

Last week we looked at part of vv. 35-58, which could easily be summarized into a few words: “We are broken people.” We are all damaged in our own way. Even for myself, I’ve been suffering through allergies since midweek and have been relying upon medications, humidifiers, and nutrition change to help remedy the discomfort of congestion. It’s clear that our flesh is broken and the suffering and decay our bodies endure are testament to that; which the Israelites were all very familiar with. While the Israelites were traversing the desert and God gave them the Law as an instruction manual of what to do when you mess up, it brought them face to face with their brokenness and taught them to yearn for a savior who would fix everything. In the Book of Judges, each judge introduced was meant to be a hero, but they were anything but that. Yes, they saved Israel, but they themselves had so many character flaws that it’s no surprise when the reader longs with Israel for a savior that will save them from their enemies and themselves. Samson, being the last judge, was the worst of the lot because he did what came naturally to him without constraint and at no point did he get it right. And so we read in 1 Corinthians 15 about how damaged we all are.

While the Israelites longed for a savior, He came. The thing no one expected was that the Savior’s saving would come in two parts. He came once to die on a cross and rise again on the third day, but His work was not yet finished at that point. We know this because we are still broken; we still mess up, we still fall prey to our sins, and our bodies continue to decay. God wasn’t finished with what He started in Jesus and Hebrews 9:27-28 illustrates this by paralleling the two fold part of man's death and facing of judgment with Christ's sacrificial death and His salvific second coming. Even though Jesus’ first coming and death was meant to bring salvation, His second coming will also bring salvation because that’s what He does and who He is. He is our savior, He saves, and He comes for much bigger purposes by bringing salvation for everyone.

We talked last week about a day when death no longer has power over us, when we will raise our fists and taunt death while singing, “Where, O Death is your victory, where O Death is your sting?”. Until that day, death will continue to be the victor and we will suffer its sting. In

verse 36, Paul talks about the lifelessness of a seed and its rebirth as a beautiful tree; by comparison, this will be the difference between our current state and the day of our resurrection. Verse 40 exemplifies the gloriousness of the day when God transforms our bodies from perishable to imperishable by equating it to contrasting brilliance between the stars and the sun. While the stars have their own kind of brilliance that continue to shine regardless of the time of day, as soon as day break arrives the sun easily washes out and outshines the stars. In relation to Jesus' second coming when we receive our resurrected bodies, the age and decay our bodies used to undergo will be an irrelevant thing of the past. In verses 42-43, Paul drives home the imperviousness of the resurrected body where physical and mental ailments will no longer be significant and the new, imperishable body will be raised in glory through God's awesome power. How glorious that day will be Jesus returns and our bodies will be raised through the power of God. In Ephesians 1:18-20, Paul prays for the recognition of the hope to which we are called, for an understanding of the riches of our promised inheritance, and for the same resurrection power exerted on Christ. Paul goes further to emphasize the limitless extent of God's glory, in Ephesians 3:20-21, by praising the power that's able to change us from within while giving weight to the day when His power will change us externally. For me, this helps focus on the resurrection and the power that was used on me for my salvation in recognizing the light of the gospel and the power that will be used to change us on the outwardly. And who will the glory go to? The Lord. Verse 45 goes on to align our current state with Adam as our forerunner for bodily decay and our future state with Jesus as our forerunner of the resurrected body. In verse 50, Paul implies the needed expectation of the second coming occurring when we least expect it and without warning; whether it occurs within our lifetime or not. Paul wraps up and asserts his point around the importance of the resurrection and what it should mean to us in verse 58 with instruction to: stand firm in our faith, let nothing move us, and always give ourselves fully to the Lord. Whatever that means to you, until that day comes, you do it with serving the Lord as your motivation. Whether we are given the opportunity to be the Christian influence within the workplace or are moved from a young age to serve, at no point will this ever be in vain as we give ourselves over to Him.