

# Resurrection Hope and Our Everyday Work

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## 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

<sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you **a mystery**. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,  
<sup>52</sup> 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.

<sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must **put on imperishability**,  
and this mortal body must **put on immortality**.

<sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on imperishability,  
and the mortal puts on immortality,  
then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

***“Death is swallowed up in victory.”***

<sup>55</sup> *“O death, where is your victory?*

*O death, where is your sting?”*

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

<sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Messiah!

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my **beloved brothers and sisters**,  
be **steadfast, immovable**,  
always **abounding** in the **work of the Lord**,  
**knowing** that **in the Lord** your **labor** is **not in vain**.

## Colossians 3:17, 23-24

<sup>17</sup> And everything you do, whatever it is in **word** or **work**, do **everything in the name of Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ...

<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, **work from your self** (soul), as **for the Lord** and not for people,

<sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the **inheritance** as reward. You are **serving the Lord Messiah**.

## Acts 20:34-35

<sup>34</sup> “You yourselves know that **these hands** ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. <sup>35</sup> In all things I have shown you that **by working hard in this way we must help the weak** and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, *‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’*”

## Ephesians 2:8-10

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should **walk in them**.

## Isaiah 65:17, 23

<sup>17</sup> “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. ...

<sup>23</sup> **They shall not labor in vain** or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them.”

## Genesis 2:15

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the human and put him in the garden of Eden to **work** it and **protect** it.

## **Ecclesiastes 2:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils under the sun?

<sup>23</sup> For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

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### **Fractured Work in a Broken World**

Work is good, but often a center of frustration and fear. We live in a work-a-day world.

Work consumes/invests life. In our work we exchange our life (time, energy, ability, strength, creativity, intelligence) for things we need or desire – money, other things.

But when work goes wrong, many things collapse. Many struggle to get work. Career shifts, economic downturns, underemployment, etc. Some perennially struggle with joblessness. Many jobs are frustrating, tedious, pointless. Some jobs/careers are all-consuming, demanding, excluding important parts of life. Work life is vulnerable to power plays, greed, worry, dishonesty, sloth, workaholism, ambition, hurting others.

Some work is challenging but not paid with money: keeping a home, parenting kids, building a marriage, being a student, serving in a community, building a ministry.

In the ancient world, the class structure from leisured aristocracy to vast slavery devalued hard work as degrading. People often caught in unbending structures.

### **Resurrection of Jesus and Putting Life Back Together**

A striking element of Paul's discussion of resurrection life in 1Cor 15 is that it ends with the assurance that life has a firm foundation and our work is not meaningless.

Christians lived with all the struggles of work. Paul worked as tentmaker. Slaves became Christians. What does a God/Gospel-centered life look like in the world.

Resurrection connects our present physical life to ultimate immortal life. This life matters morally and substantively. This body/life is not rejected but added to and transformed. The work/life you create now matters in who you are eternally. God as creator brings about new creation in which the present is incorporated / healed.

Because it is Jesus' resurrection, it transforms our vision of power, wealth, and success. Jesus lived and manifested God's power, glory, and love at the very bottom of the world's hierarchy of power. His resurrection shows what is real and what lasts.

All parts of life are united – physical work, worship, creativity, service, forced labor – in the whole person, God's beloved creature, sharing in the Messiah, doing everything as part of a whole life serving a loving, self-giving Lord. Unity from the inside out.

### **Taking Responsibility to Live the Resurrection**

God has always intended his creatures to be workers, and for that labor not to be in vain. The thorns, thistles and pains that beset our work flow from our broken relationship with God, not from God's desire. Now God gives his Spirit – the first fruit of resurrection life and says, You can do things differently, and I will help you.

We are created for good works. There is always so much to do. But it is for each of us and all together a process of learning, discernment, practice in our particular setting. We look at Jesus again and again. We look at our lives, our opportunities, our temptations. We act, live, change, build toward God's kingdom seen in Jesus. We take chances, live boldly, knowing our labor is never in vain in the Lord.