

HOPE FOR MISERABLE CHRISTIANS

(No. 1251 – 7/15/24 – Sermon Online Zoom)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Why are so many Christians miserable and joyless? There may be a number of reasons—sin, unresolved conflicts, legalism, to name a few—but Paul pinpointed the MAIN reason:

1 Cor. 15:19 (KJV): *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

- B. Jesus addressed an entire church that was miserable:

Rev. 3:14-17 (NKJV): ¹⁴*And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, “These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵‘I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked...’*

- C. In both cases, the same Greek word is used (these are the only two times it appears in the New Testament), and it can also be translated “pitiable,” “pitiful,” or “to be pitied.”
- D. Let us examine Paul’s words to the Corinthians more closely to gain better understanding...

II. 1 CORINTHIANS 15: THE GREAT RESURRECTION CHAPTER

- A. Before we can study verse 19 of 1 Corinthians 15, we need to understand the context and background of the entire chapter—here are a few important points:
1. 1 Corinthians 15 is the longest chapter in all of Paul’s epistles (58 verses!)
 2. The entire chapter emphasizes the centrality of Christ’s resurrection to the Gospel
 3. Paul gives many details about the resurrection of believers that are found nowhere else in the Bible
 4. Clear distinctions are made repeatedly between the natural and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly

B. The centrality of Christ's resurrection

1 Cor. 15:1-8: ¹Now, brothers, I want to remind you of **the gospel I preached** to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³For what I received I passed on to you as of **first importance: that Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, ⁴that **He was buried**, that **He was raised on the third day** according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that **He appeared** to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, **He appeared** to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then **He appeared** to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all **He appeared** to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Dead people don't make appearances!

1 Cor. 15:12-20: ¹²But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And **if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.** ¹⁵More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise Him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷And **if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.** ¹⁸Then **those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.** ¹⁹If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. ²⁰**BUT CHRIST HAS INDEED BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

C. Details about the believer's resurrection

1 Cor. 15:42-44: ⁴²So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. **The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;** 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.

1 Cor. 15:50-54: ⁵⁰I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: **We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—** ⁵²in

a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, **the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.** ⁵³For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “**Death has been swallowed up in victory.**”

D. Contrast between the earthly and the heavenly

1 Cor. 15:45-49: ⁴⁵So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶The **spiritual** did not come first, but the **natural**, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷**The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second Man from heaven.** ⁴⁸As was the **earthly** man, so are those who are of the **earth**; and as is the Man from **heaven**, so also are those who are of **heaven.** ⁴⁹And just as we have borne the likeness of the **earthly** man, so shall we bear the likeness of the **Man from heaven.**

III. HOPE IN THIS LIFE ONLY

- A. Paul and the other New Testament writers often speak about our hope in Christ; but 1 Cor. 15:19 is addressing those Christians whose hope in Christ is *in this life only*.
- B. The key word in this verse is the adverb *only*, for the Gospel clearly offers the believer great hope in this life—healing of physical sicknesses and diseases, provision of daily needs, peace of mind, etc.
- C. But if our hope is *only* for this life, Paul says we’ve missed the whole point of the Gospel—heaven and eternity!
- D. The New Testament often warns us about the dangers of getting choked and entangled in the affairs of this life:
1. **Mat. 13:22:** [Parable of the Sower]: *The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who **hears the word**, but the **worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it**, making it unfruitful.*
 2. **1 John 2:15-17:** ¹⁵***Do not love the world or anything in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶***For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but***

from the world. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

3. **Col. 3:1-4:** ¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above**, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.** ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
4. **2 Tim. 2:3-4** (NKJV): ³You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴**No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who enlisted him as a soldier.**
5. **Luke 10:38-42:** ³⁸As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him. ³⁹She had a sister called **Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said.** ⁴⁰**But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, "Lord, don't You care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"** ⁴¹"**Martha, Martha,**" the Lord answered, **"you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴²but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."**

IV. HEAVENLY HOPE AND ETERNAL VISION

A. The Kingdom of God is a heavenly kingdom

1. **Mat. 4:17:** *From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is near."*
2. **John 1:49-51:** ⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; **You are the King** of Israel." ⁵⁰Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." ⁵¹He then added, "I tell you the truth, **you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.**"
3. **John 3:12-13:** ¹²I have spoken to you of **earthly things** and you do not believe; **how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?** ¹³**No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.**

Jesus knows all about heaven— He came from there!

