Christ in 1 Corinthians

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Anybody like solving problems? Who are the problem solvers? I love solving problems.

Before I went to Bible College, I was a graphic designer. I studied design at university, and they say that design is problem solving.

You have a visual that you have to create, and so you solve the problem through design. I love solving problems. I'm also pretty good at making problems that need to be solved.

And one of my favorite places to solve problems is Bunnings. I love Bunnings.

There's some kind of thing you need at home, some problem at church or at home, and I know exactly what piece of hardware would solve the problem. And so I go to Bunnings.

The problem is I don't know any of the names of anything in Bunnings, so I have to walk down every single aisle until eventually a staff member finds me.

And I have to say, I'm looking for like a piece of metal that's flat and curvy at one end, and then it's got 90 degrees so that I can sticky tape, and they have no idea what I'm talking about.

But I do love to solve problems.

One of the problems I enjoyed solving was Courtney and I got married in this church three and a half years ago, and we wanted to put a curtain up on this back wall, and we didn't want to screw anything into

the wall. So how are we going to fix a curtain to this back wall?

And then I solved the problem, get a little piece of metal that has a right angle and then dips down, and then put a pole on top of that, and it was a problem solved. I know Maxie is a problem solver.

This baptismal pool has a drain that you twist to drain, but it's on the other side of the steps. And so you can't drain the pool unless you get into the pool.

And so Maxie solved the problem by getting a long pole with Velcro, and he put Velcro on the drain. So you stick the Velcro on and twist it, and it drains. Problem solved.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul is in problem-solving mode. The Corinthian church have a lot of problems. They're like teenagers, just learning how to do this faith thing.

And Paul receives a letter from them, and he responds with a letter solving their problems. Five problems, to be particular.

What's interesting about the way that Paul solves the Corinthians' problems is he responds to their problems with the gospel.

He lifts up a particular portrait of who Jesus is and what he has done, and shows how that portrait of Jesus is the solution to their problem.

And that is a good skill for us to learn, to solve our problems with the gospel, to respond to the gospel. We are in the 34th of 66 Christ in Scripture sermons, which means we're in the second half.

We've officially got on to the downhill, and we're in a series called The Letters of Paul. This is the ninth of Paul's letters that we've been looking at today. We're looking at 1 Corinthians.

Tonight, we're looking at 2 Corinthians, if you can make it. Jimmy has read for us the opening nine verses of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. A little bit of background about the church in Corinth.

We read in Acts chapter 18, that Paul, who was an early church planter and missionary for the Jesus Movement, planted the church in Corinth on his second missionary journey.

He spent, according to Acts chapter 18, one and a half years with the brothers and sisters in Corinth, teaching them about faith.

That is the second longest that he spent with any church, second only to Ephesus, where he spent three years.

So Paul spends a year and a half with the Corinthians, and then he leaves, and after he leaves, he receives a letter from Corinth with all of their problems.

And so Paul writes the letter that we call 1 Corinthians, responding to their problems with the gospel. Five problems. And Paul's methodology in 1 Corinthians is consistent.

He outlines the problem that the Corinthians have, and then he responds with the gospel. And he does that five times. Problem gospel response.

Problem gospel response. Five times. So we're going to look at these five problems that the Corinthians had and how Paul responds with the gospel.

After his opening greeting and prayer, Paul gets into the first Corinthian problem. And it's in chapters 1 to 4. The problem is division.

Division is the first problem. Corinth was a big city in the first century. Scholars estimate up to as many as 100,000 inhabitants in this city.

And it was kind of a melting pot of diverse cultures and ethnicities and people, all living in one place. Not unlike Sydney today, quite a diverse city.

And Corinth was diverse outside the church, but also inside the church, there was a lot of diversity. And that's a good thing. When you look around our church, we are a diverse group of people.

It was the same in Corinth. Different personalities and experience, male, female, Jew, Gentile, slave and free. Lots of diversity within the Corinthian church.

But the problem with Corinth that Paul addresses is that their differences went beyond diversity into division. That the different people were splitting off into different groups.

And so Paul writes a letter to them to solve this problem for them. This is a couple of ways that Paul sees their division. 1 Corinthians 1 verse 10.

Paul says, I appeal to you brothers and sisters in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly

united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there were quarrels among you.

