

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Introduction: One day a father and his daughter were out for a leisurely drive in the country. It was a hot summer day and the windows were rolled down. Suddenly the daughter began screaming and fidgeting in her seat. A bee had just flown inside the car through the open window. This would not have been a problem for most children, but for this little girl, it was a problem. You see, this girl was very allergic to bee stings. In fact, even one sting could send her into a coma. As the girl was flailing her arms around, the father quickly pulled over to the side of the road, then calmly reached over and held his daughter's arms down. Then, he himself, with his big and strong hands, caught the mad bumblebee. The bee promptly stung the man, and he threw the bee out the window. The girl, still in hysterics and in tears, was unable to calm down. The loving father reached over and held her. And he whispered these words in her ears: "It's OK. It won't hurt you now. I took the sting for you." What a beautiful picture of true love, and it is exactly what Jesus did on our behalf.

The Reality of Sin. Look with me at verse 56, "The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law." This verse gives us two realities about sin. First the result of sin is death. God told Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 that if they disobeyed and ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil they would die. Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, "for the wages of sin is death." Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Because of our disobedience to God we will die both physically and spiritually unless something changes. The second reality of sin is it is revealed to us by the Law. Many people believe that if they can be good enough or do enough good things in life that God will let them into heaven. Some people think if they can keep the 10 Commandments they will be ok. However, Paul tells us in Romans 7 that the Law actually shows us our sinfulness. The Law shows us God's standard, and the fact that we can't keep it all is meant to show us that "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The Law's job is to show us our insufficiency to meet God's standard, but it also points us to the One did meet God's standard. Jesus said in Matthew that He did not come to destroy the Law, but rather to fulfill the Law. In the Person and work of Jesus Christ, all of God's righteous demands were met.

The Result of the Resurrection. As a result of Christ's resurrection the sting of death is taken away because death has been swallowed up in victory. 1 Corinthians 15:22 says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." In John 11 a story is told of a man by the name of Lazarus who died. Jesus went to the town of Bethany where Lazarus and his sisters lived. One of Lazarus' sisters met Jesus and said "if you had been here this wouldn't have happened." Jesus responded in verse 25, "I am the resurrection and the life." The word "resurrection" means to "make alive again." What was Jesus saying to Martha? He was saying "I can make Lazarus alive again." Go back to 1 Corinthians 15:22 again, "For as in Adam all die (the reality of sin), even so in Christ shall all be made alive (the result of the resurrection). We can be made alive again because Jesus fulfilled the demands of the Father, therefore removing the sting of sin and the result is that death no longer has any power over those who are in Christ. Death has been swallowed up in victory. Because of Christ's resurrection Paul can write in verse 57, "But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." What the Law couldn't do (save us), Christ accomplished with His death. Notice what verse 58 says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The word "therefore" is a connector word, it is tying what was just said with what is about to be said. Because death has no power over us, because of our victory is certain, that frees us up to live for and serve Christ. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:26, "The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death." Paul said that death would be the last enemy destroyed and we just read that death is swallowed up in victory, so that means we as Christians have no enemies left before us. Paul said in Romans 8 that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. We have nothing to fear because Jesus Christ is our hope and because He lives, even so will we also live with Him. That is a precious promise given to us in Scripture and that is the power of the resurrection. It is able to defeat every enemy we have. A famous Baptist preacher D. L. Moody said, "Some day, you will read in the papers that D.L. Moody of East Northfield is dead. Don't believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now!" I want to close with one final question. It is a question Jesus asked to Martha after He said I am the resurrection and the life. Jesus said, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Do you believe that Jesus died so that you might live?