

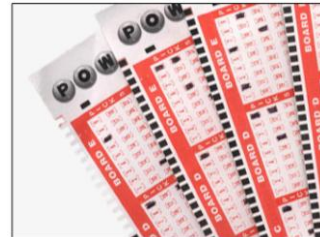
YOUR GOD IS STILL TOO SMALL

Chapter 9

Epilogue and Eternity

*If you see heaven as a lottery, instead of a destiny,
then your God is still too small!*

Statistics are a funny thing, especially when matched with hopes and fears. There are many things that people hope for, which do not really have a substantial chance of happening. For example, the true statistical odds of winning the big lottery jackpot should make people think twice about buying a lottery ticket. The statistical likelihood of winning a single state lottery is generally recognized as 1 in 18 million. To give some measure of perspective to those odds, the odds of being murdered in America are 1 in 18,000 for a single year. In other words, if you were to buy one a lottery ticket this year, then you are 100 times more likely to be murdered than you are to win the lottery. If you buy a lottery ticket for the United States Powerball game, then your odds of winning are even less than a state lottery. Your odds are 1 in slightly over 80 million. If you are going to buy that ticket, then do not clean up by taking a bath first. You are 100 times more likely to drown in the tub than you are to win the lottery. You are three times more likely to be attacked by a bear than you are to win with that lottery ticket. As for your likelihood of dying in a car wreck on your way to buying the ticket, those odds would scare you into walking (until you saw the odds of getting hit by a car while walking).¹



Even with these statistical truths, 1 out of every 2 Americans is believed to have bought a lottery ticket. It is the *hope* of winning, even in the face of insurmountable odds. After all, we read about people winning. We can all play an imagination game of “What if...,” asking, “What would I do if I won the lottery?” The “What if...” Question feeds that hope in people, bringing many to the point of purchasing. The optimists often feel *lucky!* Others that some people might label “pessimists,” or what others would label “realists,” are not tempted to buy the ticket. The “What if...” game is trumped by the “I know it won’t happen in this lifetime!” These people take the odds and realize that to equalize the odds of winning Powerball would require buying a ticket a year for an 80-year lifespan,

www.Biblical-literacy.com

and then living one million of those life times! That is a long time to wait for odds to even out!

The strange thing is that for many people, the idea of heaven and eternal life is often not much different than a lottery pick. For many, this life is what they see, and what they have, and if there is something beyond this life, then well and good. But heaven is at best, a hope, a pie-in-the-sky dream, which might be there, but might not. These people can see their faith as useful in the world today, and even as a down payment on a lottery ticket for eternity. However, heaven becomes a cherry that will top this life, not a confident expectation of the door after death. For some, this view comes from a general cynicism on what they cannot verify. For others, it might be a humility that does not want to presume on God and his Almighty-ness.

To people who are not confidently expecting heaven or eternity, we suggest the following maxim:

*If your God cares about you
Only in this world, and
Only in your life
Then your God is definitely too small!*

HOW DID WE GET TO THIS CHAPTER?

Before we discuss eternity, it is useful to recast our journey in this book thus far. We began exploring the heavens, noting astronomers have now estimated that there are 100,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars in the heavens. The prophet Isaiah set God out as one who, figuratively, marked off these heavens with the span of his hand. In this figure of speech, God's hand measures off the space that is, by our estimates, 93 billion light years across. In human terms, it would take light 93 billion years to travel from God's thumb to his pinkie. Of course, the thrust of these passages is not to limit God. Scripture does not turn God into a massive super-human. The point of these passages is to set God uniquely apart in majesty and power, while drawing out the bizarre truth that this massive God, cares and is mindful of man. These passages put into human terms the image of God in his *infinite* nature.

In some ways, this vastness of God is easier for a child to recognize than for an adult. As children, we are constantly aware that there are great things bigger and more knowledgeable than we are. The problem sets in often as adults where we have grown into our environment and are much less ready to recognize a being as much greater than we ourselves. After all, as adults, we become the masters of our

environment. We see ourselves in control, we see what we know as fairly impressive, and we do not consider that there might be something so much greater than we could even conceive. The added problem as we age is a tendency to see such vastness, if we are willing to recognize it truly exists, as something that must be impersonal. God becomes the equivalent of a massive computer. Here, we must be careful. The vastness of God should never serve to depersonalize him.

