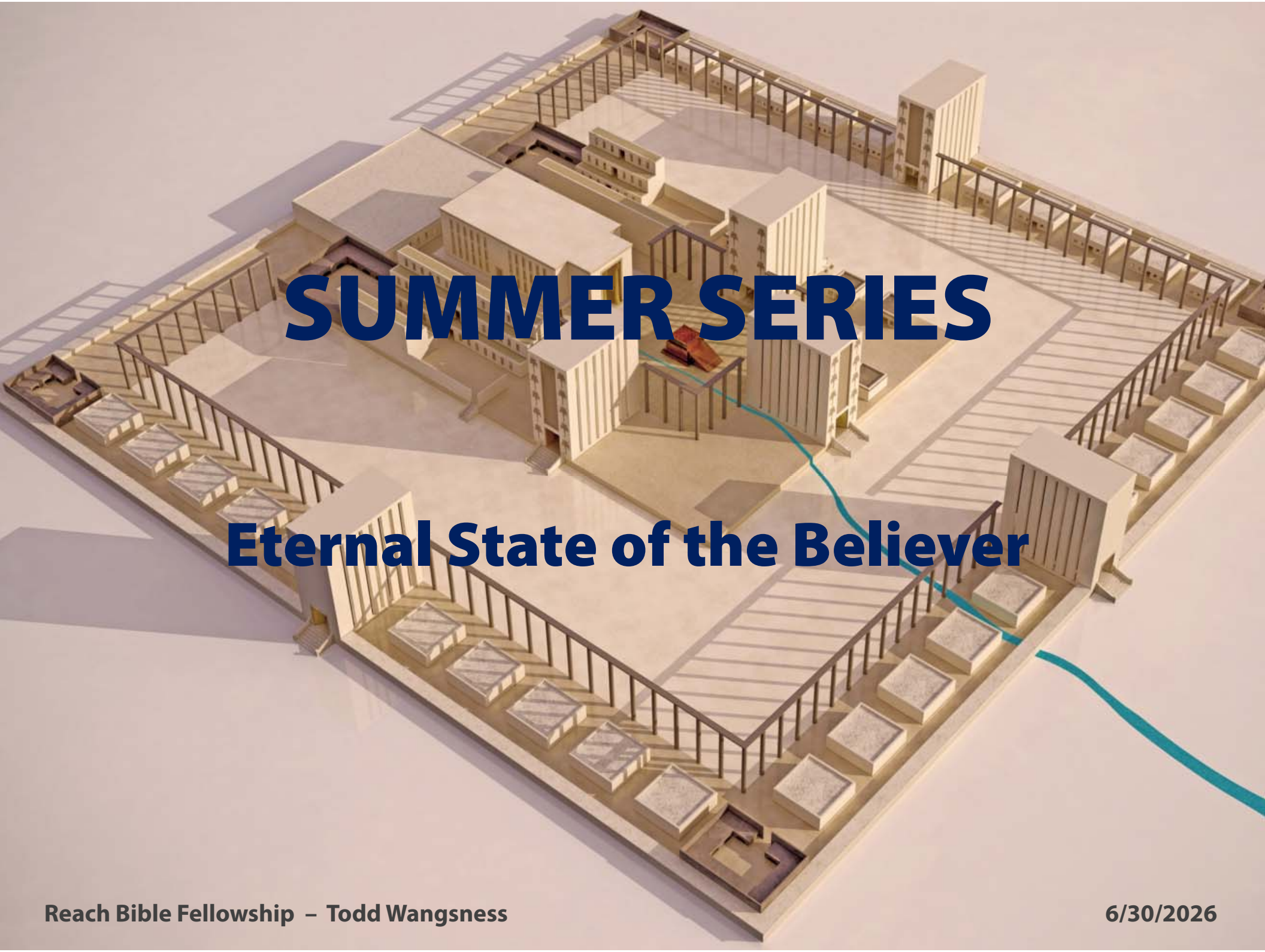


SUMMER SERIES

Eternal State of the Believer

Reach Bible Fellowship – Todd Wangsness

6/30/2026

Summer Series: Eternal State of the Believer

Overview

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul begins with a gentle yet powerful picture from nature. What we sow is not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat. It must fall into the ground and "die" before it can burst forth in new, God-given life. In the same way, our natural bodies are like seeds: perishable, humble vessels suited to this present age. Yet they carry within them the promise of something far greater.

