

The Breaking of the Power of Death

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Preacher: Edward Lobb

[0 : 00] And we're going to turn now to our Bible reading this morning. And you'll find that in Paul's second letter to Timothy, 2 Timothy chapter 1 and page 995, if you have one of our church visitors' Bibles.

And we're going to read together the first section, the first 14 verses of Paul's letter, which comes to this great crescendo as he speaks of the faith to be guarded and the guarding of God indeed of our faith.

2 Timothy chapter 1 then at verse 1, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus.

To Timothy, my beloved child, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

As I remember your tears, I long to see you that I may be filled with joy. I'm reminded of your sincere faith, the faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now, I'm sure, dwells in you as well.

[1 : 26] For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.

Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do.

But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I believed, and I'm convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. Amen. Amen. And may God bless to us his word. As you know, friends, every week on a Sunday morning, our minister stands here, and quite early in the service gives some announcements, intimations.

[3 : 18] I just imagine him standing here one week and saying this. There will be a rehearsal for the Mark drama on Monday evening. Then prayer meeting on Wednesday as usual.

Friday evening, activate and Tron Youth. Saturday evening, a Kaylee, led by Matt and the Stompers. And finally now, a piece of sad news for all of us.

One of our oldest members, Edward Lobb, died last Wednesday. But you're almost welcome to come to the funeral, which will be on Thursday at one o'clock. One day that announcement will be made.

Now let me ask, when our minister makes that kind of announcement, which he has to do several times a year, do you ever imagine that it's your name that he's saying? Or somebody else's? Because unless Christ returns in the meantime, that announcement will one day be made, and it will be your name or my name that's included. Now my sermon title for this day, for today, is The Breaking of the Power of Death.

[4 : 28] So let's turn together to 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 10, if we may, on page 995. 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 10.

And have a look at the phrase that comes there partway through the verse. Paul writes of the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death.

Now what a phrase that is. Abolished death. Just think for a moment of what abolition means. We know about abolition in this life. Think, for example, of William Wilberforce, the famous reformer, who brought about the abolition of the slave trade in the 19th century.

Or we know about the medical research, which much more recently has brought about the worldwide abolition of smallpox. But to abolish death. Now usually, as you know in our sermons, we take just one Bible passage, and we try to unpack it and draw out its implications.

And that's the right way to bring regular nourishment to the church. But just occasionally, it's good to take a Bible theme, and to trace it through various parts of the Bible. And that's what I'd like to do this morning.

[5 : 42] To look at the Bible's teaching about death, and to ask in what way Christ has dealt with the ugly monster. So we'll start here in 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 10, but we'll move around the Bible as we pursue this theme.

Just think, first of all, of the man who was writing these words in 2 Timothy, and what his circumstances were. You'll know that this is Paul's last letter, written from a Roman prison, and at the time he was under sentence of death.

He was on death row. In fact, he's going to go on to write in chapter 4, the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight. I've finished the race. I have kept the faith.

So Paul was awaiting execution in the very near future, and no doubt, you can understand this, no doubt he would have imagined the day when he was to leave his cell for the last time, to be taken out to the prison yard, where the executioner with a freshly sharpened sword would be waiting for him.

And yet, this apostle, under the sentence of death, is able to write that Christ has abolished death. Now, you might say, but death has not been abolished, has it?

[6 : 54] It happens all the time. In Scotland alone, dozens of people die every day. Now, I think that our ESV translation, the one we have here, may be just a little bit deficient at this point.

The verb that Paul uses there really means to nullify something, to make it powerless or ineffective. So a better translation would be, Jesus, who has broken the power of death.

You remember what Paul said about death in 1 Corinthians 15? O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Paul's point is that Jesus, by his death and resurrection, has withdrawn the sting of death.

It's a bit like taking the sting out of the tail of a scorpion. So although the scorpion still looks nasty, it is, in fact, harmless. Now, just for a moment, contrast Paul's confident teaching about death with the view of modern secular man.

I'd like to read you part of a poem written by Philip Larkin. Larkin was a well-known poet. He died in 1985. Very gifted poet. I think perhaps a bit of a miserable old curmudgeon in real life.

[8 : 04] But in this excerpt, he's thinking clearly about his own death, and he realizes that it's not very long into the future. And you'll see here that he's no friend of Christianity, or of what he calls here religion.

So let me quote. The total emptiness forever. The sure extinction that we travel to, and shall be lost in always. Not to be here.

Not to be anywhere. And soon. Nothing more terrible. Nothing more true. This is a special way of being afraid that no trick dispels.

Religion used to try that vast, moth-eaten musical brocade created to pretend we never die. And that silly stuff that says no rational being can fear a thing it will not feel.