What I mean is this, one of you says, I follow Paul, another, I follow Apollos, another, I follow Cephas, that's Peter from the Gospels. Still another, I follow Christ.

So the first problem that Paul deals with is division based on the origin of faith, based on the person that their faith came from. We know that Paul planted the church, that he was an early influence.

After Paul left, Apollos continued to water the seed of the church. After Apollos left, maybe Peter came and visited Priscilla and Aquila.

The church in Corinth had so many different influences in faith that the Corinthians were assigning

themselves to one of their particular origin, original founders. It's not, to be honest, unlike denominations today.

When you look at the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church traces their origin through the Pope to who? St. Peter.

The Reformed Churches trace their origin back to Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Zwingli. The Methodist Church traces back to John Wesley.

The Anglican Church goes back to King Henry VIII, Salvation Army, back to William Booth, Vineyard, back to John Wimber. I personally trace my origins back to Dallas Willard through my father.

It's not a bad thing, not a bad thing to trace your faith back to a person.

The problem is when we divide over these lines, when we say that the Anglicans aren't real Christians or the Pentecostals aren't real Christians, only we Baptists are the real Christians.

That's what the Corinthians were doing. They were dividing themselves along the lines of the origins of their faith. Secondly, they were dividing themselves along the lines of the emphasis of their faith.

1 Corinthians 1 verse 22, Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom. There's all these different factions within the church that put the emphasis in Christianity on something else.

We might say today that tradition values honor, the West values freedom, conservatives value Bible teaching, parrismatics value tongues, progressives value social action.

It's easy for us to emphasize different aspects of faith, but when those different emphases lead to division, that's where the problem is. How does Paul respond with the gospel? 1 Corinthians 1 verse 13.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Verse 17, Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. Verse 22, Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach what?

Christ crucified. Paul's portrait of Jesus that he lifts up to solve the problem of division is Christ crucified. Christ crucified in 1 Corinthians.

Paul takes it back to the cross. He takes it back to the cross, not because the cross is the lowest common denominator, but because it is the greatest common unifier.

That across the factions, differences of origin and emphasis, Christ crucified is the foundation of Christian faith. That solves division over the origin of faith. Because Paul wasn't crucified for their sin.

Peter didn't die on a cross for their sin. Dallas Willard didn't die for me. But these are people who point us to the truth that Christ was crucified for us.

It also solves division over the emphasis of faith.

Because while it is true that there is wisdom in the gospel, there's power in the gospel, there's change and transformation in the gospel, the heart of the gospel is Christ crucified.

And that brings the church together. Have you heard of the quiet revival? Have you heard that term?

The quiet revival, a couple of years ago, the British Bible Society published a report called the quiet revival.

And they were claiming that in the UK, there is a quiet revival of church attendance among Gen Z men in particular.

And so this report comes out that people are flocking back to church, especially Gen Z men, which is my generation, people like me coming back to church in record numbers.

And Christians across the world are like celebrating, yes, you know, atheism is dead, secularism has broken, Christianity is back, the name of Jesus lifted up.

And that is a really good thing, if Christianity is back.

The problem is, a couple of months or years later, it came out that the data that the report was built on was faulty in a couple of ways, and it wasn't quite as big as they claimed that it was.

Even still, I think when you look around at the world today, there's more talk about Christianity than there used to be, maybe more in America. There's a supposedly Christian president.

There's a lot more talk about Christianity.

But what I think is a really important question to ask is, all these new converts to Christianity, a helpful question to ask is, tell me about the Jesus that you do or do not believe in.

Tell me about the Jesus that you do or do not believe in.

Because from my research, and I'm really interested in this question, it seems like a lot of the drive of a growth in church attendance from people like me, is that they are super conservative, and it happens to

be that a lot of Christianity lines up with their already conservative values. And so they look at Jesus as somebody who held the line and didn't go woke.

Or people on the other side of the spectrum think that Jesus was primarily a social activist, and an example for us to do the same.

Jesus might have been those things, but the heart of the identity of Jesus is Christ crucified, not America glorified or self-deified. So let me ask you, tell me about the Jesus that you do or do not believe in.

Because Christ crucified is the only true Jesus. The thing that brings us together is Christ crucified on a cross for our sin, not our country elevated, or my personal political opinions held and bolstered by faith.

That might be a controversial thing to say. I was conscious of that. But Christ crucified is the foundation of our faith.

For the problem of division, Christ crucified. We're going to get not less controversial.

