SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

1 Corinthians 15

Your Toil Is Not in Vain — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-15 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Christ died for my sins, was buried, was raised, and was seen — and because He lives, I will be raised and changed. That is why nothing I do for Him, however small or unseen, is ever wasted.

00 The Text

1 CORINTHIANS 15 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;

14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.

16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;

17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men ⚠ most to be pitied.

20 △ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the ⟲ first fruits of those who are asleep.

21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also ☆ in Christ all will be made alive.

23 But ◷ each in his own order: Christ the ⟲ first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

25 For △ He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

26 ☆ The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, △ so that God may be all in all.

29 Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not ⟲ raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?

30 Why are we also in danger every hour?

31 I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, ◷ I die daily.

32 If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not ⟲ raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.

33 Do not be deceived: "⚠ Bad company corrupts good morals."

34 ⍗ Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

35 But someone will say, "How are the dead ⟲ raised? And with what kind of body do they come?"

36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;

37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

38 But △ God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.

40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.

41 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.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, ☆ it is raised an imperishable body;

43 it is sown in dishonor, ☆ it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, ☆ it is raised in power;

44 it is sown a natural body, ☆ it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." △ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, ☆ we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but ☆ we will all be changed,

52 in 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 will be changed.

53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.

55 “O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “the gospel which I preached to you” — God — His character & actions
- **v2** “hold fast the word” — Command / instruction
- **v3** “as of first importance” — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** “Christ died for our sins” — God — His character & actions
- **v4** “He was raised on the third day” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “more than five hundred brethren at one time” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “by the grace of God I am what I am” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “our preaching is vain” — Sin / warning
- **v17** “you are still in your sins” — Sin / warning
- **v19** “most to be pitied” — Sin / warning
- **v20** “But now Christ has been raised from the dead” — God — His character & actions
- **v22** “in Christ all will be made alive” — Promise / blessing
- **v23** “each in his own order” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “He must reign” — God — His character & actions
- **v26** “The last enemy that will be abolished is death” — Promise / blessing
- **v28** “so that God may be all in all” — God — His character & actions
- **v28** “that God may be all in all” — God — His character & actions
- **v31** “I die daily” — Time / place / contrast
- **v33** “Bad company corrupts good morals” — Sin / warning
- **v34** “Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning” — Command / instruction
- **v38** “God gives it a body just as He wished” — God — His character & actions
- **v42** “it is raised an imperishable body” — Promise / blessing
- **v43** “it is raised in glory” — Promise / blessing
- **v43** “it is raised in power” — Promise / blessing
- **v44** “it is raised a spiritual body” — Promise / blessing
- **v45** “The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v49** “we will also bear the image of the heavenly” — Promise / blessing
- **v51** “we will all be changed” — Promise / blessing
- **v52** “in the twinkling of an eye” — Time / place / contrast
- **v54** “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory” — Promise / blessing
- **v56** “The sting of death is sin” — Sin / warning
- **v57** “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory” — God — His character & actions
- **v58** “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” — Command / instruction
- **v58** “your toil is not in vain in the Lord” — Promise / blessing
- **v3** “according to the Scriptures” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** “first fruits” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v4** “raised” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v2** “vain” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,"

FIGURE · SEVEN "IF"S AND THEIR ANSWERS

IF THE DEAD ARE NOT RAISED … (1 Corinthians 15:12–19)		BUT NOW CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED (the rest of the chapter answers each link)	
1 Christ has not been raised	vv13, 16	→ Christ has been raised	v20
2 our preaching is vain	v14	→ so we preach and so you believed	v11
3 your faith also is vain	v14	→ the gospel … in which also you stand	v1
4 we are false witnesses of God	v15	→ He appeared … to more than five hundred	vv5–8
5 you are still in your sins	v17	→ Christ died for our sins	v3
6 the dead in Christ have perished	v18	→ the first fruits of those who are asleep	v20
7 of all men most to be pitied	v19	→ your toil is not in vain in the Lord	v58

Pull out one fact — the empty tomb — and every link falls. Put it back, and every link holds.

Read each row left to right: every consequence Paul draws in vv. 12–19 if Christ is still dead is answered somewhere else in the chapter by the fact that He is not.