In that sense, we discussed in the second chapter that God is a detailed God. Science has indicated incredible complexity in man. Man is not a clunky singular specimen that exists only as man. Instead, man and all matter exists on a mega-microscopic level. We can take man down on a cellular level to the constituent parts of each cell. We can then see that the cells themselves are collections of molecules. The molecules are reducible down to atoms, which themselves break down into subatomic particles. God has created a universe as vast on a sub-microscopic level as it is on a telescopic level. Into this detail, in a miracle we call the incarnation, God took on the leptons and quarks of this universe's matter and became a human. This was a blunt and blatant demonstration of God's personal nature. God, who became flesh, existed in human form, experienced the common events of humanity, and showed himself to be a *personal* God.

God's personal nature was never something that exists simply in his infinite essence. God has related to humanity in human terms and language. Humanity speaks, even when silent. Our brains are formed around language, and we think in words, forming them in our minds with each conscious thought. Stunningly, some people are willing to acknowledge that God exists, but are unwilling to grant that he would choose to communicate to humans. It is a bit bizarre to think that a God Being exists – one who is infinite, one who is personal, one who is aware not only of humanity, but also of every lepton and quark in the universe, and one that certainly knows of humanity's linguistic ability to relate to him, humanity's desire to know him, and humanity's semi-constant reach for him – yet this God would choose to ignore humanity? Is it as if the infinite and personal God has too much to do? Is he too busy keeping Saturn in orbit or spreading out the galaxies? Is keeping up with the leptons and quarks too taxing for him to relate to man? This certainly is out of character with the Biblical portrayal of the personal God. The Bible sets out the sensible observation that the infinite and personal God is not silent. He has chosen to reveal himself through his relationships with humanity in human language. God speaks.

It is from God's speaking that we derive revelation and truth. Truth is not simply an abstract term; it is a reality. The ultimate manifestation of truth is found in the incarnated one, in God made flesh. It is revelation that allows us to grasp what level of truth there is in the world. Man is no longer dependent upon the mind of man for knowing the truths of God. There are truths that the infinite, personal, and

communicating God has revealed. These truths can be confirmed by the way they make sense of the world, and ourselves, but the truths themselves come from revelation, not mankind's mental brilliance. In fact, our brilliance will never achieve the enlightenment of revelation. Our brilliance is useful for a limited scope of vision that, while it might seem wise to our own eyes, it is in fact foolish in reality.

Perhaps one of the ways we can best see the contrast between revelation and self-computed wisdom is in the area of good and evil. Appalling issues of evil in the world are debatable by those who do not access revelation. The evil of Hitler and the Third Reich was discussed in this sense. If God and revelation are removed from the equation, then a thoroughly legitimate and logical argument can be made that Hitler's actions were actually good. Without God, the idea of eugenics, of refining the human race to those better suited to evolve into something more spectacular, something that might one day save the planet from its inevitable decay, can be a hard but brilliant choice. It can be painted as the difficult strategy of the chess Grandmaster who is willing to sacrifice a pawn or two, and even a major piece, in order to win the game and capture the other's king. Killing the weaker elements to secure food and resources for the stronger ones who can better perpetuate humanity and propel mankind's development can easily be cast as a solid "good" rather than an evil.

Yet, most readily acknowledge that Hitler was wrong, and the course he pursued was evil. This is the cry of the heart that is made in God's image and aligns itself with the morality of God. God's moral character, revealed by God to humanity, is the ultimate definition of what is right and wrong. God is not good because he does good. Nor is good good because God says it is so. Good is the word we use to label the traits that are God's traits! Good is what God is, not simply what he does or says.