The second Corinthian problem is sex. Chapters 5 to 7 of 1 Corinthians. Sex was a hot topic in ancient Corinth, pun intended.

It was a port city, meaning constantly people are coming in this trade, there's all sorts of things happening in the city.

The Greek historian Strabo claims that there were 1,000 temple prostitutes in the Temple of Aphrodite in Corinth. Part of the way you worship Aphrodite is by sleeping with the temple prostitutes.

So sex is a really tricky topic for the church in Corinth. We know, in fact, that there was a slang term, that if a woman was called a Corinthian girl, it was not a compliment.

It was referring to something that we wouldn't want to call a person ever. This is the culture of Corinth that Paul is writing to.

We read in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 1, It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate.

A man is sleeping with his father's wife, and probably it is his step-mom, not his biological mom. Not that that helps, but it helps a tiny little bit. Verse 2, you are proud.

Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?

Sexual immorality in English translates the Greek word pornea, from which we get the word pornography.

Pornea is a broad term which encompasses any sexual activity outside of God's intention, anything that God has not specifically created sex for.

And so Paul is ruling out sexual immorality over the chapters 5, 6 and 7. He gives a couple of examples of the ways that he is seeing this pornea play out. There's a guy sleeping with his step-mom.

Paul says, stop that. There's people sleeping with temple prostitutes. Paul says, stop that.

There's sex happening outside of marriage. There's married people who are having sex, committing adultery. Paul writes his letter to deal with the problems that are happening of sex outside of marriage.

He says, stop it. It's not right. But he also talks about the problems of sex inside marriage.

1 Corinthians chapter 7 is the longest treatment on the topic of Christian marital sexual ethics in the whole New Testament. If you're married, it's a really helpful chapter to read and to think about.

Verse 1 of chapter 7. Paul says, now for the matters you wrote about. And then he quotes them.

He quotes the letter that Corinth wrote to Paul. It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.

So there's a view within the Corinthian Church of people who have become Christians that sex is bad. Sex is what the pagans and what the devil does. Sex is not proper for a Christian to do.

So they're saying, it's good for every person to not have sex. Paul writes 1 Corinthians chapter 7 to fix that problem. He says, no, no, no, no, no, you've got it all upside down.

God created sex for the particular purpose of unifying one husband and one wife in the bond of covenant love, that is marriage. So Paul is correcting the way that they are thinking about it wrongly.

He gives a beautiful picture of the proper place of sex to, he talks about the fact that the wife yields her body to the husband and the husband yields his body to the wife.

Nobody in all of history up to this point had ever said that about men. Women should do that for their husbands, but men were free to do whatever they want with their bodies. This is radical for its time.

Paul is promoting the good gift of sex that God has given married people. He also dignifies singleness. We don't have time to go into that line of thought, but read 1 Corinthians 7.

It's really encouraging. That is the Corinthians problem with sex. Sex outside of marriage that shouldn't be happening and problems with sex inside marriage that is not happening that should be happening.

How does Paul respond with the Gospel? 1 Corinthians 7 verse 18. Flee from sexual immorality.

All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually sins against their own body.

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought at a price, therefore honor God with your bodies.

The portrait of Jesus that Paul lifts up to solve the problem of sex is Christ sanctified. Christ sanctified. Sanctified is a fancy word that means made holy, set apart, dedicated to.

Paul says that because Jesus is sanctified, Jesus is holy, we are called to be holy as well.

To be sanctified in our body by not having sex outside of marriage, but by having the kind of God-glorifying sex that God gave the gift for to husbands and wives.

I wonder what you think of when you hear the word holy. Sanctified means to be made holy. What do you think of when you think of holy?

I wonder if some of us think of the, maybe a picture that helps is a kid at a playground playing with all their friends, having so much fun.

And the parents come and take the kid away from the fun and put them in the corner by themselves. That's what holiness is. Christians can't have any fun.

Put them in the corner. I would suggest to you, that is the opposite of what the Bible means by holy. The true kind of picture of holiness in the Bible is not a kid taken away from all the fun.

It's a child eating mud pies in the dirt, invited to feast on something. Holiness in the Bible is not primarily defined by what you are taken away from, but by what you are given to.

And when we talk about being sanctified in our bodies, it's not a bunch of rules of what you can't do. It's the pleasure that God is inviting you to give yourself to, to sanctify your body.