Our current bodies – fearfully and wonderfully made as they are – belong to the order of the first Adam: formed from dust, subject to decay, weakness, dishonor, and the limitations of flesh and blood. They are perfectly adapted to this creation but wholly unsuited, in their present form, to inherit the kingdom of God.

In contrast stands the last Adam, Christ, the Heavenly Man. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so we shall bear the image of the Heavenly Man (v. 49). This is no disembodied existence; it is a real, tangible resurrection body, yet transformed and perfected:

- **Incorruptible:** No longer subject to aging, disease, or death
- **Glorious:** Radiant with honor and beauty befitting the presence of God
- **Powerful:** Freed from frailty, endowed with strength and vitality
- **Spiritual:** Fully animated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, responsive to heavenly realities rather than earthly appetites

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1Cor 15:52 … in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

'*metamorphoō*': to transform (literally or figuratively, "metamorphous"): change, transfigure, transform.





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A Few Questions We All Have

1. What will we look like?
2. What will it be like to be free from aging, sickness, and fatigue?
3. What will it be like to be 'free from sin'?
4. What capabilities will we have?
5. Will we retain familial relationships?
6. What will we do? What authority will we have?
7. How will it compare to the best this life has to offer?

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1. What will we look like?

"It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare.

All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.

Nations, cultures, arts, civilization – these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."

-- C.S. Lewis (Weight of Glory)

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1. What will we look like? (cont.)

- **1 Corinthians 15 provides the most comprehensive description of our glorified, heavenly bodies found anywhere in the bible**
  - ***1 Cor 15:48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.***
  - ***1 Cor 15:42-44 The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.***
- **When Paul uses the term 'spiritual body', he is not talking about a body made of spirit, or an incorporeal body**
  - **Body means corporeal: flesh and bones**
  - **The word spiritual here is an adjective describing body, not negating its meaning**

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1. What will we look like? (cont.)

- **Judging from Christ's resurrection body, a spiritual body appears most of the time to look and act like a regular physical body, with the exception that it will have powers of a metaphysical nature**
- **John states that we will look like Jesus**
  - ***1 Joh 1:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.***
- **Using the body of Jesus as our example, He was:**
  - **Recognizable**
  - **Able to eat**
  - **Touchable with flesh and bones**

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2. What will it be like to be free from aging, sickness, and fatigue?

- In our glorified state, freedom from aging, sickness, and fatigue will bring profound, constant vitality, effortless strength, and overflowing joy
- The Bible describes this transformation as moving from perishable weakness to imperishable power and glory … something far beyond our current experience, where bodies align perfectly with redeemed spirits in God's presence
- Back to 1 Corinthians 15 (verses 42-44, 52-54):
  - Sown in **corruption** (decay, aging) → Raised in **incorruption** (imperishable, ageless)
  - Sown in **dishonor** (weakness, sickness, shame) → Raised in **glory**
  - Sown in **weakness** (fatigue, frailty) → Raised in **power**
  - Sown a **natural body** → Raised a **spiritual body**

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2. What will it be like to be free from aging, sickness, and fatigue? (cont.)