Here, the problem arises. We have a just God who is consistent and unchanging. He is infinite, and has no bounds in the sense of the finite space/time universe. He knows everything and everyone, down to their constituent parts. He is a personal God who has taken an interest in humanity, revealing himself through words and as The Word. Even as he has done so, he has shown himself to be a moral God, a God who has virtue and morality/ethics inherent in who he is. That same morality is built into humanity who is made in his image. We are a people who recognize moral right and wrong, so much so, that it seems a part of the universe itself. We know good and evil, but we do not always choose to do good. There lurks within every human error and failure to reach the purity of God. If his goodness is the target, then it is a target we all miss. This is not because we are predetermined to do what we do. We can really choose our actions. We have real moral responsibility for the choices we make. It means that even as the pure God seeks

out relationships with humanity, humanity is unable to live to the standard of God's nature and character. Perfection with God is not an option; it simply is.

Here we reached chapter 8, the answer to the problem. Sinful man has no ability to live eternally enveloped in the presence of God. Cause and effect takes hold. Sin is a life decision that exists outside of God and God's life. Sin is intimately bound up with death. Not simply losing one's brain function, but eternal separation from God – a real eternal death. The opportunity for God's purity has passed every person by. We do not have it in us.

This could be the end of the story, were it not for God's provision and plan. Paul taught the Ephesians that through Christ, God was "making known" to the church "the mystery of his will." God purposed a plan that in the fullness of time, he would "unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:9-10). This was never a "Plan B" for God. As the God unlimited by time, it was something he planned before the foundation of the world. It was an act of love, to incarnate as a perfect man, yet to die a cursed, sinner's death. This was not done capriciously; it was the solution to man's immoral choices. It was a way that man as man, could find the release from the death man deserved for sin. The death of Christ was attributed outside of time to sinners. We say "outside of time" because that is the way of God. God operates in this universe, and in that sense operates in time, yet God exists infinitely, outside of the universe and outside of time. In this sense, God was able to pass over the sins of Abraham and others who died before Christ's atoning death, crediting them with the forgiveness that came through Christ. Paul explained to the Romans that Christ's death was necessitated because of sins committed before his incarnation. In this way, the death of Christ showed "God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins" (Rom. 3:25).

How does this happen? How does this death of Christ have any application to a person? Here is the audacity of the resurrection. God acted outside of nature, outside of space and time, and resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead. He performed a miracle that would not happen short of divine intervention. After dying the sinner's death, Christ was resurrected as the God of power he was from eternity. The grave could not hold a perfect man. Because of his faithfulness to the Father, Jesus had the power of an indestructible life. Death had no power over the One who was Life. This was and is the key for human hope. While we are human, we have an alternative to the death demanded by our sinfulness. We have a way into God's purity.

Paul explained to the Ephesians that God, "even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him" (Eph. 2:5-6). The resurrection of Christ is the key for

us. We are made alive *with* him. God acted out of his love for us, as Paul termed it “because of the *great love* with which he loved us” (Eph. 2:4). This is not something anyone earns or achieves on his/her own. It is God’s free gift enabled by the cross of Christ and empty tomb, apportioned to us through our faith and trust (Eph. 2:8-10).

This is indeed the work of a mighty God. There is nothing small about a God who plans and accomplishes such things out of his love for people. But one might ask, “Does it end there? Is this life all there is? Do we have any kind of confidence that the future holds anything concrete for us, or is it a lottery chance?” Paul has much to say about this as well. He explained in the same teaching to the Ephesians that the reason God has done these things is not simply to make us better people on earth. God raised us up with Christ “and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6-7). The future is not a lottery; it is a destiny!

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

As we speak of “heaven,” we might mean various things. The Bible uses the term with great frequency and with multiple meanings as well. In one common sense, “heaven” refers to the skies and space. This is the “expanse” talked of in Genesis 1 as the place of the stars and the sky where birds fly. Beyond that, however, there is another level of meaning in the term. “Heaven” is also used as a term for the dwelling place of God. This is the heaven “above the stars” (Isa. 14:13). Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God as “our Father in heaven” (Matt. 6:9). Repeatedly, God is noted as being in “heaven” or being our “heavenly Father” (Matt. 6:26, 32; 7:11, 21). This is where God’s will is done (Matt. 6:10) as the term used for God’s eternal kingdom (Matt. 7:21, 10:11). In this sense, as the word is used for God’s holy essence and dwelling outside of space and time, it is where the redeemed are found residing beyond this life. “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” recline at a table “in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 8:11). Our own efforts are encouraged to be in that direction as Jesus taught his disciples, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal (Matt. 6:19-20).

