



THE DAY DEATH DIED

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





The Day Death Died

ADRIAN ROGERS

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide this transcript produced from a live sermon preached by Adrian Rogers while serving as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. This transcript is intended for your personal, non-commercial use.

Note: Though it has been transcribed from a version used for broadcast, it may contain stutters, stammers, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

In order to ensure our ability to be good stewards of Adrian Rogers' messages, Love Worth Finding has reserved all rights to this content.

Except for your personal, non-commercial use and except for brief quotations in printed reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—without the prior permission of the publisher.

Copyright © 2022 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.

Transcripts are used by permission of the Rogers Family Trust.



The Day Death Died

SERMON REFERENCE: 1 Corinthians 15:45-58

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1989

Death is a fact. People die suddenly, instantaneously, and in strange ways. But as believers, we have hope in Jesus Christ, who beat death and rose from the grave. 1 Corinthians 15 gives a picture of the day death died.

This chapter first explains the sovereign majesty of our Redeemer.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

In Scripture, Jesus is referred to as the second Adam; He is also called “the first fruits” (1 Corinthians 15:23).

When He comes again, we will have a harvest. When Jesus Christ rose from the grave, He became the death of death; He sealed the deed.

Second, this passage describes the sacred mystery of the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

The Rapture is a sacred secret—no human wit, wisdom or scientific investigation could ever reveal it; only divine revelation. One day, the living saints will be brought up into Heaven, and the dead saints will be raised from the grave.

When Adam sinned against God, he died immediately in his spirit, progressively in his soul, and ultimately in his body. When the Lord redeems us, we are justified immediately in the spirit, sanctified progressively in the soul, and glorified ultimately in the body. We don’t know when the rapture will take place; we only know that we live in a world that is ripe for it.

Finally, this passage shows the steadfast ministry of the redeemed.

“...then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’” (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

Because Jesus is alive, we have victory and must walk in that victory by serving Christ.

Adrian Rogers says, “Jesus has been the death of death, so He takes the pain out of parting, the gloom out of the grave. He takes the strength out of sin and the sting out of death.”

Life Application

1 Corinthians 15:58 says, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” Until Jesus comes again, we should work to further His kingdom with stability, fervency, and expectancy. Be steadfast, immovable, and abound in the work of the Lord.



The Day Death Died

SERMON REFERENCE: 1 Corinthians 15:45-58

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1989

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) In today's message, we will learn about the victory that the Lord Jesus Christ has won over death.
- b) Death is a monster to be dealt with.
 - i) All around, people are dying; yet we do not want to think about death.
 - ii) We do not want to face death.
- c) Death is a fact.
 - i) People die suddenly, instantaneously, and in strange ways.
- d) Someone once said, "Life is a losing proposition; you'll never get out of it alive."
 - i) Today's message will prove that this saying is absolutely wrong.
- e) There are three things that we will look at in our Scripture today:
 - i) The sovereign majesty of our Redeemer.
 - ii) The sacred mystery of our rapture.
 - iii) The steadfast ministry of the redeemed.
- f) 1 Corinthians 15:45-58

2) THE SOVEREIGN MAJESTY OF OUR REDEEMER (1 Corinthians 15:20-47)

- a) Jesus Christ is King and Lord.
 - i) He has risen from the dead, and He is Lord.
 - ii) Jesus came out of that grave and became the death of death.
 - iii) When Jesus walked out of the grave, He did more than survive death.
 - (1) He decimated death.
 - (2) He destroyed death.
- b) He is called "the firstfruits" and "the last Adam."
 - i) 1 Corinthians 15:20
 - ii) 1 Corinthians 15:45
- c) 1 Corinthians 15:47
 - i) Jesus is called "the second man."
- d) 1 Corinthians 15:22
 - i) The first Adam was the Adam that married Eve.
 - ii) The last Adam is the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - iii) In the first man, we all fell.
 - iv) In the second man, we are all redeemed.
- e) Jesus is called "The firstfruits of them that slept."
 - i) 1 Corinthians 15:20
 - ii) In the Old Testament when there had been a harvest, the priest would go out into the field and find a sheaf of first-ripened grain.
 - (1) They would take it into the temple and have a ceremony called the Feast of the



Firstfruits.