Not seeing that this is what we fear. No sight. No sound. No touch or taste or smell. Nothing to think with. Nothing to love or link with.

[9 : 09] The anesthetic from which none come round. Sharply written. Now that is 20th century secular man at his most bitter.

A man from whose world view the gospel has entirely leached out. So who is right? Philip Larkin or the Apostle Paul? They can't both be right.

Well now we'll start to move around the Bible as we follow this theme of the breaking of the power of death. There's no need to turn up the passages that I refer to unless you're quick-fingered. But I'll read everything out as we go along.

We'll start with the first two verses of Ecclesiastes chapter 7. A good name is better than fine perfume and the day of death better than the day of birth.

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting. For this is the end of all mankind and the living will lay it to heart.

[10:13] Isn't that surprising? The day of death better than the day of birth. You wouldn't think that by reading the newspaper columns which announce the births and the deaths. In the newspapers there's no doubt as to which of those things is thought to be the better event.

But Ecclesiastes says it's better to visit a home at the time of a funeral than a home where there's celebration and feasting. Why? The second verse tells us for death is the destiny of every man. The living should take this to heart. So God is encouraging the living, that's us, to take to heart the fact that death is the destiny of each of us. My father died over 20 years ago and my mother about three years ago.

And as you know there's usually a gap of about a week or ten days between the day of a death and the day of the funeral. And I think with both of my parents' death I had this passage from Ecclesiastes in mind.

And when both of them had died I made a point of going to the undertaker's back parlor a couple of times during the week before the funeral so that I could sit there quietly beside the body of my dead parent.

[11:24] The coffin of course was open. The lid had not yet been put down. And I took my Bible with me and I prayed a little bit but I also took time to look at the quiet and motionless features which I'd known so well.

The still face and the hands. It is an educational experience to do that. You'll find that you're in touch with a level of reality that you will never find at a 21st birthday party or at a wedding.

The non-Christian world tries to avoid thinking about death as much as possible. Tries to keep it all at arm's length. And the usual tactic is to trivialize it by using humor.

For example the following graffiti once appeared on a wall. The first two minutes of life are the most difficult and dangerous of all. And somebody had added underneath yes and the last two minutes can be pretty dodgy as well.

Now that's witty. It is witty and we smile but it's remarks like that which are designed to keep the awesome reality and the significance of death covered up. Let's joke about it people think but let's not really face it.

[12:38] Friends, it is only the Bible that will tell us the truth about death and it's only the Bible that will tell us the truth about how the power of death is broken.

Now I want to pursue this theme by asking three questions about death. But first let me add just one point of clarification. It's physical death, the death of our physical bodies that we're looking at today. The Bible actually speaks about three kinds of death. Physical death, spiritual death, that's what Paul writes about in Ephesians chapter 2 when he speaks of those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

What he means is they're physically still alive but they're dead towards God. And then thirdly, there's eternal death which is the state of those who have rejected God and the gospel and are eternally in hell.

But it's physical death which is our main concern this morning. So here's our first question. Why do people die physically? It's to the story of Adam and Eve that we must turn to get the Bible's answer.

[13:44] And the Bible's answer may be a surprise to us because we're so accustomed to think of death as a natural process. When somebody dies, we ask, why did so and so die?

And the reply comes back, he died of bronchial pneumonia or a coronary thrombosis or cancer of the pancreas. But the Bible doesn't look at it in those natural or medical terms.

It's sin. It's rebellion against God that has brought death to the human race. The ultimate cause of death, therefore, is moral, not medical.

Here's what God the Lord says to Adam in Genesis chapter 2. You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die.

Why die? Not because the fruit was poisonous, but because man's disobedience must call forth God's judgment. So although at one level we can account for an individual's death in medical terms, from heart disease or cancer or whatever, those medical reasons for death are secondary.

[14:56] The primary reason is that the human race has rebelled against its creator. The Apostle Paul unpacks the meaning of this further in Romans chapter 5, 512.

He writes this, Sin entered the world through one man, that's Adam, and death through sin. And in this way death came to all men because all sinned.

Our sin must call forth the righteous sentence of God. As Paul puts it in Romans chapter 6, the wages of sin is death. Now friends, don't despair.

The picture is going to brighten up shortly when we come to the achievement of our Savior in a few minutes' time. But we need to recognize that the sentence of death is severe. If we underestimate the severity of it, we shall never understand how glorious the gospel is.

Look at it like this. God is introduced to us in the Bible as the creator. It was his joyful purpose to create men and women so that we should live in relationship with him, a lovely relationship, joy and love, like the joy of bridegroom and bride, but a thousand times better.