- **Boundless energy and strength without fatigue**
  - No more exhaustion after work, exercise, or daily tasks
  - You'll move with perpetual vitality, never tiring
  - Passages about renewed strength (like Isaiah 40:31's "they shall run and not be weary") point to this eternal reality
- **Complete freedom from pain, sickness, and aging**
  - No aches, inflammation, disease, or degeneration
  - Bodies will be "impassible" (incapable of suffering)
  - The constant low-level (or acute) burdens of headaches, joint pain, illness, or frailty will vanish entirely
  - Every breath, movement, and sensation will feel whole, pure, and pleasurable in a sinless creation
- **Youthful vigor and ageless perfection**
  - No wrinkles, stiffness, slowing down, or loss of abilities
  - You'll feel at the peak of health and capability … better than the best day you've ever had on earth … eternally!

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3. What will it be like to be 'free from sin'?

- **Being "free from sin" in the glorified state will mean complete liberation from sin's presence, power, penalty, and even the desire for it … resulting in perfect holiness, unhindered intimacy with God, and unimaginable joy!**
- **How It Will Feel and What It Will Be Like**
  - **Pure, unbroken fellowship with God: Sin no longer separates or hinders. You'll experience full, face-to-face intimacy with the Lord and others without barriers, fear, or self-consciousness. Worship, love, and joy will flow naturally and infinitely.**
  - **Freedom to be your truest, best self: Free will remains, but it will be sanctified … you'll freely choose only what is good, true, noble, and lovely (Philippians 4:8). Like Jesus (who cannot sin yet is perfectly free), or God Himself, your desires will be wholly righteous. There will be no temptation, devil, or sinful nature to lure you. Choices will lead only to greater joy and creativity in serving and exploring God's creation.**

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3. What will it be like to be 'free from sin'? (cont.)

- **Perfect peace and rest from internal conflict:** No more wrestling with temptation, guilt, shame, or failure. The divided heart (wanting to do good but struggling with sin … Romans 7) ends. Every thought, desire, and action will align perfectly with God's will, bringing effortless obedience and deep satisfaction.
- **Overflowing joy without regret or sorrow:** No more hurting others, self-sabotage, or consequences of sin. Relationships will be pure, love unselfish, and pleasures holy. The relief of this freedom … after a lifetime (or eternity past in struggle) under sin's weight … will amplify eternal happiness. Joy will increase as you grow in knowledge and experience of God.
- **Moral perfection as natural as breathing:** Holiness won't feel restrictive or boring … it will be liberating and delightful. You'll be "unable to sin" not by force, but because your renewed nature makes sin foreign and undesirable, just as it is for Christ.

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4. What capabilities will we have?

- As glorified beings, we will have imperishable, powerful, glorious, and spiritually empowered bodies suited for eternal life in the new creation … vastly superior to our current natural, perishable state
- Key capabilities and contrasts
  - **Imperishable and Immortal:** No aging, decay, sickness, injury, or death. Our current bodies break down and die; glorified bodies last eternally, immune to corruption
  - **Powerful and Strong:** No weakness or fatigue. We'll have boundless energy and strength for any activity. Current limitations (tiredness, frailty, physical constraints) are replaced by perpetual vitality and power
  - **Free from Suffering:** Incapable of pain, tears, or harm. No disease, hunger or thirst as necessities, extreme temperatures, or injury. Jesus ate after resurrection but didn't need to.

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4. What capabilities will we have? (cont.)

- **Glorious and Honorable:** Radiant, pure, and without shame. Our bodies will reflect God's glory (possibly with brightness or splendor, like Jesus at the Transfiguration). Current dishonor from sin, aging, or deformity gives way to perfect beauty and dignity.
- **Spiritual Yet Physical:** A real, touchable body of flesh and bones (like Jesus Luke 24:39), fully controlled by the Holy Spirit. It's not ghostly but elevated … perfectly suited for the spiritual realm while remaining corporeal. We'll recognize each other and interact physically.
- **Enhanced Mobility and Agility:** Likely freedom from current spatial limits. Jesus appeared/disappeared, passed through locked doors, and ascended. Glorified bodies may allow instantaneous travel, passing through barriers, or unrestricted movement (agility where the body perfectly obeys the will).

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5. Will we retain familial relationships?