Setting. Paul writes from Ephesus (16:8) to a church that has believed the gospel and is still standing in it (v1), but some of whom say "there is no resurrection of the dead" (v12). They did not deny Jesus' resurrection — "so we preach and so you believed" (v11). They denied ours. Chapter 15 is the longest chapter in the letter, and Paul saved it for last.

Structure:

- vv1–11 — **the gospel received and seen:** received, stood in, saved by, if held fast (vv1–2). Of first importance: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (vv3–4). He appeared to Cephas, the twelve, more than five hundred at one time (most still alive),

James, all the apostles, and last of all to Paul "as to one untimely born" (vv5–8). "By the grace of God I am what I am" (vv9–10). The same message from every apostle (v11).

- vv12–19 — **the nightmare if it is false:** no resurrection of the dead → Christ not raised → preaching vain, faith vain, false witnesses, faith worthless, still in your sins, the dead in Christ perished → "of all men most to be pitied."
- vv20–28 — **"But now":** Christ raised, the first fruits of those asleep (v20). By a man death, by a man the resurrection; in Adam all die, in Christ all made alive (vv21–22). Each in his own order: Christ, then those who are His at His coming, then the end — the kingdom handed to the Father, every rule abolished, He must reign until all enemies are under His feet, death the last enemy, God all in all (vv23–28).
- vv29–34 — **why risk anything?** Those baptized for the dead (v29), danger every hour, "I die daily," wild beasts at Ephesus (vv30–32). If the dead are not raised, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (v32). Do not be deceived; bad company; sober up; stop sinning; some have no knowledge of God (vv33–34).
- vv35–49 — **what kind of body?** The question (v35). The seed: it must die; you sow a bare grain; God gives it a body (vv36–38). Many kinds of flesh and glory (vv39–41). Four contrasts: perishable/imperishable, dishonor/glory, weakness/power, natural/spiritual (vv42–44). Two Adams: a living soul / a life-giving spirit; earthy / heavenly; we have borne one image and will bear the other (vv45–49).
- vv50–58 — **the mystery and the victory:** flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom (v50). We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet (vv51–52). The perishable puts on the imperishable, the mortal immortality (v53). "Death is swallowed up in victory," Isaiah and Hosea's taunt, the sting and the power, thanks to God who gives us the victory (vv54–57). Therefore — steadfast, immovable, abounding; your toil is not in vain in the Lord (v58).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "raised" ×18 (+ "raise" v15 = 19) — vv4, 12, 13, 14, 15 (×2), 16 (×2), 17, 20, 29, 32, 35, 42, 43 (×2), 44, 52. The chapter's key word.
- "Christ" ×15 — vv3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 (×2), 31, 57.
- "dead" ×13 — vv12 (×2), 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29 (×2), 32, 35, 42, 52.
- "body / bodies" ×12 — vv35, 37, 38 (×2), 40 (×2), 42 (×2), 44 (×4).
- "if" ×12 — vv2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 29, 32 (×2), 44; seven of them in vv12–19.
- "God" ×11 — vv9, 10 (×2), 15 (×2), 24, 28, 34, 38, 50, 57.
- "sow / sown" ×7 — vv36, 37 (×2), 42, 43 (×2), 44; "glory" ×7 — vv40 (×2), 41 (×4), 43.
- "death" ×6 — vv21, 26, 54, 55 (×2), 56; plus "die / dies / died" ×5 — vv3, 22, 31, 32, 36.
- "subjection / subjected" ×6 — vv27 (×3), 28 (×3).
- "flesh" ×6 — vv39 (×5), 50.
- "vain" ×5 — vv2, 10, 14 (×2), 58 (and "worthless" v17).
- "preach / preached / preaching" ×5 — vv1, 2, 11, 12, 14; "brethren" ×5 — vv1, 6, 31, 50, 58.
- "imperishable" ×5 — vv42, 50, 52, 53, 54; "perishable" ×4 — vv42, 50, 53, 54.
- "heavenly" ×5 — vv40 (×2), 48 (×2), 49; "earthy" ×4 — vv47, 48 (×2), 49.
- "appeared" ×4 — vv5, 6, 7, 8; "asleep / sleep" ×4 — vv6, 18, 20, 51; "spiritual" ×4 — vv44 (×2), 46 (×2).
- "victory" ×3 — vv54, 55, 57; "Adam" ×3 — vv22, 45 (×2); "grace" ×3 — v10.