- (2) They would take that sheaf of grain, wave it before the Lord, and then put it on the altar.
 - (a) This was thanksgiving to God and an act of faith that typified the harvest that God would give to them.
- iii) Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection.
 - (1) He has appeared in Heaven for us.
 - (2) Like His resurrection, so will be our resurrection.
- iv) When He comes again, we are going to have the harvest of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the firstfruits.
- f) Jesus Christ is sovereign over the grave.
 - i) Paul, who wrote First Corinthians, saw Jesus on the road to Damascus.
 - (1) Acts 9:3-6
 - ii) Paul talks about all of those who were eye witnesses of the resurrected Christ.
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 15:5-8
 - iii) What possible motivation could the apostles and witnesses have had for telling a lie if Jesus Christ were still in the grave?
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 15:14-15
 - (a) It all would have been a waste of time.
 - (b) They would have been false witnesses.
 - (c) They would have perjured themselves.
 - (2) When we read the way these men lived and what they said, then we know that they were not deceivers or mistaken.
 - (3) They earned martyrdom.
 - (a) Martyrs and hypocrites are not made of the same stuff.
 - (i) Men may live for a lie, some men may mistakenly die for a lie, but no man will willingly, knowingly die for a lie when they know the lie they are dying for is indeed a lie.
 - (b) One would think that these early apostles, some of whom lived for forty years after the fact, would have told the truth in order to save themselves.
 - (c) These men smiled at death because they knew that Jesus Christ had walked out of that grave.
- g) When Jesus died, He became the death of death.
- h) When He rose again from the grave, He sealed that deed.

3) THE SACRED MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

- a) What does Jesus' resurrection have to do with our resurrection?
 - i) We are the harvest, and He is the firstfruits.
- b) 1 Corinthians 15:51-53
 - i) "We shall not all sleep" in verse 51 means not everyone is going to die.
 - ii) Verse 51 begins with the word "Behold."
 - (1) It means "to pay attention."
 - iii) Paul calls it a mystery because it is a sacred secret.
 - (1) A mystery, in the Bible, is something that we could not figure out ourselves.



- (a) Human wit, wisdom, ingenuity, and scientific investigation would never show it to us.
- (2) It is a truth revealed by divine revelation.
- (3) It is a sacred secret that had been a secret for many years.
 - (a) It was not revealed to the angels or to Old Testament prophets.
- (4) The secret is that millions upon this Earth will one day go to Heaven without dying; and those who know the Lord Jesus Christ, who sleep in the grave, will be raised up.
 - (a) We call this the sacred mystery of the rapture.
- c) The word “rapture” is not found in the Bible.
 - i) It is a Latin word which means “to transport something from one place to another.”
 - ii) But the word “catching up” is used in the Bible, and Latin is just the way to describe that.
 - iii) In Hebrews 11, the rapture is called “the translation.”
 - iv) In 1 Corinthians 4, it is called “being caught up.”
 - v) This sacred secret means that one day, perhaps today, millions of people are going to be transported from this Earth into Heaven.
- d) The living saints will be changed in a moment, and the dead saints will be raised from the grave.
 - i) There is going to be a resurrection.
- e) God is not finished with us.
 - i) When we die, we go in the spirit immediately to Heaven, but the body goes to the grave to await the resurrection.
 - ii) When Adam sinned against God, he died immediately in his spirit, progressively in his soul, and ultimately in his body.
 - (1) When our Lord redeems us, He puts that in reverse.
 - (a) We are justified immediately in the spirit, sanctified progressively in the soul, and glorified ultimately in the body.
- f) God is not going to leave these bodies of ours in the grave.
 - i) One may believe that this is a little supernatural.
 - (1) The whole creation is supernatural.
 - (a) God made everything out of nothing; so He can raise us out of something.
 - ii) Acts 26:8
 - iii) 1 Corinthians 15:35-38
 - (1) When a seed is put in the ground, that seed has to die before it comes back to life.
 - (2) Every time a seed is put in the ground, it is a picture of the resurrection.
 - (a) A seed goes into the ground.
 - (b) It dies, is buried, and it rots.
 - (c) But out of that seed comes a new, glorious life.
 - (i) More glorious than the seed that went in the ground.
 - iv) What about a person whose body has been in the grave for two or three millenniums, and the body is disintegrated?
 - (1) It is not the individual particles that God is concerned about.
 - (a) Every few years we get a new body, as far as the particles are concerned.
 - (i) We don't have the same body we had ten years ago.
 - (ii) Our bodies keep changing, and each year it gets a little less than it was before.