4. **Mat. 13:** ...*the kingdom of heaven is like...*
5. **John 18:36:** *Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is from another place.”*
6. **Acts 1:6-8:** ⁶*So when they met together, they asked Him, “Lord, are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”* ⁷*He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*
7. NOTE: Even after Christ’s resurrection, the apostles were still mistakenly looking for an earthly kingdom, and Jesus had to correct them. This same error is being repeated today in such movements as Kingdom Now theology. Christ’s kingdom is NOT OF THIS WORLD! Paul and the other apostles weren’t promoting a kingdom to overthrow Rome—they were teaching that we must go through much tribulation to enter the kingdom in heaven (Acts 14:22).
8. **2 Tim. 4:18:** *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

B. Our inheritance is in heaven, not here on earth

1. **Mat. 6:19-21:** ¹⁹*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
2. **1 Pet. 1:3-7:** ³*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith—of greater*

<p>They could rejoice in difficult circumstances because they had a heavenly hope!</p>
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worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor **when Jesus Christ is revealed.**

3. **Col. 1:3-5:** ³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—⁵the faith and love that spring from the **hope that is stored up for you in heaven** and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel.

C. We only have a deposit and a taste of the first fruits now

1. **Eph. 1:13-14:** ¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, **the promised Holy Spirit,** ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory.
2. **2 Cor. 1:21-22:** ²¹Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²²set His seal of ownership on us, and **put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.**
3. **Heb. 6:4-6:** ⁴It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have **tasted the heavenly gift,** who have **shared in the Holy Spirit,** ⁵who have **tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,** ⁶if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace.
4. This was foreshadowed in the Old Testament when the twelve spies brought back the first fruits from the Promised Land, but Israel still needed to go in and possess the land:
Num. 13:17-27: ¹⁷When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, "Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. ¹⁸**See what the land is like** and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. ¹⁹What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? ²⁰How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? **Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land.**" (It was the season for the first ripe

Through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, God has given us a small foretaste of the glorious inheritance that awaits us in heaven!

grapes.) ...²³When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of **grapes**. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some **pomegranates** and **figs**.²⁴That place was called the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. ²⁵At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. ²⁶They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There **they reported** to them and to the whole assembly and **showed them the fruit** of the land. ²⁷They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! **Here is its fruit.**”

5. **Rom. 8:18-25:** ¹⁸I consider that our **present sufferings** are not worth comparing with the **glory that will be revealed** in us. ¹⁹The **creation waits in eager expectation** for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²²We know that **the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time**. ²³Not only so, but **we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies**. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. But **hope that is seen is no hope at all**. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵But if **we hope for what we do not yet have**, we wait for it patiently.

D. Our calling is a heavenly calling

1. **Heb. 3:1:** Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the **heavenly calling**, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.
2. **Phil. 3:13-14:** ¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which **God has called me heavenward** [lit. “upward”] in Christ Jesus.

E. Our citizenship and home are in heaven

1. **Phil. 3:20-21:** ²⁰*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,* ²¹*who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body [resurrection].*
2. **Eph. 2:6** (NKJV): *And [God] raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*
3. **Heb. 11:8-10:** ⁸*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.* ⁹*By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.* ¹⁰*For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*
4. **Heb. 11:13-16:** ¹³*All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.* ¹⁴*People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.* ¹⁵*If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.* ¹⁶*Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*
5. **John 14:1-3:** ¹*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me.* ²*In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.* ³*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.*
6. **2 Cor. 4:17 – 5:4:** ¹⁷*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.* ¹⁸*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.* ¹*Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an*

Faith is being sure of what we hope for—they lived by faith because they had hope for what they did not yet have!

We must choose between the temporal and eternal.

eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

²Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our **heavenly dwelling**, ³because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our **heavenly dwelling**, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

7. **Heb. 12:22-24:** ²²But you have come to Mount Zion, to **the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God**. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³to the church of the firstborn, whose **names are written in heaven**. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

V. EARTH & HEAVEN COMPARED

A. Earthly life summarized

1. The earth is under the curse of sin, painful toil, sorrow, vanity, decay, sickness, and death
 - a) **Gen. 3:17-19:** ¹⁷To Adam He said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ **cursed is the ground** because of you; through **painful toil** you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the **sweat** of your brow you will eat your food **until you return to the ground**, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”
 - b) **Rom. 5:12:** Therefore, just as **sin entered the world** through one man, and death through sin, and in this way **death came to all men**, because all sinned.
 - c) **Rom. 8:20-22** (NKJV): ²⁰For the creation was subjected to **futility** [“vanity” KJV; “frustration” NIV; “God’s curse” NLT], not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of **corruption** [“decay” NIV] into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²²For we know that the **whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now**.