- "according to the Scriptures" ×2 — vv3, 4; "first fruits" ×2 — vv20, 23; "sting" ×2 — vv55, 56; "changed" ×2 — vv51, 52; "image" ×2 — v49.

Contrasts: received and stand (v1) ⟷ believed in vain (v2). If not raised (vv12–19) ⟷ "But now" (v20). In Adam all die ⟷ in Christ all made alive (v22). Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die (v32) ⟷ become sober-minded and stop sinning (v34). Sown perishable / dishonor / weakness / natural ⟷ raised imperishable / glory / power / spiritual (vv42–44). The first man, a living soul, from the earth ⟷ the last Adam, a life-giving spirit, from heaven (vv45–47). The image of the earthy ⟷ the image of the heavenly (v49). Death swallowing ⟷ death swallowed up (v54). Vain (v14) ⟷ not in vain (v58).

Shape of the chapter: history (1–11), logic (12–19), sequence (20–28), life (29–34), nature (35–49), victory and duty (50–58). It begins with what Paul delivered and ends with what we are to do, and the hinge is two words: "But now" (v20).

Chapter theme (my words): The gospel stands or falls on an empty tomb. Because Christ has been raised as the first fruits, everyone who belongs to Him will be raised and changed, death will be swallowed up, and every bit of work done in the Lord will prove to have been worth it.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20

"△ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the ☆ first fruits of those who are asleep."

FIGURE · EACH IN HIS OWN ORDER

"EACH IN HIS OWN ORDER" · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:23–28

1 · CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS	2 · AFTER THAT THOSE WHO ARE CHRIST'S	3 · THEN COMES THE END
raised on the third day "the first fruits of those who are asleep" (v20)	raised "at His coming" (v23; parousia — the King's arrival)	He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father (v24)

"HE MUST REIGN UNTIL HE HAS PUT ALL HIS ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET" (v25)

Psalm 110:1 — the King reigns now, from the right hand, until the last foe falls

all rule (v24) · all authority (v24) · all power (v24) · death, the last (v26)

"… SO THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL" (v28)

Readers differ on the gap between 2 and 3: Guzik sees Christ's thousand-year reign (Rev 20); Henry reads His present mediatorial reign running on to the end. All agree on the order.

Christ first, then His people at His coming, then the end — every enemy under His feet, death last, and God all in all.

FIGURE · TWO MEN, TWO IMAGES

1 COR 15	THE FIRST MAN, ADAM	THE LAST ADAM
WHAT HE BROUGHT	by a man came death (v21)	by a man … the resurrection of the dead (v21)
THOSE IN HIM	in Adam all die (v22)	in Christ all will be made alive (v22)
WHAT HE BECAME	a living soul — received life (v45; Genesis 2:7)	a life-giving spirit — gives life (v45)
WHERE HE IS FROM	from the earth, earthy (v47)	from heaven (v47)
HIS IMAGE IN US	we have borne the image of the earthy (v49)	we will also bear the image of the heavenly (v49)

Paul sets the first man and the last Adam side by side twice (vv. 21–22, 45–49): what each brought, what each became, and whose image we bear.

What were the Corinthians denying? Not Jesus' resurrection (v11) but the resurrection of believers. Guzik: they "did not deny Jesus' resurrection; they denied our resurrection," shaped by Greek philosophy (a pure spirit is better than a body) or by Sadducee thinking. Henry thinks they were "perfect Sadducees" who took death for the end of the whole man — which is why Paul can say the dead in Christ "have perished" (v18). Paul's point: you cannot hold the one and deny the other. If the dead are not raised, "not even Christ has been raised" (vv13, 16).

The gospel as fact (vv1–8). Four "that" clauses — died, buried, raised, appeared. Guzik: "At the core of the gospel are things that happened – actual, real, historical events." Sproul: our faith "does not rest on inferences drawn from a missing body," but on the testimony of those who saw, touched, ate and spoke with Him. Spurgeon: preachers "are not makers and inventors; we are repeaters." "Most of whom remain until now" (v6) is an invitation to ask them.