This is a controversial thing to say. It's a controversial message. Sexual ethics within Christianity is very unpopular in our world today.

The world has a perception that the church is prudish and thinks that sex is evil and for the non-Christians to do. The Bible is the opposite. Can I say God made sex, not the devil, not monkeys.

God created this gift, but it's a gift that's like a fire. Fire is a good thing. It keeps us alive, but it's a dangerous thing.

You take fire outside of its proper place and it can do a lot of damage. And so the solution to the problem of sex is Christ sanctified. Our bodies made holy and committed to God.

For the problem of division, Christ crucified. For the problem of sex, Christ sanctified.

And the third Corinthian problem that Paul deals with in chapters 8 to 10 is freedom. Freedom, 1 Corinthians 8 verse 4. So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world.

And again, he's quoting the Corinthians letter. And that there is no God but one. But even if there are so-called lowercase G gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords.

Yet for us, there is but one capital G God, the father, from whom all things came and for whom we live. And there is but one capital L Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols, that when they eat sacrificial food, they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god.

And since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to god. We are no worse if we do not eat and no better if we do.

The third Corinthian problem is freedom. Corinth was a very religious place. There was the temple of Apollo, the temple of Aphrodite, the temple of Asclepius, all these different temples.

Part of the way that the pagan Corinthians would worship is by sacrificing an animal, a ball, or a sheep, or a goat, or something like that. Part of the animal would be burned by the priest at the temple.

But most of the animal was still whole and able to be eaten. Since meat was quite rare in those days, the temple would sell the meat to the market, and the market would sell the meat to the citizens of Corinth.

And so then you have a situation, right, where you go over to your friend's house for Sunday lunch after church, and the Christian says, wow, this roast lamb is delicious.

And the host says, thank you, it was dedicated to Zeus just this morning. And then what's the Christian supposed to do? Oh, hang on.

This was dedicated to a pagan god? What am I supposed to do? Do I eat it?

Do I not eat it? That's the problem with freedom that Paul is explaining. Paul seems to indicate that there are two responses in that moment.

Once you find out that food has been sacrificed to an idol, there are some people who enjoy the roast lamb even more. And in eating the lamb, they are proclaiming Christ's victory over the other gods.

They are proclaiming that there is no other god but Yahweh, that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. In eating the food, they are glorifying God and every good gift that he has given.

But then there's also some people who hear that that delicious roast lamb was sacrificed to Zeus, who think, oh, I can't eat this anymore. Maybe they're new Christians.

Maybe they have previously partook, partaken in meat sacrifice to idols. And they, in not eating the very same meat, glorify God with their choice.

So you see on both sides, they glorify Christ, whether they eat or whether they don't eat. That's the problem with freedom that Paul is talking about.

And this is how he responds with the gospel, 1 Corinthians 10, verse 31. Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the Church of God. Even as I try to please everyone in every way, for I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many so that they may be saved.

The portrait of Jesus that Paul lifts up to solve the problem of freedom is Christ glorified. Christ glorified. Whether we eat, we glorify Christ, or we don't eat, we glorify Christ.

And if I eat my food and that causes my brother to be offended out of love for my neighbour, I will not eat anymore, and that glorifies Christ too. The point is, Paul says, freedom is for glorifying Christ.

And to be clear, we're talking not about black and white things that the Bible says no to. You can't glorify Christ by being sexually immoral.

We're talking about the things that the Bible doesn't specifically address. Maybe somebody enjoys smoking a cigar and having a really good conversation with a friend.

That person, in smoking that cigar, glorifies Christ for this good gift. But another person looks at that and says, No, I will glorify Christ by not smoking a cigar. Maybe somebody really enjoys craft beer.

And when they taste the flavor and the complexity and the different pieces, they glorify Christ for this good gift. But another person looks at the alcohol and says, Not for me.

And they glorify Christ by abstaining. Maybe somebody really loves fashion, color and shape and form and pattern. And they glorify Christ in what they wear.

And another person says, No, that's not for me. I can't do that. I just have to be kind of simple and minimal.

And they glorify Christ as well. The point is, in every situation, we glorify Christ. That's what freedom is for.

Whether we eat or drink, we do it all for the glory of God. For the problem of division, Christ crucified. For the problem of sex, Christ sanctified.

For the problem of freedom, Christ glorified.