[16:14] How terrible sin must be then if it causes the creator to become the destroyer. We can't even guess at the pain in God's heart in Genesis chapter 3 when he has to pronounce the death sentence on Adam.

He says to him, for dust you are and to dust you will return. Our word pulverize comes from the root word meaning dust. So when God says to Adam, to dust you will return, he is speaking of the pulverizing of the human race.

That's why we have to think twice before we joke about death, particularly if the person who has died was not a Christian. Something too serious is going on here.

And this is why it's shallow to see death as no more than a natural process caused by some disease. Death is not a natural process. It is a supernatural judgment.

So there's our first question. Why do people die physically? The Bible's answer is that death entered the world through sin. We're all sinful and God's sentence of physical death is his severe but just response to our rebellion.

[17:29] Now this immediately raises our second question. If death is God's sentence upon rebels, why do Christians die? Christians, after all, have had our rebellion forgiven.

Haven't we? Christ has received the death penalty in our place, on our behalf. Hasn't he? So if he has already borne the death penalty for us, why do we still have to go through this business of growing old and dying?

I think there's a two-part answer to this question of why Christians have to die. Part one, as a preliminary, the death of Christians is not a punishment for them.

Death may be the just sentence for a rebel race but as soon as any person becomes a Christian, he or she is taken out of the sphere of God's punishment.

Remember how Paul puts it in Romans chapter 8, therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Paul does not say there, there will be no condemnation for Christians in the world to come, though of course that's also true.

[18:40] What he says is there is no condemnation now for Christians. You know Charles Wesley's triumphant hymn, no condemnation now I dread.

Jesus and all in him is mine. And Wesley is so right. No condemnation now. Christ has paid for it all. He has borne the condemnation.

He has borne the death penalty fully. He didn't bear 95% of it and then ask us to bear the final 5%.

He has taken the full weight of the punishment and the condemnation that our sins deserved.

So if we're to understand why Christians die physically, it must be a reason other than the punishment of our sins. What is it then?

Part 2. Christians die because death is the final outcome of living in a fallen world. It's the final outcome of living in a fallen world.

[19:39] The Christian is a citizen of heaven now, but he's also a citizen of earth until he dies. This means then that Christians have a dual citizenship.

And while we continue to be citizens of earth, we are subject to everything that characterizes a fallen world. We can look at it like this. In his great wisdom, God decided that he would not give us all the benefits of Christ's redeeming work at once.

He gives us these benefits in installments over time. Now, there's a great deal that we enjoy already which are benefits of the death of Christ. We enjoy full forgiveness now.

We have the revelation of God's message to us in the Bible. We have the joy of belonging to the Lord's family. We already have the new birth. If we're Christians, we're born again.

And there's much more as well that we enjoy now. But other benefits are reserved for the life to come, such as freedom from illness and pain, freedom from sorrow, and much more.

[20 : 47] And in the same way, God in his wisdom has not chosen to remove all evil from the world immediately. He has decided to wait until the final judgment and the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth, before death and mourning and pain will cease to exist.

So Christian people are still living in a fallen world, and our experience of salvation is still incomplete. Paul teaches us that the last aspect of the fallen world to be removed will be death, as he puts it in 1 Corinthians 15.

Christ must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. So although death doesn't come to Christians as a condemnation for our sins, it does come to us as a result of living in a fallen world.

This is why Christians, just as much as non-Christians, experience aging. If you doubt that, just look at the people sitting next to you. What do you see?

As the old hymn writer has put it, change and decay in all around. I see you may be young and beautiful. You may be 20. Look at the corner of the eyes. Look at the skin.

[22 : 04] You'll see it. And because we live in this fallen world, Christians are just as likely as non-Christians are to experience illnesses, accidents, and natural disasters.

In his wisdom, God has chosen to allow Christians to experience physical death before we gain all the benefits of the salvation that Christ has won for us.

So, death is not a punishment for the sins of Christians. It is the final outcome of living in a fallen world where everything is subject to decay. Well, now to our third question.

Given that we shall all die physically, unless, of course, Christ comes beforehand, but given that we shall die otherwise, how is it that Christ has broken the power of death?

Now, perhaps I could ask you to turn up the next passage, 1 Corinthians 15, on page 962 in our Bibles. How is it that Christ has broken the power of death?

[23 : 13] 1 Corinthians 15, I'll read a little bit from verse 54. You'll see there's a little bit of poetry set in the verse there. 1 Corinthians 15, 54.

Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But, thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, as I said earlier, it's as though Paul is likening death to a scorpion.

But in this passage, he launches a triumphant put down to the power of death. O death, where is your sting? It's gone. It's been removed. How?