Why the burial and the third day matter. The burial proves the death (Guzik). "The third day" is Jewish reckoning — parts of Friday, Saturday and Sunday — and "according to the Scriptures" points to Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 53, Hosea 6:2, Jonah and Isaac (Henry and Guzik). The perfect tense *egēgertai* says He was raised and remains raised.

Paul's "untimely birth" (vv8–10). *Ektrōma* is a stillbirth — Paul's harshest word for himself, perhaps picking up the Corinthians' own contempt. He calls himself the least of the apostles because he persecuted the church; but "by the grace of God I am what I am." Guzik: "The grace that saves us also changes us," and puts us to work: "God does it and we do it."

The chain of consequences (vv12–19). If Christ is not raised: preaching empty, faith empty, apostles false witnesses, sins unpaid, the dead lost, believers most pitiable (see the figure). Guzik: "if Jesus is not risen, He is

unable to save." Sproul: "take away the resurrection, you take away Christianity." Henry: "the gospel is a jest; it is chaff and emptiness." Christianity is not a moral philosophy that would survive the loss of its founding event.

First fruits and the two heads (vv20–23). The first sheaf (Lev 23:10–11) pledged the whole harvest; Jesus rose on that very feast day (Guzik). Lazarus was revived and died again; Jesus is the first to rise never to die. "In Adam all die … in Christ all will be made alive" — both Guzik and Henry read the second "all" as those in Christ: all will be raised (John 5:29), but only those in Christ to life.

The end and the reign (vv24–28) — where teachers differ. Guzik reads "He must reign" as the thousand-year reign of Revelation 20, with death abolished after it. Henry reads Christ's present mediatorial kingdom, given after His ascension and handed back when every enemy is down — no gap. Sproul: Christ reigns now, but "Christ has rebellious subjects." All agree on the order (Christ, then His people at His coming, then the end), on death as a real enemy, and that the Son's subjection (v28) is His role as Mediator, not a lesser nature (Guzik: "the administrative order of the Godhead"; Henry: the man Christ Jesus appears as the Father's subject).

Baptized for the dead (v29) — honestly hard. Guzik counts more than thirty interpretations; Henry, "more than three times three." Guzik: a pagan or superstitious custom Paul mentions without approving (note "they," not "we"); the Mormon practice is "neither Scriptural nor sensible." Henry prefers converts baptized on account of those God took at Corinth (11:30). Others read "for the sake of" believers who died, hoping to rejoin them. What no reading can do is make the living's baptism save the dead. Paul's argument stands on any reading: the practice is pointless if the dead are not raised.

"I die daily" (v31). Guzik insists the context is physical danger (Acts 23:12–13), not mortifying the flesh; Spurgeon's sermon "Dying Daily" draws the devotional posture from it — "to hold this world with a loose hand." Both are true in their place; the text itself is about danger.

Bad company (vv33–34). Paul quotes Menander's comedy *Thais*. Doctrine and morals travel together: deny tomorrow and you will live for today (v32; Isa 22:13). Henry: "Real atheism lies at the bottom of men's disbelief of a future state."

What kind of body (vv35–49)? Continuity and change. The same seed, a different body (Spurgeon: "The identity is preserved," yet "The difference shall be extraordinary"). "Spiritual body" does not mean a body made of spirit (Henry: "Not that body would be changed into spirit"); it is a real body wholly fitted to and ruled by the Spirit — like Jesus' risen body, which ate and was touched (Luke 24:39–43). The first Adam received life; the last Adam gives it.

The mystery and the last trumpet (vv50–52) — again some difference. Guzik connects the instant change with the catching up of 1 Thess 4:16–17 and holds that the last trumpet need not be the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11; Henry reads it as the summons of all the living and dead to Christ's tribunal. All agree: the dead in Christ are raised imperishable, the living are changed in an instant, and "flesh and blood" — these bodies as they are — cannot inherit the kingdom.

The sting and the power (vv55–57). Death strikes with sin; sin gets its power from the law that condemns it. Christ bore sin and satisfied the law, so death is left without a stinger. Henry: "It may hiss therefore, but it cannot hurt." Sproul: "The sting of death was removed by the captain of our salvation." For the one outside Christ, Guzik warns, death is still an enemy.

