And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-Begotten, full of grace and truth.”*

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

Mike: Yes. *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”*; John chapter 1, verse 14. And so we see right there in John that John was writing that at the beginning of chapter 1, pointing out that *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* And he was laying out a case for Christ.

Going back to that, 1 John says that anybody who doesn't believe that Jesus came in the flesh is not from God. And so we're not just talking about the fact that Jesus walked on the earth. Was a guy named Jesus actually alive? Well, yes He was; that's pretty easy to prove. Was He the Son of God? Was He what John talks about? Was He Deity, divine—fully God and fully Man? Did that Guy come in the flesh?

And I'm going to give you a wrap-up story to finish. Years ago I was in New York City. I was working with an organization voluntarily for a week, an organization called “Open Air Campaigners.” We were standing on the streets, proclaiming the gospel to whoever would stop and listen. It was not fun, but it was challenging.

We had a van, a big, full-sized van. And you opened up the side doors and you'd pull out this step, and you could stand on it. And up on the roof was this big rack. And you could set the rack down and it made an artist's easel. And we'd put this big thing on this artist's easel. We had an artist, and he would start to paint a picture.

So what you would do is, you'd try to draw a crowd, right? And so it used to be, way back in the day, that the Salvation Army would stand on street corners with trumpets and instruments and play. People would gather around and then they would share their stories.

But this is what we did in New York City. We would pull up along the busy street. What we did is that we would just pull up and stop. So we parked right in front of Macey's one day. We literally just stopped in front of Macey's and stopped on the street and pulled over against the curb. We put this thing out and we had five of us. One guy was the artist, and he started painting the picture.

The four of us split up. We had gospel tracts in our pockets. We walked up the street a ways, and we were just trying to share the gospel with whoever would listen while this guy was painting a picture. At a certain point we'd come back. When he was about $\frac{3}{4}$ done with the picture we'd come back, and there would be people gathering. And so we'd come back in and we'd gather in. And so a crowd builds a crowd, right? So pretty soon we'd have thirty people standing there.

And the guy would be painting the picture. And as he got done, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through, once we came back, he would turn around and say, “Oh! I guess you wonder what I'm doing out here.” And he would begin to share the gospel, using this painting that he had just made, completing the painting while he was talking. And he would use symbolism; he had symbolism all over the painting to share the gospel with; it was really cool.

And so while we were doing that, with the crowd of course somebody decides to capitalize on our crowd. Two guys came running down the street and put a table right against the front of our van. And they would begin selling incense. These were a couple of Muslim guys who began selling incense to our crowd. Okay, that's fine; New York City is pretty wild.

So they stop when they're doing that. I came walking down the street just to hear the one guy say to the other, after we had been through at least one presentation, “How can

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

they know they’re going to heaven? That’s crazy!” And I thought, Okay, Lord; that’s my cue.

There were two guys. And I stopped and I had my Bible that I pulled out of my pocket. And I said, “Let me tell you how we can know for sure that we’re going to heaven.” And right away the one guy, the guy who said that, turned around and wouldn’t even look at me. And the other guy stayed facing me, but he looked pretty nervous. And so I shared the gospel with him. And I said, “So that’s how we know we can go to heaven.”

So I did that, and they didn’t immediately respond. It was cold; it was November. I got into the van to get warm. I climbed in for a little bit, but I was not paying attention to anything going on outside. I was talking to another guy in the van and keeping warm.

And I got out of the van eventually, about fifteen minutes later. I opened the door and I stepped out. And somebody said, “There he is!” (*Laughter*) And I thought, Oh, no! (*Laughter*)

I closed the door and I turned around. And here’s this guy; he’s about this big. He had to be about 6.6, 6.7, a black guy wearing long, white flowing robes with a little hat on top. Anyway, he had a whole bundle of papers under his arm. He stepped three steps and he was right there beside me, and there was nowhere for me to go. I just said, “Lord, if I’m going to die today, that’s okay.” (*Laughter*)

And I looked at this guy. And when I looked at this man, I kind of look people in the eyes a lot. And when I looked into this man’s eyes, I’m not going to kid you. What I saw was flames of fire. That’s the only way I can describe it; it was flames of fire. He stepped up. I said, “Lord, put Your hedge of protection around me. I trust You. Whatever You have in mind, let’s do it.” (*Laughter*)

But he immediately said, “Hey, how would you like to make a donation to our school?”

And I said, “Tell me about your school.”