Well, he goes on to explain, the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. Let me try and explain that. I think his thinking goes like this.

[24 : 11] The law, that is God's law, the Ten Commandments, and the whole body of the Bible's moral teaching. The law, although it is holy and righteous and good, exposes us as sinners.

And we only have to read the Ten Commandments to see how far short we've fallen of them. So the law doesn't only say, live like this. It also says, you have not lived like this.

You lack the power to live like this. So the law exposes our sin and condemns us as sinners. That's what Paul means when he says, the power of sin is the law.

It's the law that gives sin its power to condemn us and to bring us to hell. And that's why Paul says that sin is the sting of death.

It's sin that deals the fatal wound. It's sin that puts the scorpion sting into us. So it's the law that exposes our sin and it's our sin that brings us down.

[25 : 12] So if we are to be released from this dreadful predicament, the thing that has to be dealt with is sin. And you and I cannot deal with it ourselves. But Paul tells us that Christ has dealt with it.

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

What has Jesus done then in order to bring this victory for us? Well, he has done what we were powerless to do. He has stood in for us.

He went to the cross as our representative and as our substitute. In the Apostle Peter's words, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

He bore them. He carried them in our place. This is astonishing. It is totally undeserved. This is the gospel. What does it mean then that he bore our sins?

[26 : 16] It means that he endured the penalty that they had incurred, which is death. The wages of sin is death. And Jesus accepted that dreadful wage for us so that we need not be paid out that wage to ourselves.

And that is how he has broken the power of death for us. He has endured the penalty of sin on our behalf. And we're free. So although we still have to face physical death, we have been spared the eternal ruin in hell, which our sins deserved.

But there's more to it than this. No need to turn this one up. But in Romans chapter 6, Paul writes, this is the early part of the chapter, chapter 6, verses 3 and 4, Paul writes of the union between Christians and Christ, which is expressed and symbolized by our baptism.

He writes this, do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

And then he says, and listen to this, friends, for if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

[27 : 45] Christian people, his people, his church, are united with him. We are part of him. We are incorporated into his very body and being. So his dual experience of death under the righteous judgment of God, followed by resurrection by the power of God, becomes our experience too.

if we have been united with him in a death like his, says Paul, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. And Paul goes on to say this a few verses later.

If we have died with Christ, which indeed we have if we're Christians, if we've died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again.

death no longer has dominion over him. And that means that it no longer has dominion or mastery over those who belong to him. That is the victory that Jesus has achieved.

And all who are his share in that victory. So this is how Christ has broken the power of death. He has taken the wages that we deserved, which is death.

[28 : 58] He has endured the penalty that we had incurred, which is death. death. And if we are Christians, we are part of him. We are indissolubly incorporated into his very being, united with him in his death and in his resurrection.

His death assures us that our sin has been dealt with, and his resurrection assures us that we too shall be raised. And this is why, to go back to 1 Corinthians 15 again, this is why Paul is able to sound such a triumphant note.

Just listen to him. I want to read from verse 50. It's a terrific passage. I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood, that's our present bodies, 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, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

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

[30 : 26] O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But, thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

And this is the reason, friends, why Christians need not fear to die. Physical death is something we have to go through unless Christ returns before it happens.

But for the Christian, physical death is the gateway to the very presence of God, to sharing his glory with him, and to seeing our Savior.

Now, we're able to thank him now, thank the Lord Jesus now in our prayers for winning this victory for us, but the time will come when we will be able to thank him to his very face.

Now, let me mention one or two practical things which might be helpful as we contemplate our lifespan of three score years and ten, or four score, or even perhaps five score.

[31 : 28] First, let's trust that God providentially oversees our circumstances and the length of our lives. Remember how Jesus said, which of you can add a single hour to his life?

When it comes to length of life, if God is our kind Father, then whatever he gives us is to be received gratefully, whether it's thirty years or sixty years or a hundred.

Paul writes in Romans 8, 28, we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. And the all things of that verse must include setbacks and disappointments and illnesses, frustrations, and the timing of our death.

If we believe Romans 8, 28, we will never have to be haunted by questions like, why could she not have lived another ten years?

We can trust God's sovereign timing to be perfect. Now, of course, we won't enjoy the business of growing old and weak. As somebody has said, old age is only for the stout-hearted.

[32 : 42] The last part of our life on earth may well be rather painful and difficult, but when we know the gospel, we have nothing to fear from death itself. Now, second, Christians can look forward with joy to the prospect of going to be with the Lord.