Word study (Greek):

- **gospel — *euangelion* (G2098):** good news; "the gospel which I preached" (v1).

- **received / delivered — *paralambanō* (G3880) / *paradidōmi* (G3860):** the technical pair for handing on tradition intact (vv1, 3; 11:23).
- **hold fast — *katechō* (G2722):** keep holding on — present tense (v2).
- **in vain — *eikē* (G1500):** to no purpose, for nothing (v2; Gal 3:4; 4:11).
- **raised — *egeirō* (G1453):** perfect *egēgertai* seven times — raised and remaining raised (vv4, 12–14, 16–17, 20).
- **appeared — *horaō* (G3708):** aorist passive *ōphthē*, "He was seen," four times (vv5–8).
- **untimely born — *ektrōma* (G1626):** a stillbirth; only here in the NT.
- **grace — *charis* (G5485):** three times in v10 — what made Paul, what worked with him.
- **vain / empty — *kenos* (G2756):** empty, hollow (vv10, 14 ×2, 58).
- **worthless — *mataios* (G3152):** futile, getting nowhere (v17).
- **fallen asleep — *koimaō* (G2837):** the believer's death as sleep (vv6, 18, 20, 51); root of "cemetery."
- **most to be pitied — *eleeinos* (G1652):** pitiable; elsewhere only Rev 3:17.
- **first fruits — *aparchē* (G536):** the first sheaf, pledge of the harvest (vv20, 23; Lev 23:10).
- **order — *tagma* (G5001):** a military rank or division; only here.
- **coming — *parousia* (G3952):** arrival, a king's visit (v23; 1 Thess 4:15).
- **abolished — *katargeō* (G2673):** render powerless, put out of business (vv24, 26; 2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14).
- **subject — *hypotassō* (G5293):** to put under; six times in vv27–28.
- **baptized — *baptizō* (G907):** with *hyper*, "for / on behalf of / on account of" the dead (v29).
- **company — *homilia* (G3657):** association, keeping company; only here.
- **become sober-minded — *eknēphō* (G1594):** sober up out of a stupor; aorist imperative; only here.
- **you fool — *aphrōn* (G878):** senseless (v36; Luke 12:20).
- **perishable / imperishable — *phthora* (G5356) / *aphtharsia* (G861):** decay / incorruptibility (vv42, 50, 53–54).
- **natural / spiritual — *psychikos* (G5591) / *pneumatikos* (G4152):** fitted to this life / ruled by the Spirit (vv44, 46; 2:14–15).
- **life-giving — *zōopoieō* (G2227):** make alive (vv22, 36, 45).
- **image — *eikōn* (G1504):** likeness (v49; Gen 1:27; Rom 8:29).
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466):** a truth hidden until God reveals it (v51).
- **changed — *allassō* (G236):** altered, not replaced (vv51–52).
- **moment / twinkling — *atomos* (G823) / *rhipē* (G4493):** an uncuttable instant / the flick of an eye; both only here.
- **immortality — *athanasia* (G110):** deathlessness (vv53–54; 1 Tim 6:16).
- **swallowed up — *katapinō* (G2666):** gulped down whole (v54; 2 Cor 5:4).
- **victory — *nikos* (G3534):** three times (vv54, 55, 57) — won by Christ, given to us.
- **sting — *kentron* (G2759):** a goad or stinger (vv55–56; Acts 26:14).
- **steadfast — *hedraios* (G1476):** seated, settled (v58; 7:37; Col 1:23).
- **immovable — *ametakinētos* (G277):** not to be moved off; only here.
- **abounding — *perisseuō* (G4052):** overflowing (v58).
- **toil — *kopos* (G2873):** labor to the point of weariness (v58).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The gospel is a report before it is a request** — died, buried, raised, appeared (vv3–5); received and delivered, not invented.
2. **He has been raised — and stays raised.** The perfect *egēgertai*, seven times.
3. **Go and ask them.** Living witnesses (v6); faith not built on a missing body (Sproul).
4. **The empty tomb is the receipt** (Guzik) — without it we are still in our sins (v17).
5. **Everything hangs on one fact** — seven "if"s, each answered in the chapter (Henry: "Remove this foundation, and the whole fabric falls").
6. **A first fruits means a harvest** — the first sheaf, the day after the Passover Sabbath.
7. **Death is an enemy — and the last one** (v26); Christ reigns until it falls.
8. **What we believe about tomorrow shapes how we live today** (vv32–34).
9. **Burial is a sowing** — the same seed, a different body (vv36–44).
10. **Doctrine ends with a shovel** — steadfast, immovable, abounding; not *kenos* (v58).

