

Empire Church of the Brethren
Sunday Service Sermons

03 May 2026

The Challenge of the Resurrection

Text: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, you be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

1 Cor. 15:58

John Wesley writes of his mother's death in a journal.

"We stood around the bed and fulfilled her last request: 'Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.'"

How powerful our lives would be if we would radiate such hope and faith in the hour of our death.

Actually, there is no reason why we can't; we are all partakers of the same hope.

Throughout *Chapter 15 of First Corinthians* Paul seeks to prove and to explain the resurrection.

Now in the closing verses he presents the challenge of the resurrection.

The word "therefore" introduces our practical duty.

Great truths ought to lead always to noble living.

Paul tells us here that the resurrection should challenge us to three things.

The resurrection should challenge us to faithfulness.

Paul's words are, "Be steadfast, unmovable."

These words exhort us to have a firmness, a stability in faith,.

The resurrection should cause us to remain loyal to Jesus regardless of our circumstances.

Corinth was a hard place to live the Christian life.

In this seaport town and center of pagan worship, temptations and trials constantly confronted the Christians.

However, Paul still asserted that the resurrection was motivation enough to keep the Corinthians true to Christ.

Just as the Corinthians were barraged with temptations, so are we.

It is not easy for us to live a consistent Christian life in our town.

But we must stay true to Christ.

A very simple and perhaps overworked illustration of how we need to act is that of a postage stamp.

It takes a licking every time it goes to work.

It may be pounded, crushed, and hidden under a pile of other mail with none to see or care.

Yet it sticks to its task until the work is done.

Dare to be a postage stamp Christian.

Through fair weather and foul, through lickings, poundings, and obscurity, stick to your faith.

The resurrection should challenge us to diligence.

Paul says we should be "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

What is the work of the Lord?

It is doing good to others in the name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus went about doing good.

He fed the hungry, helped the sick, befriended the outcasts, and sought the lost.

We should follow his pattern.

To what extent are we to be involved in the work of the Lord?

We are to “abound” in his work.

This work describes a river that runs over its banks.

It has flooded the countryside.

The resurrection should challenge us to work diligently for the Lord.

Some people abound in the work of their political party, civic club, or fraternal order.

God should have first claim on us.

The resurrection should challenge us to confidence.

Paul motivates us to persevere when he says, “You know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

We need such a reminder that our work is not wasted when we work for him.

Many lives are empty and meaningless.

People continually give their first-rate loyalty to second-rate causes.

Their priorities are out of order with their values.

The resurrection guarantees that our labor for the Lord is never wasted.

The view of life of the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes was this: “Vanity, vanity, all is vanity.”

In contrast is the view of the apostle Paul, who stands on this side of the cross and the empty tomb and says, “our labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

The difference between an empty life and a fulfilled one is serving the Lord in the certainty of the resurrection.

When Dr. W. E. Sangster, England’s great Methodist preacher, lay dying with muscular atrophy, he reminded a friend that all his life he had preached that Jesus was adequate for every crises.

Now that he had only a few days to live, he wanted his friend to know that Christ was indeed adequate in the hour of death.

He said to him, “Tell everyone it is true; tell them for me that God is wonderfully near his children when they come to the end of life’s road.”

We who know Christ can face even death with confidence.

For he is the one who lived, who died, and who rose again.

He lives evermore as Lord, savior and redeemer.

In him there is no death.

He is the one who releases prisoners from whatever grips them.

The writer of Hebrews portrays helpless human beings crying for release from the bondage of life’s greatest enemies: sin, death, and the Devil.

He asserts that Jesus Christ, the Christian’s leader, encountered these sinister forces to deliver people from them.

Christ delivers believers from the tyranny of sin.

Sin is an enemy of each person who ever lived on this earth.

It separates us from God and life.

Jesus came to deliver all who believe in him from the binding tyranny of sin.

Christ came as priest to offer the sacrifice needed to remove the stain of sin: himself.

Jesus ministered before God to make atonement for sin.

Jesus is the High Priest who alone is capable of delivering people from the penalty of sin.

Jesus helps us live victoriously over the power of sin each day.

“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

The problem of temptation and sin is ever-present,, but Jesus can help us because he knows what it is like to be human.

He went through temptation without yielding so he can deliver us from the power of sin.

He also delivers us from the dread of death.

Death is the direct result and inevitable fruit of sin.

Only Jesus has the power to deliver a person from the dread of death.

Jesus died and he rose triumphantly over the grave.

He defeated life's greatest enemy.

Jesus alone can give a person victory over death.

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, a person's ultimate enemy has been defeated.

Death can be the end of life.

But in Jesus it is just a transition into a greater life.

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Jesus defeated the devil.

He destroyed the one who had the power of death.

He rendered him impotent.

Jesus wins the battles against the Devil's power for us.

The war with evil is over.

Jesus won it for himself and us.

Though battles continue to be fought Jesus has the power over the Devil since he conquered death.

The Devil was overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

That power is ours whenever we need it.

The greatest enemies of the human race are sin, death, and the devil.

We can try to deliver ourselves but Jesus alone can give deliverance from life's greatest enemies.

In Him is life!

Now and forever!