Do God’s children “go to heaven” when they die? What is the future going to be? Paul went into a measure of detail in this as he taught the Corinthians about the importance of Christ and the resurrection. Paul’s teaching on the subject took two approaches. First, after setting out the many witnesses to the resurrection of

Christ, Paul discussed the implications of the resurrection on Christians. Then, Paul explored what the resurrection from the dead would entail. We will follow both of his trains of thought here.

The Implications of Christ's Resurrection

Paul wrote about the implications of Christ's resurrection in "If... then..." terms. In some ways, his writings could be read directly to the issues that have arisen in the philosophy of many among "modern man." Paul wrote to Corinthians when some set of them held to the Christian ethic and lifestyle, and even wore the label "Christian," yet denied the truth of the resurrection, just as many do today. Paul's message to those people was direct and blunt, in a near machine gun fashion.

Paul began by setting up the "If..." portion of his statement. In this, Paul granted the truth of these people's approach, to argue the true ramifications of their beliefs. Paul began, "If there is no resurrection..." not in a way of showing any possible agreement with such a position, but merely to set out the implications of such. We can think of this as a hypothetical type argument. Paul finished his "If..." with multiple "then..."s. For Paul, no resurrection meant:

- **Jesus was not resurrected.** Taking away the resurrection of people, takes away the resurrection of Jesus who was fully human. It means that the teachings of Paul and all the apostles were dead wrong.
- **Paul's preaching was in vain.** If Jesus was not resurrected, and if there is no resurrection of the dead, then all that Paul taught was worthless, empty, and based on nothing. It was foolish.
- **The faith of believers was in vain.** Not only was Paul's preaching based on nothing, but the faith of a Christian was as well. Believers in Christ believed in a fake and phony. The faith had no substance. Anyone denying the resurrection might claim to be a "Christian," but in truth, they do not have a faith with any substance. Such a person may adhere to a Christian ethic, but adhering to a Christian ethic should never be confused with being a Christian.
- **Paul was misrepresenting God.** Because the center of Paul's teaching was the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, if there was no resurrection of the dead, then Paul realized that he was a false witness (The Greek word Paul used for "misrepresenting" God is *pseudo-martus* – literally "false witness"). If there was no resurrection, then Paul was a liar, plain and simple.

- **Any believer’s faith is futile.** Having a faith in God is meaningless and empty absent a resurrection from the dead.
- **Everyone is still in his or her sins.** This is why any believer’s faith is futile. The forgiveness of our sins before a holy and pure God is dependent upon a resurrection from the dead. Paul explains that the future is permanently linked to the past. One cannot deny the future resurrection without denying the past forgiveness of sins. As Paul told the Roman Christians, reconciliation and salvation are linked to the death *and* resurrection life of Christ (Rom. 5:10).
- **The dead are gone.** Without a real resurrection of the dead, there is not some way that there is some other afterlife or reincarnation. Death is the end. The dead are destroyed and gone forever.

Paul concludes this “If...” portion of his statement by saying the most logical conclusion of all, “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1 Cor. 15:13-19). Gordon Fee summarized Paul’s concerns into today’s world well:

To deny Christ’s resurrection is tantamount to a denial of Christian existence altogether. Yet many do so to make the faith more palatable to “modern man,” we are told. But that will scarcely do. What modern man accepts in its place is no longer the Christian faith, which predicates divine forgiveness through Christ’s death on his resurrection. Nothing else is the Christian faith, and those who reject the actuality of the resurrection of Christ need to face the consequences of such rejection, that they are bearing false witness against God himself. Like the Corinthians they will have believed in vain since the faith is finally predicated on whether or not Paul is right on this issue.²