Cross-references: Gen 1:27; 2:7, 17; 22:1–14; Lev 23:9–14; Num 12:12; Job 19:25–27; Ps 8:6; 16:10; 110:1; Prov 13:20; Isa 22:13; 25:8; 53:3–12; Dan 12:2; Hos 6:2; 13:14; Jonah 1:17; Matt 12:40; 27:52–53; 28:16–17; Luke 12:20; 24:34, 36–43; John 5:28–29; 11:25–26; 12:24; 14:19; 20:19–29; Acts 1:3, 14; 17:31–32; 19:23–41; 23:6–8; 26:8, 14; Rom 1:4; 4:25; 5:12–21; 6:4–5; 8:11, 23, 29; 1 Cor 6:13–14; 11:23, 30; 16:15; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:1–8; 11:23–28; Gal 1:11–16; Phil 3:10–11, 20–21; Col 1:18, 23; 1 Thess 4:13–18; 1 Tim 1:12–16; 6:16; 2 Tim 1:10; 2:17–18; Heb 2:14–15; 6:10; 1 Pet 1:3–4; Rev 1:17–18; 3:17; 20:4–6, 14; 21:4.

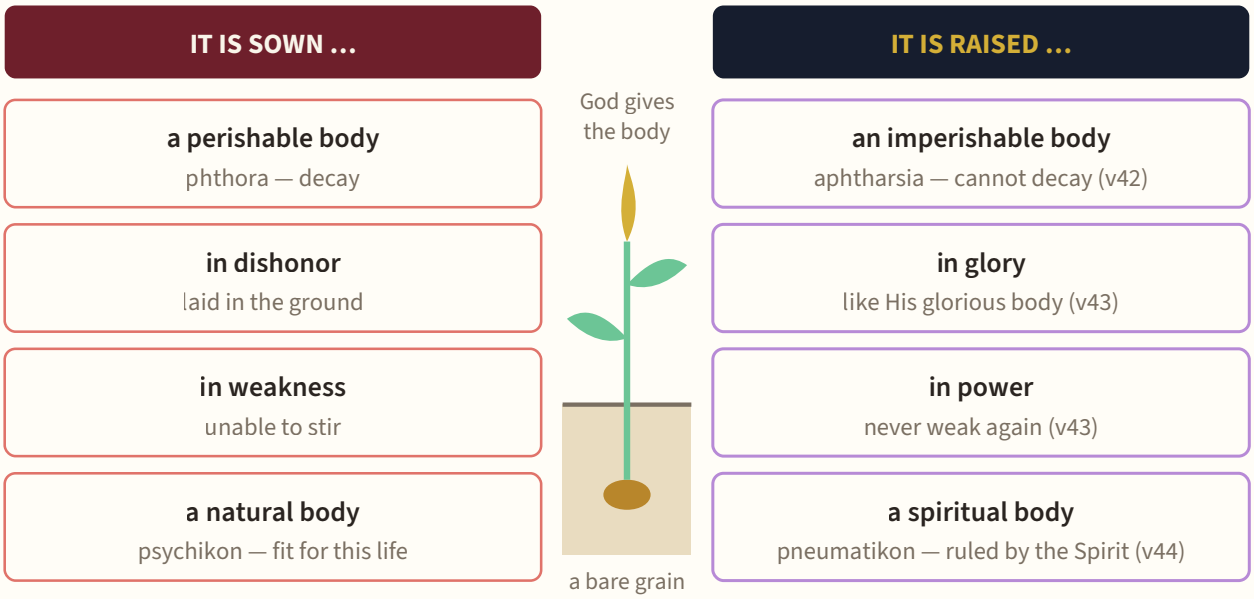
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:43

"it is sown in dishonor, ☆it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, ☆it is raised in power;"

FIGURE · SOWN A SEED, RAISED A BODY



"That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies" (v36) — the same seed, a different body.
Spurgeon: "The identity is preserved." Guzik: they "are not lost; they are sown" (quoting Spurgeon).