And the fourth problem that Paul deals with is disorder. Disorder in chapters 11 to 14. 14 verse 26.

What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation.

Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two or at the most, three should speak one at a time and someone must interpret.

If there's no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God. We're talking about disorder in the weekly gathering.

The Corinthians would gather on the Lord's Day, Sunday, just like we do. They would pray, they would eat together, they would sing psalms, they would read scripture, they would enjoy fellowship.

But there was disorder in the church because everybody wanted to do everything. So you have these prophets, people who are speaking God's word into the present situation.

And over there, somebody stands up and says, thus says the Lord. And then somebody over here says, no, no, no, this is what the Lord says.

And somebody over here says, no, no, no, no, no, this is what the Lord says. Chaos.

There's people in the corner speaking in tongues, different languages, and no one can understand the language apart from one guy who can interpret. And no one's even listening to him.

There's women on one side and men on the other. And in that culture, women were not as educated as men. And so the women are shouting across the room to their husbands to explain what is going on.

There's chaos at the communion table. The rich people are getting drunk on the wine and the poor people are getting nothing at all. We would never experience that level of disorder at NorthernLife.

But there's chaos and disorder in the church. How does Paul respond with the gospel? 1 Corinthians 12, 27.

Now, you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it.

And God has placed in the church, first of all, apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all teachers, do all work miracles, to all have gifts of healing, to all speak in tongues, to all interpret? And the implied answer is no, we don't all do those things.

Now, eagerly desire the greater gift. That's how Paul responds with the gospel. In one word, two words, Christ embodied.

That's the portrait that Paul lifts up of Jesus to solve disunity over disorder in the Corinthian church. Christ embodied. Paul talks about the metaphor of the church as a body.

You know, there's hands and feet and fingers and voices and ears and legs and arms and all different parts of the body that together make the church of Christ.

It's a beautiful image that our differences come together to make something greater than the sum of the parts.

We spoke earlier about how diversity can bring division between the church, but if we are based on Christ crucified, then our differences are a strength.

Paul talks about the fact that all the different parts, the fact that you're good at something, you're good at something, I'm not good at those things, and you're good at something that I'm not good at, you're

good at something else. We come together and what brings us together is love. You know, 1 Corinthians 13? Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast.

The wedding passage, that comes in this part of 1 Corinthians. I mean, I knew that.

I've studied 1 Corinthians before, but I was kind of, yeah, challenged again by the fact that 1 Corinthians 13 occurs in the context of our love, the love that we have for each other in the body of Christ.

Two weeks ago, the young adults did a prayer walk as part of our monthly gathering. And we had 25 young adults in twos or threes or fours walking around Hornsby, praying for our city.

And it was such an awesome time realizing how much need we have for prayer. And also realizing how many churches are doing meaningful gospel work to address those needs. We, I sort of think of The Dish, St.

Peter's Anglican, providing food for those who don't have food to eat.

Dom's Place, and that's a Catholic church, Dom's Place is run, sorry, that's an Anglican church, Dom's Place is a Catholic church, providing housing for those who don't have houses.

The 24-7 prayer room is run by Viva Vineyard Church. We have all these churches, our church included, we run homework club, Youth on Fridays, all these ministries to reach out to our community together.

My point is, I was so encouraged by the fact that we are the body of Christ within this church, and between all the churches, we are also the body of Christ. And what binds us together is love.

For the problem of disorder, we have Christ embodied. For the problem of division, Christ crucified. For the problem of sex, Christ sanctified.

For the problem of freedom, Christ glorified. And for the problem of disorder, Christ embodied.

Finally, the fifth problem that Paul deals with in Chapter 15 is death. The ultimate problem, the ultimate enemy, 1 Corinthians 15.

Paul says, if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless, and so is your faith.

More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God. For we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if, in fact, the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins.

Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Paul saves the hardest problem till the end of his letter, the problem of death. There were people within the Corinthian church that denied that Jesus rose again. They denied that anyone would rise again.

They are saying that because they are heavily influenced by Greek philosophy. Plato was one of the most famous of the Greek philosophers, and he had this idea called dualism, that body equals bad, soul equals good.

And so the great hope of Plato is that we would die and get rid of this body and be free to be a floating, ghosty, wispy soul floating around somewhere.