1. But it is the same body.
 2. You are the same person you were as a child of six months old, yet there is not one particle that was in your six-month-old body that is in your body today.
- (2) There is something that makes us individuals, and it is DNA.
 - (a) In one cell is encoded all of the characteristics of that particular life.
 - (i) That is God's blueprint for an individual.
 - (b) God has a blueprint on every one of us.
 - (c) Psalm 139:16
 - (i) The author of this passage is talking about us in our mother's womb.
 - (ii) God has a book on everyone and gives us our DNA, our genetic code.
 1. He sees that person being developed in continuance.
 - (iii) We are unique individuals.
 - (3) God built into each of us a genetic code.
 - (a) When God gets ready to raise you up, He will not have to search for any particular particles.
 - (i) He is going to raise you, that person that is united around that genetic code that He has allowed to go into the grave.
 - (ii) We are coming out of the grave.
- g) When is the rapture going to take place?
- i) 1 Corinthians 15:52
 - (1) "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."
 - ii) Historically, what time is it on God's clock?
 - (1) There have been roughly 6,000 years of recorded history.
 - (a) "6" is the number of a man.
 - (2) 2 Peter 3:8
 - (3) Exiguus, a mathematician and philosopher, gave us the modern calendar in 532 AD.
 - (a) He calculated the birth of Jesus, but his calculations were wrong.
 - (b) According to his calendar, Jesus was born in 4 BC.
 - (4) If Jesus was born in 4 BC, then the year 2000 was actually 1997.
 - iii) We do not know when He is coming.
 - iv) From the time that Jesus went away to the time that He is to come again, He could have come at any moment.
 - (1) We are not waiting for some sign to be fulfilled.
 - (a) Signs may encourage our faith, but they do not prove that Jesus is near.
 - v) He could come at any time.
- h) The last days began at Pentecost.
- i) 1 John 2:18
 - (1) John said that, "it is the last time," over 2,000 years ago.
 - ii) The Second Coming of Jesus is always imminent.
 - iii) The early Christians looked for Jesus to come.
 - (1) Philippians 3:20
 - (2) 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10
 - (a) The early Christians 2,000 years ago were waiting for Jesus.
 - (3) James 5:8



- (4) Titus 2:13
- iv) It has always been, since Jesus went back to Heaven, the last days.
- i) We have an idea that we are living in the last part of the last days.
 - i) We are 2,000 years closer to the Second Coming of Jesus than they were in Paul's day.
- j) From the time Jesus ascended, people were remembering the message of the angels.
 - i) Acts 1:11
 - ii) So, we are watching and waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to come.
 - (1) He may come at any moment.

4) THE STEADFAST MINISTRY OF THE REDEEMED (1 Corinthians 15:54-58)

- a) 1 Corinthians 15:54-58
 - i) Paul is talking about the victory.
 - (1) We are to be living every day and every moment serving Christ in the light of that victory.
 - ii) Jesus Christ has conquered death.
 - (1) He has been the death of death.
 - (a) He has taken the pain out of parting and the gloom out of the grave.
 - (b) He has taken the strength out of sin and the sting out of death.
 - (c) He gives us a hope that is steadfast and sure, so that we can literally mock death.
 - (i) We can laugh at death.
- b) 1 Corinthians 15:55-56
 - i) The law makes sin sin; therefore, sin becomes a sting to us.
 - ii) But Jesus Christ pulled the sting from death.
 - (1) Jesus took that sting in His own body and removed it from death.
 - (2) He fulfilled the law for us; therefore, death holds no terrors for us.
 - (3) The sting of death was taken by Jesus, and death cannot hurt us.
- c) The rapture is when the living saints will be translated, and the dead saints will be raised.
- d) The two-fold anthem of the redeemed:
 - i) Those who are raptured and will never die will say, "O death, where is your sting?"
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 15:55
 - ii) Those who have come out of the grave are going to say, "O grave, where is your victory?"
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 15:55
 - iii) Then, together, we will say, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 15:57
- e) 1 Corinthians 15:58
 - i) We are to have stability.
 - (1) Be steadfast.
 - (a) We are living in a day where everything that is not nailed down is coming loose.
 - (2) Be unmovable.
 - ii) We are to have fervency.
 - (1) Go to work for Jesus.
 - (2) Occupy till He comes.
 - (3) Get your head out of the clouds of prophecy, and get your feet on the pavement of soul winning.



- (4) The great proof that we believe these things to be true is this: what are we doing to warn people to flee from the wrath to come?
 - iii) We are to have expectancy.
 - (1) It pays to serve Jesus; it pays every day.
- f) As Jesus' coming gets nearer, we should want to move one step higher:
 - i) In our love for the Lord.
 - ii) In our faith.
 - iii) In our faithfulness.
 - iv) In our stewardship.
 - v) In our soul winning.
- g) We should not want to just learn some facts about prophecy, but our hearts need to be burning with a zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- h) 1 John 2:28