2. The whole world is still under Satan’s control:

1 John 5:19: *We know that we are children of God, and that the **whole world is under the control of the evil one.***

3. Everything is temporary—it will all pass away!

a) **Eccl. 2:1-11:** *¹I thought in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with **pleasure** to find out what is good.” But that also proved to be **meaningless** [“vanity” KJV “futility” NAS]... ³I tried cheering myself with **wine**, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the **few days of their lives.** ⁴I undertook **great projects:** I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. ⁵I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. ⁶I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. ⁷I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also **owned more herds and flocks than anyone** in Jerusalem before me. ⁸I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I **acquired men and women singers, and a harem** as well—the delights of the heart of man. ⁹I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. ¹⁰I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; **I refused my heart no pleasure.** My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. ¹¹**Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a CHASING AFTER THE WIND;** nothing was gained under the sun.*

b) **Luke 8:14:** *The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are **choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures,** and they do not mature.*

c) **1 John 2:16-17:** *¹⁶For everything in the world—the **cravings** of sinful man, the **lust** of his eyes and the **boasting** of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷**The world and its desires pass away,** but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

- d) **2 Pet. 3:10-13:** ¹⁰*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The **heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*** ¹¹***Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?*** You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²*as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.* ¹³***But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.***
- e) **Luke 16:19-31:** ¹⁹*There was a **rich man** who was dressed in purple and fine linen and **lived in luxury every day.*** ²⁰*At his gate was laid a **beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores*** ²¹*and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.* ²²*"The time came when the **beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side.*** *The **rich man also died and was buried.*** ²³***In hell, where he was in torment,*** he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴*So he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire."* ²⁵*But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that **in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, BUT NOW he is comforted here and you are in agony.*** ²⁶*And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us."* ²⁷*He answered, "Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house,* ²⁸*for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."* ²⁹*Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."* ³⁰*"No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."* ³¹*He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."*

B. Heaven summarized

1. No more devil!

Rev. 20:10: *And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

2. No more death, mourning, crying, or pain; no more darkness, sin, abomination or lying—God’s glorious Presence will dwell in the City of God, New Jerusalem, with the redeemed for all eternity!

- a) **Rev. 21:1-8:** ¹*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.* ²*I saw the **Holy City, the new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.* ³*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the **dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them.** They will be His people, and **God Himself will be with them and be their God.** ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be **no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**”* ⁵*He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!”* Then He said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶*He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the **water of life.** ⁷He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son. ⁸But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”*
- b) **Rev. 21:22-27:** ²²*I did not see a temple in the city, because the **Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.** ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the **glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.** ²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into*

it. ²⁵*On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be **no night there.*** ²⁶*The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.* ²⁷***Nothing impure** will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is **shameful or deceitful** [“commits abominations (unclean, detestable, morally repugnant things) or practices falsehood” AMP] **but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.***

3. No more curse—the throne of God and the Lamb will there, and His servants will see His face and reign for ever and ever!
 - a) **Rev. 22:1-5:** ¹*Then the angel showed me the **river of the water of life**, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the **leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*** ³***No longer will there be any curse.*** The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. ⁴***They will see His face**, and His name will be on their foreheads.* ⁵*There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And **they will reign for ever and ever.***
 - b) **Ps. 16:11** (NKJV): *You will show me the path of life; **in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.***
 - c) **1 Cor. 15:50-54:** ⁵⁰*I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.* ⁵¹*Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—* ⁵²*in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, **the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*** ⁵³***For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.*** ⁵⁴*When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “**Death has been swallowed up in victory.**”*

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. In his great resurrection chapter—1 Corinthians 15—Paul warned every believer that if their hope in Christ is only for this life, they are the most miserable people in all the world:
1 Cor. 15:19 (KJV): *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*
- B. Although the Gospel offers us great hope in this life, our primary focus must always be on heaven—God has called us with a heavenly calling to a heavenly home and inheritance!
- C. Like Abraham, we are just pilgrims and strangers passing through this world, looking for a *better* city and country—the city of the living God, New Jerusalem!
- D. Read Revelation 21 & 22 often to remember where our true home is!

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ,
set your hearts on things above,
where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
When Christ, who is your life, appears,
then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

—Colossians 3:1-4