And so people who have that formation, that philosophical framework, come to Christianity, and they think that the gospel is that Jesus died on the cross and got rid of this gross body, and he went to heaven as

a little wispy soul, and we will one day do the same thing too. In other words, they are denying the resurrection from the dead.

They are denying that anybody would ever willingly come back into a body that looks something like this. But that is Platonism, not Christianity.

What scares me is that the gospel that we hear today around the world sounds kind of a lot like Platonism.

This idea that the main fact of the gospel is that Jesus died so we can go to heaven as a wispy soul after we die. Paul says the gospel is even better news than that.

Yes, Christ crucified is the foundation of everything, but that's not the end of the gospel story. A couple of years ago, my brothers and I were watching June 2 in the movies.

As at Macquarie Cinemas, it's like one of the most epic films of the past, of the century, I'm going to say it. And epic movie. And we got to the end of this movie, literally the climactic battle scene.

That's not a spoiler, but if you've seen June 2, the battle scene at the end of the movie, and the power went out.

And so we're, there's like dozens of us in the cinema, we're just waiting for the power to turn back on and play the rest of the movie.

And after waiting 10 minutes, one of the staff members came and said, sorry guys, all of Macquarie has blacked out. The movie's not coming back. Contact us, we'll give you a refund.

And so we kind of make our way in the dark, trying to get out of the building. And to this day, I still haven't seen the end of June 2. And the third one's coming out soon, so I better get on to it.

I didn't see the end of the story. And that's what some people are like with the gospel. They don't know the end of the story, that he rose again in a brand new body, and he will do the same thing for us.

Christ resurrected is Paul's gospel response to the fact that people have denied that there is a resurrection, who think that death is victorious. Paul says he is alive again.

Christ indeed has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

For as in Adam all died, so in Christ, all will be made alive. Christ resurrected is how Paul finishes his letter, which is nice that he started with Christ crucified, and he ends with Christ resurrected.

The fact that Christian hope is not that we die and the immaterial part of us floats to heaven.

Christian hope is that Jesus returns one day and makes all things new again, and we get to have a body of the same kind as Jesus resurrected body. You know, he could teleport through walls.

Does that mean we can do that? Probably, because we have the same type of body as he has. We will have the same type of body.

The promise of new creation, the promise of resurrection, that is our hope. Not only that we go to heaven when we die, but that heaven comes down to earth and transforms everything.

Paul ends his chapter, Chapter 15, with these words. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you.

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15 is the greatest chapter on the resurrection in the whole New Testament.

And that's how he ends. Talking about the fact that our lives matter. The stuff that we do for God and for his glory matters.

To use a metaphor that I thought of a couple of months ago, our lives are not rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic.

But everything we do has meaning if it is done for the glory of God, because Christ resurrected.

Problem solved. Paul has solved five of the Corinthian problems. If our problem is division, our solution is Christ crucified.

If our problem is sex, our solution is Christ sanctified. If our problem is freedom, our solution is Christ glorified. If our problem is disorder, our solution is Christ embodied.

If our problem is death, our solution is Christ resurrected. Let me encourage you to think of your real world problems and think about how the gospel reframes the way that you think about them.

These are really practical, earthy human issues that the Corinthians were dealing with. And Paul applies the gospel to that situation. And that is a good skill for us to learn to.

Christ crucified, Christ sanctified, Christ glorified, Christ embodied, Christ resurrected. This is Christ in 1 Corinthians. Let me pray.

Lord, we confess that we have problems, all sorts of difficulties and aches and pains and sufferings, and we make mistakes. We make a mess of our lives on our own. We relate to the Corinthians in that way.

But we thank you for the gospel, for Christ crucified. Thank you that He took our place on the cross, dying for our sin, that we might be reconciled to you. We thank you for these bodies that you've made us.

Thank you for the gift of sex that you've given us, us who are married. We want to sanctify ourselves, God.

Help us to see that there are eternal pleasures at your right hand, that when we make ourselves holy as you are holy, we live the best life because we get to know you deeper. We thank you for our freedom, God.

We thank you that you have set us free from the powers of this world, and our heart is to glorify you in everything that we do.

We thank you, Lord, for the unity we enjoy as a church, for the way that you've given us different gifts. We pray that you might bring us closer together in love as each part does its work.

Above all, we thank you that our Lord Jesus is risen, and he is risen indeed. And so it is our joy now to give him thanks and praise. In Jesus' name, Amen.