5) CONCLUSION

- a) It is going to be too late one of these days to be a soul winner because the rapture will have come.
- b) It is going to be too late one of these days to be faithful to God's church because the rapture will have come.
- c) It is going to be too late one of these days to be a tither because the rapture will have come.
- d) What you are going to do for Jesus, you need to do now.
- e) Jesus walked out of that grave.
- f) He is there in His sovereign majesty.
- g) Jesus is coming soon.
 - i) That is the sacred mystery.
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 15:52
 - ii) Our steadfast ministry:
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 15:58
- h) We know that Jesus lives; do you live?
 - i) This question is not do you exist, but do you live?
 - (1) Are you saved?
- i) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- j) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



The Day Death Died

SERMON REFERENCE: 1 Corinthians 15:45-58

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1989

Would you take God's Word and find First Corinthians chapter 15 if you would. In a moment we're going to begin reading in verse 45. But, let me just say that we are talking today about the victory that the Lord Jesus Christ has won over death. The title of our Bible study this morning; "The Day Death Died."

Now death is a monster to be dealt with and with every tick of your watch, somewhere on planet Earth, a soul dies. [snap, snap, snap, snap, snap] People are dying. All around people are dying, and yet, we don't want to think about death. We don't want to face death. You mention death and people will change the subject like they're switching channels on television.

People die and they die in strange ways. Harold Lee Duncan was cutting his grass; his wife and children were watching. Suddenly he seized his left side, crumpled to the ground, and he was dead. A small, half inch piece of wire, no bigger in diameter than a pencil lead, had been flung by that power mower into his head, entered his brain, and he died instantaneously.

A fisherman, a true story, a fisherman in the Philippines was fishing in his boat. His name was Carlos Umbus. He yawned, stretched out and yawned. A fish jumped out of the water and into his throat, and he strangled before they could do anything for him. Yawning in a fishing boat. The next moment he is dead. Death is a fact and people die suddenly, instantaneously, and in strange ways.

Wasn't it Mark Twain who said, "Life is a losing proposition; you'll never get out of it alive?" He was wrong. He was wrong. And this message is set to prove that he was absolutely, totally wrong, very, very wrong.

There are three things I want us to see in the Scripture that we are going to read in just a moment, and I'll tell you what they are ahead of time. I want you to see the sovereign majesty of our Redeemer. I want you to see the sacred mystery of our rapture. And then I want you to see the steadfast ministry of the redeemed.

Now look if you will as we read this Scripture and see if you can find those things. First Corinthians and read with me now beginning in chapter 15 beginning in verse 45 through the end of the chapter, "And so it is written, 'The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening,' that is, a life-giving, 'spirit.' Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." That is, the first Adam came before Jesus. "And afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man," the second Adam, "is the Lord from Heaven. And as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are Heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show 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 trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus



Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Now think for just a moment about **the sovereign majesty of our Redeemer**. Why is He King? Why is He Lord? He has risen from the dead and He is Lord. Jesus came out of that grave and Jesus became the death of death. Now listen to me. When Jesus walked out of that grave He did more than survive death, are you listening? He decimated death. He didn't survive death; He destroyed death. He is called, “The First Fruits,” and He is called, “The last Adam.” Look if you will, in the Scripture again here in First Corinthians 15 verse 47. Look at it, “The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from Heaven.” He is called, “the second man,” or again look over in First Corinthians 15 verse 22 if you will. He is called, “The last Adam.” “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” He is, “The last Adam.” The first Adam was the Adam that married Eve, and the last Adam is the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, in the first man we all fell. In the second man we're all redeemed.

I read somewhere of some men who were climbing the Matterhorn, that majestic mountain in Switzerland and there were four of them together. There were two guides and two tourists. First of all, there was a guide, then there was a tourist, then there was a guide, and then there was a tourist. And they were going up that steep, icy slope and they were all tied together. Now, the last man, tied to the rope was a tourist and he put his foot down on the ice and he slipped and he swung over the side. When he did he was tied to the second man who was the next guide who was a skilled Alpine climber, but he was dragged over. When he went over he pulled the next man over. Now the lead guide felt the tug on the rope, he knew what was happening, and he dug his cleats in and put his pickax into the ice and bulged his muscles and held for all he could hold, and these other three men were dangling, but they finally got their feet back on and all four of them went up the mountain together. Now folks, I want to tell you that first man who slipped was Adam, but that last man who held was Jesus. We're all tied together, but thank God, thank God for that last man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has survived for us.

Now, not only is Jesus in this passage of Scripture called, “The second Adam,” or the, “second man from Heaven,” but in First Corinthians 15:20 He is also called, “The first fruits of them that slept.” In the Old Testament when they were having a harvest the priest would go out in the field and they would find a sheaf of first ripened grain. They would take that into the temple and they would have a real ceremony called, the Feast of the First Fruits, and they would take that sheaf of grain and they would wave it before the Lord and then put it on the altar. What it was was thanksgiving to God and an act of faith saying, “Lord, this typifies the harvest that You're going to give us.” Now Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection. He, my friend, has appeared in Heaven for us, and like His resurrection, will be our resurrection. When He comes again we're going to have the harvest, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the first fruits.