The New Testament teaching is that when Christians die, their souls go immediately to be with the Lord. As Paul famously puts it in Philippians chapter one, to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. Then a verse or two later, he says, I'm torn between the two, in other words, between staying and leaving. He says, I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. But he then says, but I think I'm going to have to stay here for your sake a little bit longer.

Now, when a Christian dies, the body, this body that we have now is finished with. It's buried or cremated and it soon becomes dust or ashes, dust and ashes.

The soul goes straight to be with the Lord. If you want another reference, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 is a good chapter to see the program there as Paul lays it out.

[33 : 55] But the soul goes straight to be with the Lord. Then when Christ returns, the souls of believers who have died will come with him and will then be reunited with their bodies and their bodies will be raised from the dead.

Now, the body will be raised not in its original, frail, mortal form. That body is finished with. But a new body, made new, immortal and incorruptible, a glorified body will be given to us like the resurrection body of Jesus himself.

Then third and last, once we understand all these things, let's make it our aim to die in the most godly way possible.

Now, you may be very young, you may have many years of life ahead of you on earth, but it's never too early to prepare to die in a godly way. The way in which we face our own approaching death can be a powerful example to other people.

I'd like to tell you about a man like this, a friend of ours who was a member of our church at Burton-on-Trent some years ago. His name was David Wilkinson and David died in February 2003, 14 years ago, at the age of 70.

[35 : 12] Now, David had been a school teacher all his life and he retired at the age of 62. I think you can retire at 62 if you're a teacher. But in the last eight years of his life, he became almost like an unpaid member of our church staff.

He preached regularly for us, he led small group Bible studies, and every month he used to meet with our small group study leaders to prepare them to teach their Bible passages for the coming month.

He was a very skillful Bible teacher and as well as that he was a most delightful human being, twinkling with fun and encouragement wherever he went. Anyway, in September 2002, he was diagnosed with an aggressive inoperable cancer and he died only five months later.

But during that five months of his dying, he did his dying publicly. He kept coming to all the meetings of the church. At the end of the service, he would sit perhaps towards the back laughing and joking and enjoying everyone's company and encouraging people.

I remember about two months before he died, he had to spend a couple of nights in hospital and I went to visit him in the hospital one evening. And as I walked up the ward and approached his bed, I was surprised to see that he wasn't in the bed.

[36 : 26] He was sitting up beside it with a big notebook, a bit like this one, in his hands and he was making notes. So I said to him, David, what are you doing? He said, oh, I'm just preparing for my next Bible study group leaders meeting.

He actually took his last Bible study group leaders meeting only two weeks before he died. He could hardly speak at that stage, but he came down to the church hall.

It was a very nasty January evening, I remember, but he came to the church hall and he croaked for about 45 minutes. As he taught the Bible study leaders the meaning of the passages.

Now, it was a wonderful example of how to die in a godly way. And he was able to do it like that because he knew the gospel. He knew that Christ had broken the power of death.

Two days before David died, I was visiting him at his home. And at that stage, he could hardly move. He was propped up in an armchair with blankets all over him. And when I'd sat with him for a while, I prepared to go home.

[37 : 30] And I said to him, well, David, I'm on my way now, but I'll come and see you again tomorrow. Now, as I say, he could hardly speak at that stage, but he just managed to look up at me like that from his chair.

I could see his eyes were twinkling. And he said to me, Edward, I very much hope that I shan't still be here tomorrow.

Well, he actually lived two more days, and I was with him as he took his last breath, which was a great privilege. But thinking of the way this man died, I realized what an example he had set for me and for the whole of our church.

This was how a Christian should die, serving the Lord and serving the Lord's people, because of course serving the Lord really is serving the Lord's people, right up to the very last moment, and doing it with joy and dignity and a lot of humor.

But you can only do that when you have deeply digested the New Testament's teaching on how Christ has broken the power of death.

[38 : 32] So let me end with two quotations. First from Paul, I've read this already, but you're going to get it again. When 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.

Oh death, where is your victory? Oh death, where is your sting? It's nowhere. Then secondly, words of Jesus. Jesus to his friend Martha. John chapter 11, just before he raised Lazarus from the dead and he went to visit Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus.

And he says to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? That's what he said to her. Do you believe this? And that's the question for us all.

Do you believe this? Let's pray together. Now, Lord Jesus, to think of you as the resurrection and the life, the one who has the power to wake the dead and to call them forth from the grave, gives us great joy.

[39 : 54] And we thank you so much that you were prepared, that you were willing to bear the cost, the cost that we could not bear ourselves. Thank you for your willingness to be put to death.

and thank you for the power of heaven that brought you up from the grave. And we pray that you'll write these things deep in our hearts, helping us to rejoice and to live accordingly.

We ask it for your great name's sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.