Burial is a sowing: the four contrasts of vv. 42–44 run down the page, and the seed in the middle is the same life coming up in a far greater body.

Truth to hold — "of first importance." I can spend a whole week on second things: the schedule, the argument, the bill, the game. Paul puts one thing first: Christ died for my sins, was buried, was raised, and was seen. I want to be able to say those four clauses to any man at the table and to the man in the mirror. If the resurrection is first, it will rearrange everything else.

Sin to confess — living as if this life were all. Verse 19 searches me. If my hopes, my fears, my spending and my temper would look exactly the same if Christ were still in the grave, then I am hoping in Him "in this life only." I confess the times I have lived like the "eat and drink" crowd (v32) — grabbing comfort now because I am not really expecting anything later — and the company I keep that pulls me that way (v33).

Command to obey — "Become sober-minded … and stop sinning." For many of the men I walk with, "sober up" is not a metaphor. Paul uses a word that means coming out of a drunken stupor, and he ties it straight to the

resurrection: if there is a tomorrow with God, then today matters. This week I will name one piece of "bad company" — a person, a place, a feed, a habit — and step away from it, out loud, with a brother.

Promise to trust — the seed and the trumpet. I have stood at graves — my parents', friends', men from the program who did not make it. Paul says a believer's burial is a sowing: sown in weakness, raised in power. The ones who died in Christ are not lost; they are sown. And at the last trumpet, in a moment, we will all be changed. I can grieve, but not as one who has no hope (1 Thess 4:13).

Example to follow — Paul's grace and Paul's labor. Paul never forgot that he persecuted the church, and he never let it stop him: "by the grace of God I am what I am … I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (v10). My past does not disqualify me; grace both makes me and works with me. For the men I serve who carry a record, this verse is a door, not a wall.

Work to keep doing — "your toil is not in vain in the Lord." Fifty-seven verses of doctrine end with a shovel in my hands. The lesson for a few men on a Thursday night, the prison visit, the phone call to the brother who relapsed, the prayer no one heard — none of it is empty. I will be steadfast (seated, settled), immovable (not pushed off the foundation by the next idea), and always abounding — not doing the minimum.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul calls the death, burial and resurrection "of first importance." What have I let crowd it out of first place? (15:1–4; Gal 1:11–12) *Received, stood in, held fast — past, present and future all resting on one message.*
2. If Christ had not been raised, what in my life would look exactly the same? (15:17–19) *If nothing would change, I may be hoping in Christ "in this life only."*
3. Paul was the man who "persecuted the church of God," and grace made him what he was. What does my past say about what grace can do? (15:9–10; 1 Tim 1:15) *"By the grace of God I am what I am" — and that grace "did not prove vain."*
4. What company is shaping what I believe about the future — and how I live now? (15:32–34; Prov 13:20) *Bad company corrupts good morals; wake up and stop sinning.*
5. How does the picture of the seed change the way I stand at a believer's grave? (15:42–44; 1 Thess 4:13) *It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power — we grieve, but not as those who have no hope.*
6. What work for the Lord have I been tempted to think is wasted? (15:58; Heb 6:10) *Your toil is not in vain in the Lord — not the lesson, not the prayer, not the visit no one thanked you for.*

Worship. Christ the first fruits, the first sheaf waved before the Father. Every enemy under His feet, and death last. A trumpet, a twinkling, a change. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer. Father, thank You that Christ died for my sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day, and that He lives. By Your grace I am what I am; let that grace not prove vain in me. Wake me up from the stupor of living for this life only, and keep me from the company that corrupts. When I stand at the graves of those who sleep in Jesus, remind me that they are sown, not lost. Make me steadfast, immovable, always abounding in Your work — and keep me, and the men I serve, until the trumpet sounds and we are changed. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see 1-Corinthians-15-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.