“Adrian, are you sure that Jesus Christ is sovereign over the grave? Are you sure that He came out of that grave?” Absolutely. Do you know who wrote this 15th chapter of First Corinthians? It was Paul, and Paul saw the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus, and look in verse 8 if you will. He's talking about all of those who were eye witnesses. And the Bible says, well, let's go to First Corinthians 15 verse 5 through 8, “And He was seen of Cephas,” that's his name is Peter, “then of the twelve. And after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present hour, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then, of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as one born out of due time.” Now what the apostle Paul is saying is, “Look, this is not a fairy tale. We saw Him. This is an eye witness account.”

Now, I want to ask you a question. What possible motivation could the apostle Paul have for telling



a lie? What possible motivation could those apostles and those witnesses have for telling a lie if Jesus Christ was still in that grave? If He were still in that grave that would mean that He had lied to them, that He had betrayed them, and besides that, what possible thing could they gain by telling a lie and saying, "Yes, we saw Him," when they did not? Look in First Corinthians 15 verses 14 and 15 of this same thing. He says, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." That is, "It's all a colossal waste of time if He's still in that grave." "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ." Now, listen, it's not that they would have been mistaken; they would have been false witnesses. They would have perjured themselves. They would have been liars.

Now you read the way these men lived, read what they said, and answer this question: do you believe that the apostle Paul was a knave? Do you believe that Simon Peter was a liar? Do you believe that these people were con artists? You see, it's not that they were deceivers, it's not that they were merely mistaken. Well you say, "Maybe they were, maybe they were trying to earn something." Friend, do you know what they earned? Martyrdom. Martyrs and hypocrites are not made of the same stuff. Men may live for a lie, some men may die for a lie, but how many people will knowingly die for a lie? I mean when they know that the lie they're dying for is indeed a lie. But now, if these apostles had not seen the Lord Jesus Christ, why would they say that they had seen Him, why would they die for a lie? Hypocrites and martyrs are not made of the same stuff.

I was reading Charles Colson. You know, Charles Colson was one of President Nixon's closest advisers in the Watergate scandal. Charles Colson later became a Christian. And Charles Colson told about how Watergate just unraveled. He said, "Ehrlichman called him one night at his house and said, 'There's been a break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters,' and he said he knew then we had trouble in the White House. But he said several weeks later, he said that John Dean walked into the White House and they were sitting there, came into the oval office, and John Dean said to the President, 'Mr. President, there is a cancer growing on the presidency.' So they put their heads together to see how they could control it, what they could do.

But they said that John Dean began to get nervous and he walked out of there and he got a lawyer, began to talk to a lawyer. And then in a few days he came to the prosecutors and in order to protect himself he said, 'If you will give me immunity, I'll tell you what has happened,' and he turned state's evidence. And then, he said the whole thing began to fall, the whole thing began to cave in. They could not keep the lie a lie. 'Why,' he said, 'we were the twelve most powerful men in the world there in that office and he said we could not keep a lie going for three weeks.' Why? Because John Dean said, "I'm not going to go down with this lie. I'm not going to suffer for a lie," so he told the truth in order to save his own hide.

Don't you think these early apostles, some of them who lived for forty years after that, would have told the truth in order to save their own skins? Of course they would. Listen folks, men may live for a lie, they may mistakenly die for a lie, but they will not knowingly, willingly die for a lie! But these men smiled at death because they knew that Jesus Christ had walked out of that grave. Friend listen, this is our resurrected Savior. When Jesus died, He became the death of death! When He rose again from the grave He sealed that deed.

Now here's the second thing I want you to see. Not only the sovereign majesty of the Redeemer, but it follows as night follows day you're going to see **the sacred mystery of the rapture**. What does His resurrection have to do with our resurrection? Well, our resurrection, we are the harvest, He is the



first fruits, so Paul follows this up a little bit, if you will, look in First Corinthians 15 verse 51 through 53. He says, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep," that is, not everybody is going to die, "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Sounds like a motto we could have in the church nursery. "We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed. Behold, I show 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 trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Now, notice what he says, "Behold, I show you a mystery." Now how does that sentence begin? "Behold." It means pay attention. Are you paying attention? The apostle Paul is telling you to pay attention. "Behold, I show you a mystery."