- **The bible indicates that earthly family structures like marriage will not continue in the same form in the resurrected, glorified state, but believers will recognize and enjoy fellowship with loved ones in a perfected way as part of God's eternal family**
- **There will be no "marriage" in heaven … The purpose of earthly marriage, to reflect Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32), procreate, and provide companionship, will have been fulfilled**
  - ***Mat 22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven***
- **The bible indicates that the relationships in heaven will *far transcend* the intimacy we have with our human spouses (and other family members)**
  - ***Eph 5:26-32 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, … 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish ... 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. … 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.***

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6. What will we do? What authority will we have?

- **In the original creation, unfallen humanity was already "glorious", physically, spiritually, and relationally, though mortal and capable of falling. A glorified man will realize this ideal, although perfected and amplified.**
- **Psalms 8 highlights our potential**
  - ***Psa 8:4-8 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.***

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6. What will we do? What authority will we have? (cont.)

- **"A little lower than the angels/heavenly beings"**
  - Humanity is not the highest creature in absolute terms (angels are powerful spirit beings without the limitations of flesh)
  - Yet humans are <u>only slightly lower</u>, made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27) with unique capacities for relationship with God, moral reasoning, creativity, and rule
  - This ultimately positions redeemed/glorified humanity *far* above angels
- **Crowned with glory and honor**
  - "Glory" (***kabod***) conveys weight, splendor, radiance, and the visible manifestation of God's presence/character
  - "Honor" (***hadar***) suggests majesty, dignity, and beauty
  - God "crowns" humanity like a king, bestowing royal status
  - This echoes Genesis 1:26-28, where humans receive dominion over creation as God's vice-regents

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6. What will we do? What authority will we have? (cont.)

A. Restored and Elevated Dominion

- Full authority under Christ over the renewed creation
- No more futility, curse, or rebellion from nature
- Believers will "reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6), participating in righteous rule

B. Crowned with Divine Glory and Honor

- Radiance and moral/spiritual excellence reflecting God's character perfectly (no more sin or shame)
- Dignity as adopted sons/heirs, sharing in Christ's glory (Romans 8:17-30; John 17:22)
- A visible, tangible "weight" of splendor, like the transfigured Jesus or the saints in Revelation

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6. What will we do? What authority will we have? (cont.)

C. Elevated Above Angels and Uniquely Honored

- Glorified humans retain humanity (embodied, relational) but are exalted
- Angels serve heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14) and will be "judged" or governed by saints in some sense
- Humanity's unique image-bearing role reaches fulfillment

D. Incarnational and Redemptive

- Glory comes through suffering and death (as with Jesus)
- The path to glorification is the cross … humility, obedience, and resurrection power

E. Corporate and Individual

- "Him" refers to humanity (singular representative) fulfilled in Christ and extended to the church as His body

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7. How will it compare to the best this life has to offer?

- **The glorified state will infinitely surpass the best this life has to offer … making even our greatest earthly joys, achievements, and pleasures seem pale, temporary, and incomplete by comparison!**
  - ***1 Cor 2:9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."***
  - ***Psa 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.***
  - ***Psa 36:8 They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures***
- **Any suffering or loss we experience in this life is not worthy of comparison to the glory we will have!**
  - ***2 Cor 4:17-18 For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.***

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Summary

Paul's vision culminates in exultant victory. 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. Because Christ, the Heavenly Man, has conquered death and risen as the firstfruits, all who belong to Him will follow in His likeness.

This glorification is the ultimate hope of the Christian life. Our natural bodies, marked by the fall, will not be discarded but redeemed and elevated. What was sown in weakness will rise in power; what groaned under the curse will shine with the uncreated light of the new creation. We will be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2) … fully human, yet perfectly conformed to the Heavenly Man.

Therefore, Paul concludes, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (v. 58). The promise of this glorious transformation anchors every act of faithfulness in the present, assuring us that the best is yet to come: not escape from our humanity, but its long-awaited coronation in the image of Christ, the Heavenly Man!