And he said, “At our school we train people to be this and that.”

I said, “I’m sorry. I really can’t give a donation to your school. I only give donations to Christian organizations.”

And he said, “Ha! You’re no Christian!”

And I said, “So why would you say that?”

He said, “You’re supposed to be a follower of Jesus, right?” And I said, “Yeah.”

And he said, “Well, Jesus wore long white robes. I see that you’re not wearing them.” He was standing there with the white robes. And he said, “See, you don’t wear robes.”

And I said, “No.”

He said, “Jesus wore sandals. I see that you’re not wearing sandals.” And he said, “Do you speak Aramaic? Jesus spoke Aramaic.” And you know, he was just firing as quick as he could, one after the other.

And I said, “Fine. Well, you’re a little bit off about that. It has nothing to do with what I wear or what language I speak. There are people all over the world that speak all kinds of languages.” And I said, “You know, it’s about a relationship with the living God.”

And he said, “A relationship with God! You’ve got that all wrong!”

And I put my Bible out, and I started opening it. And he said, “Where are you going??”

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

I said, “John 1:1.” Remember the Scripture we just read in 1 John 4? “*Test the spirits.*” All right, so I opened up to John 1:1, and he quoted it to me. And I said, “Good. Then you understand what I’m talking about.”

He goes, “Oh, no, no, no; you have it all wrong.” “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.*” I said, “Yeah.”

He said, “God; in Aramaic that’s a three-letter acrostic which means faith, hope and love.” (*Laughter*)

And I said, “Oh. So what you’re saying to me is that God is not a real Being.”

He said, “No, it’s faith, hope and love. Whoever has faith, hope and love is God.” GOD, you know? The acrostic in Aramaic.

And I said, “Well.” And he started telling me, “I can see that you’re a well-educated guy. I can see that you’re going to listen and talk.” He pulls his paper out and he shows me his paper. And he said, “Let me show you what we’re doing.” Amid his display of newspapers he had a picture of a classroom full of kids on the front page. And they were all sitting there with robes, and all that. He said, “We’re teaching our kids to speak Aramaic. We’re teaching our kids to wear the white robes. We’re teaching our kids to have faith, hope and love. And so you really need to make a donation to our school.”

I opened up my Bible again. I started opening it up and he said, “Where are you going now?” And I said, “John chapter 1 verse 14,” which is “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*”

And when I said John 1:14, this guy went berserk. The papers went flying in the air. And he start screaming, “It’s lies! It’s lies! It’s lies!” And he ran right down the middle of the street with horns beeping, right down the middle of the street like he was being chased by angels, okay? I don’t know.

Don Maurer: So much for love.

Mike: So much for love. And I was standing there with my mouth hanging open, because I just watched the victory happening over those evil spirits right there.

Gary: Are you sure he wasn’t being chased by the Hound of heaven?

Mike: By the Hound of heaven; that’s exactly what it looked like. He was screaming and running. I turned around to these two guys that were standing there with their mouths hanging open and who had called him in to come after me. And I just said, “What are you gonna do? Are you gonna believe that guy running down the street, or are you gonna believe this?” And I held the Bible up. “This makes that run down the street.” And they were shocked; they didn’t even know what to do.

All right, gentlemen. That was the power of God; that wasn’t Mike Davis. That was the power of God because man, I was praying! Every time he was talking I was praying like a maniac. I said, “Lord, if I’m going to die sharing the gospel, that’s okay with me. You do what You want to do.” And He did what He wanted to do.

All I’m saying, brothers, is that we serve the living God. We are not men of dust anymore. We’ve been set apart, and we’re given victory. Don’t ever forget who you are. And as we go out from here this morning, and as you go every day of your life, take the challenge of saying, every morning when you wake up, “Lord, whoever You have for Me to talk to today, whatever situation You want to put me in, I’m here. Use me.” And let Him use you because of who you are.

“A Surrendered Life Comes From Victory”

Let's pray. Father, thank You so much for the opportunity that is ours to be men of heaven. We're men of heaven because You have chosen us. We're men of heaven because You've spoken into our hearts; Your Spirit has called us. We're men of heaven because of what you, Lord Jesus, did by dying on the cross, by being buried, and by the Resurrection of the dead, by resurrecting back to life, the first fruits, and we're to follow. That's what Your word tells us. When You return, we are to follow. And Lord, we look forward to Your return. But in the meantime, Lord, use us how You see fit, to be image-bearers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You, Father. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)