Now why does he call it a mystery? Well, it's a sacred secret. A mystery in the Bible is something that you could not figure out yourself. Human wit, wisdom, and ingenuity, scientific investigation would never show it to you. It is a truth revealed by divine revelation. And this is a mystery, it is a sacred secret that had been a secret for many years. It was not revealed to the angels. It was not revealed to the Old Testament prophets. It was a mystery. Not revealed to Isaiah, to Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, they didn't know about this mystery until in the last days God revealed this mystery. The secret is out and what is the secret? Millions upon this earth will one day go to Heaven without dying and those who know the Lord Jesus Christ, who sleep in the grave, will be raised up. We call this the sacred mystery of the rapture.

Now the word rapture is not found in the Bible. It's a Latin word which means to transport something from one place to another, but the word catching up is used in the Bible and Latin is just the way to describe that. In Hebrews chapter 11 verse 5, this thing that we call the rapture is called the translation. So what is this sacred secret? Well, it means that one day, perhaps today, millions of people are going to be transported from this earth into Heaven.

Hal Lindsey, a popular writer, put it this way. He says, how it might be. He said, "There I was, driving down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went crazy, cars going in all directions and not one of them had a driver. I mean it was wild. I think we've got an invasion from outer space.

Another scenario. It was the last quarter of the championship game and the other side was ahead. Our boys had the ball. We made a touchdown and tied it up. The crowd went crazy. Only one minute to go and they fumbled. Our man recovered. He was about a yard from the goal when zap, completely gone, just like that.

Another scenario. It was puzzling, very puzzling. I was teaching my course in the Philosophy of Religion when all of a sudden three of my students vanished. They simply vanished. They were quite argumentative, always trying to prove their point from the Bible. No great loss to this class however. I find this disappearance very difficult to understand.

Another scenario. As an official spokesman for the United Nations I wish to inform all of the peace loving people of the world that we're making every human effort to assist those nations whose leaders have disappeared. We have issued a general Declaration of Condemnation in the General Assembly concerning these heads of states. Their irresponsibility is shocking.

Here's another scenario. My dear friends in the congregation; bless you for coming to church today. I know that many of you have lost loved ones in this unusual disappearance of so many people; however, I believe that God's judgment has come upon them for their continual dissention and quarreling with the great advances of the church in our century. Now that the reactionaries are removed we can make progress toward our great and glorious goal of uniting all mankind into a brotherhood of reconciliation



and understanding." Well friend, one of these days they're going to have to explain the fact that we are not here; we're gone. Now the living saints will be changed in a moment and the dead saints will be raised from the grave. There is going to be a resurrection.

You see, God is not finished with us. When we die we go in the spirit immediately to Heaven, but the body goes to the grave to await the resurrection. When Adam sinned against God, he died immediately in his spirit, progressively in his soul, and ultimately in his body. When our Lord redeems us, He puts that in reverse. We're justified immediately in the spirit, sanctified progressively in the soul, and glorified ultimately in the body.

God is not going to leave these bodies of ours in the grave. We are coming out of that grave. You say, "Adrian, do you really believe that?" Yes, I really believe that. You say, "Isn't that a little supernatural?" That's it; you've got it. That's it. The whole creation is supernatural. God made everything out of nothing. You think He can't raise me out of something? Of course He can, of course He will. That's the reason the apostle Paul said to an incredulous king whose name was Agrippa in Acts chapter 26 and verse 8, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" In this chapter Paul gives an illustration of it. Look if you will in chapter 15 verse 35 through 38, "But some man will say 'How are the dead raised up?'" I mean, good night, how's this going to happen? "And with what body do they come?' Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." When you put a seed in the ground that seed has to die before it comes back to life. "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body."

Now the apostle Paul says, "Why should you marvel at the resurrection? Every time you put a seed in the ground you have a picture of the resurrection." A seed goes into the ground, it is buried, it dies, it rots, but out of that seed comes new, glorious life, more glorious than the seed that went in the ground. But you say, "Now wait a minute Adrian, what about a person whose body has been in the grave for two or three millenniums? I mean, his body is disintegrated; how can God raise it up? I mean where are all of the particles?" Well folks, you need to understand that it's not the individual particles that God is concerned about. You see every few years we get a new body in so far as the particles are concerned. We don't have the same body we had ten years ago unfortunately. Our body keeps changing and each year it gets a little less than it was before. Well, you say, "Then it's not the same body?" Of course it's the same body. I'm the same person I was when I was a child of six months old, and yet there is not one particle that was in my six month old body that's in my body today. The first time I crossed the Mississippi River was in 1963. I drove across the Mississippi River. There's not one drop of water in that river today that was in it when I crossed it in 1963, but it's the same river.

Now, what is our Lord going to raise up? Well, He's going to raise up me. Not this particular hide, hair, blood, bone, and corpuscle, but it is me. You say, "What is the difference?" Well, the difference is what those people who are trying to clone people now have discovered. There is something that makes me me and you you and its DNA. And if they can take a mammal, a sheep and reproduce a mammal out of one cell, how have they done that? Well in that cell is encoded all of the characteristics of that particular life. And that is God's blueprint, that is God's schematic for an individual. That is what makes you you, that encoding that God has put into you. Now God has a blueprint on every one of us.

Let me give you a wonderful verse. Psalm 139 and verse 16, "Thine eyes," listen to this, "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect," he's talking about us in our mother's womb, "and in Thy book," listen to this, "in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." That's an incredible verse. God had a book on me and God said that is an



Adrian Rogers, that is his DNA, that is his genetic code. And God saw that being developed in continuance. And that unique individual is me. You are a unique individual. God built into you a genetic code and when God gets ready to raise you up, He's not going to have to fish around for any particular particles. He is going to raise you, that person that is united around that genetic code that He has allowed to go into the grave. We are coming out of that grave, hallelujah! It is going to be wonderful.

Now, when is this rapture going to take place? When? Well, I don't know, but let me tell you something. He says it's going to take place in First Corinthians 15 verse 52, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Now what time is it historically, and we're going to talk about this in our series on prophecy, but what time is it on God's clock, historically? There have been now 6,000 recorded years of human history. What is six in the Bible, and we'll talk about this in our series on prophecy? Six is the number of a man. There have been 6,000 years of recorded history. Second Peter 3:8, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years; a thousand years as one day."

Now, Exiguus, who was a philosopher and a mathematician, was the man who gave us our modern calendar. He did that in A.D. 532. And he figured the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and they've gone back and recalculated and they've found out that he set the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ wrong. Jesus was literally born in 4 B.C. So you know what that means? If Jesus was born in 4 B.C., do you know when the year 2000 begins? 1997. Now, you say, "Well Adrian, are you saying that Jesus is coming back this year?" Yes! Perhaps! We don't know when He's coming, but it's very interesting, it's very interesting that, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day." We are on the threshold of a new millennium and folks, I am telling you, you talk about signs in the sky. You talk about epics that would make us think that we are living in cataclysmic days; these are pregnant days to say the least.

But, now here's the point. From the time that Jesus went away to the time that He is come again, He could have come at any moment. We are not waiting for some sign to be fulfilled. Those things may encourage our faith in a way, but they don't prove that Jesus is near. He could have come at any time. You say, "Well Pastor, aren't we living in the last days?" Well the last days began at Pentecost. First John 2 verse 18, "Little children, it is the last time, it is the last time." John said that 2000 years ago. The Second Coming of Jesus is always imminent. The early Christians looked for Jesus to come. Philippians 3 verse 20 Paul said, "For our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." He told those in Thessalonica in First Thessalonians 1 verses 9 and 10. He said, "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. And to wait for His Son from Heaven." Those early Christians 2000 years ago were waiting for Jesus. The apostle James said in James chapter 5 and verse 8. "Stablish your hearts; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Paul told Titus in Titus 2 verse 13 we are to be, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ." Folks, what am I saying? I am saying that Jesus may come before I finish this message.

Now we have an idea we're living in the last part of the last days, surely, and we're 2000 years closer to the Second Coming of Jesus than they were in Paul's day, but I'm telling you, from the time that He went up people were remembering the message of those angels which said in Acts 1:11, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing thus into Heaven. This same Jesus which is taken up from you shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven." So we're watching and waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to come, and He may come at any moment.

So, what have we talked about? We've talked about the sovereign majesty of our Lord. He rose from the dead and became the death of death. And then we've talked, not only about the sovereign majesty



of the Redeemer, but the sacred mystery of the rapture. And now let's move to the third and final thing.

And the third and final thing, folks, is **the steadfast ministry of the redeemed**. What does all of that mean to us? Well, notice in First Corinthians 15 verse 54 through 58. He begins it with the word so, now he's building to a point. He is not trying to make better theologians out of us, he trying to make better Christians out of us. So, listen to it now, "So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore," underscore that, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Now, what's he talking about? He's talking about the victory and you and I are to be living every day, every moment, serving Christ in the light of that victory. What he is saying is that Jesus Christ has conquered death. Jesus has been the death of death so He takes the pain out of parting, the gloom out of the grave. He takes the strength out of sin and the sting out of death, and He gives us a hope that is steadfast and sure so that we can literally mock death. We can ridicule death. We can laugh at death. Notice what he says in First Corinthians 15 verses 55 and 56, "O death, where is thy sting?" Well, he says, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." The laws make sin sin and so therefore, sin becomes a sting to us, but Jesus Christ pulled the sting from death. Jesus took that sting in His own body and removed it from death. He fulfilled the law for us and therefore death holds no terrors for us.

If I can illustrate this way; a woman had her two children in a garden and they were enjoying a beautiful day, and a big bee lit on the little boy and stung him and the little boy began to cry and there came that swollen place where that bee had stung the little boy. And then the bee began to buzz around the little girl. The little girl was frightened to death and she was terrified. By this time the little boy had quietened down, and the mother said, "Darling," to the little girl, "don't be afraid. Come over here and let me show you something. Look real closely at brother's arm. Do you see the stinger that's there? When that bee stung little brother he left his stinger. Did you know that a bee does that? He can't sting but one time. Do you know that? And the bee left his stinger in little brother. Do you see it there?" She said, "Now sweetheart, that bee can't hurt you because he left his stinger in little brother. He may buzz, he may frighten you, but he cannot hurt you."

Now friend, I want to tell you something. The sting of death was taken by Jesus and death cannot hurt you. Death may frighten you, but I want to say that Jesus has taken the sting out of death, and Jesus has taken the gloom out of the grave and you have, remember we said the rapture was what? The living saints will be translated and the dead saints will be raised. Now notice the two-fold anthem of the redeemed where the apostle Paul here is illustrating it. When Jesus comes at the rapture you and I are going to look back at the grave and at death and we're going to mock them, and those of us who have been raptured and we never die, we're going to say. First Corinthians 15 verses 55 through 57, "O death, where is your sting," and those who have come out of the grave are going to say, "O grave, where is your victory." And then together we're going to say, "Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen?

Now listen, come to the bottom line of all of this. There is the sovereign majesty of the Redeemer, there is the sacred mystery of the rapture, and then there's the steadfast ministry of the saints. Now I'm saying it all to bring you to this point. Look again where he says in First Corinthians 15 verse 58, I believe, therefore, look at it, "Therefore, therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always



abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." You are to have stability; be steadfast. Don't get blown around; stay in there. We're living in a day where everything that's not nailed down is coming loose. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast." Have stability, be unmovable. And then have fervency, "Always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Now, if you believe that Jesus Christ is coming again, and you do, what should you do? Go to work for Jesus. Occupy till He comes. Get your heads out of the clouds of prophecy and get your feet on the pavement of soul winning. And you know the great proof that you believe these things to be true is what are you doing to warn men and women, boys and girls, to flee from the wrath to come? There needs to be stability. There needs to be fervency. First Corinthians 15:58 says, "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." And then there needs to be expectancy. "For you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." It pays to serve Jesus, it pays every day.

We are beginning a program called. One Step Higher. "Why Pastor, why are you preaching on prophecy while we're having a program called One Step Higher?" Well, it's very simple. As Jesus' coming gets nearer I want to move one step higher. I want to love the Lord more, I want to go one step higher in my faith, I want to go one step higher in my faithfulness, I want to go one step higher in my stewardship, I want to go one step higher in my soul winning, I want to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. I don't want to just get some facts about prophecy down on some paper in a notebook. I want my heart to be burning with a zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to go out gloriously, don't you? I mean, the Bible says in First John 2:28, "Abide in Him, that when He shall appear we shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming." I want to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

It's going to be too late folks one of these days to be a soul winner because the rapture will have come. It's going to be too late one of these days to be faithful to God's church because the rapture will have come. It's going to be too late one of these days to be a tither because the rapture will have come. What you're going to do for Jesus you need to do now. Jesus walked out of that grave. He is there in His sovereign majesty. Jesus is coming soon; that is the sacred mystery, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Therefore, what is our steadfast ministry? "Therefore, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Now, I'm asking you, to say before God, in the light of what Jesus did at Calvary and in that empty tomb, and in the light of His soon coming, that by God's grace we will have all, I don't care where we are in our spiritual life, all of us will have moved up one step higher. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Every head bowed, every eye closed. Now we know that Jesus lives. Here's the question; do you live? I didn't say do you exist; do you live? Are you saved? Do you know that you're saved? Well, you can be saved right now. God will save you if you'll trust Him. And I want you to pray this prayer after me out of your heart right now, "Dear God, I know that You love me and I know Lord Jesus that You want to save me. You died to save me. Lord Jesus, I need to be saved. I want to be saved. I want my sins forgiven. I want to be ready when I die, or when You come, to meet You. Forgive my sin. Cleanse my life. Take control of my life. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be. And Lord Jesus, help me never to be ashamed of You because You died for me. In Your name I pray, Amen.



PO Box 38300 | Memphis TN 38183-0300 | (901)382-7900