“Hope” in the Resurrection

In 1 Corinthians 15:19, quoted above, Paul wrote of how pitiful a believer would be if her/his “hope” was only in this life. There are many times Paul and other New Testament writers mentioned the “hope” we have in Christ. To the Colossians Paul wrote of the “hope laid up for you in heaven” (Col. 1:5). “Hope” is the English word used to translate a Greek word *elpis*. Unfortunately, we lose a good bit of the Greek meaning when we translate *elpis* simply as “hope.” It makes the word sound like a lottery term. It is as if we are “hoping” for eternal life in the sense that we “hope” to win the lottery. That is not, however, the emphasis of the Greek. *Elpis* denotes not a simple wish or hope, but rather it denotes a confident expectation. It references something that has not yet occurred, but is fully expected to occur. In Acts 16, we read of Paul

being pestered by a girl with a spirit of divination. The slave girl had “brought her owners much gain by fortune telling” (Acts 16:16). She was an ATM machine for her owners, with a strong track record for bringing in money. After this went on a number of days, Paul got tired of it, and commanded the spirit to leave the girl. The spirit left at that very instant. Needless to say, the owners who had suddenly lost their human ATM machine were furious. In describing their reaction, Luke uses the word *elpis*: “But when her owners saw that their *hope* of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas” (Acts 16:19). The owners’ expectation of future income from the girl was not a lottery hope. It was a confident expectation unexpectedly thwarted by a reaction of Paul. This verse is an excellent illustration of the Greek idea behind the word translated as hope. When Paul, and others, spoke of the hope of glory, they were not expressing a lottery hope. They were speaking of a confident expectation one could go to the bank on!

In teaching the Corinthians about this issue, Paul then set up the contrary “If... then...” statement about the implications of a factual resurrection. Resurrection meant:

- **Christ was resurrected.** Christ was what Paul called the “first fruits” of resurrection. His resurrection was the first of many to come.
- **Resurrection comes to those in Christ.** Paul contrasted the way that sin and death have permeated all humanity just as all humanity lives in the condition of Adam. In like manner, resurrection comes to all who are “in Christ” because Christ himself is resurrected and alive.
- **Christ will come again and eventually destroy even death.** The implications of a resurrected Christ and a resurrection of Christians is that things will proceed in God’s orderly fashion. Christ will return, he will exercise his power over everyone and everything, even over death. Christ will be the one who unites all things, subjecting them to the Father and eternity.

Again, we can turn to Fee’s summary of Paul’s statements into modern man’s condition:

The resurrection of Christ has determined our existence for all time and eternity. We do not merely live out our length of days and then have the hope of resurrection as an addendum; rather, as Paul makes plain in this

passage, Christ's resurrection has set in motion a chain of inexorable events that absolutely determines our present and our future.³

This was not a lottery issue for Paul. Resurrection's implications were both profound and mandatory. It was a critical part of the work of God in Christ.

Paul knew his teaching would likely not answer the objections of those who doubted the resurrection from the dead. Having explained why the resurrection was a theological imperative, Paul now turned his attention to the mental objections of those in denial. It is clear from reading Paul's entire discourse in 1 Corinthians 15, that he was confronting a mental opposition of his readers to the idea that life would come back to a dead corpse. In their minds, death was final to the corpse. Because they could not figure out *how* a resurrection could occur, they did not accept *that* a resurrection could occur. Paul resumes his discussion, explaining in his own terms, that no matter how spiritual the Corinthians considered themselves, their concept of God was still too small!

How Can There Be a Resurrection? What will it Be Like?

Paul set out the likely verbal challenge of those who opposed his resurrection teaching stating,

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" (1 Cor. 15:35).

This was the problem they could not wrap their heads around. Their mental obstacle was faced with the visible reality: dead bodies decay; they do not reanimate.

Paul responded harshly to these people calling them "foolish men." Paul's usage of the word "fool" stemmed from his Old Testament training. They were fools in the sense that their position and argument did not take into account God (Ps. 14:1). Paul used common everyday occurrences to make his point. He pointed to seeds, which also go into the ground and decay. The seed's decay does not end the life cycle, but merely opens the door to the seed's fuller potential as a new plant in a new form. In this sense, death does not thwart God's design; it is a critical part of it.

Paul used the word "body" to refer to the resurrection, but he was quick to point out that "bodies" take different forms, based on their roles and place in the universe. A star has a much different body than a plant. Both have different bodies than a flesh and blood human. God tailors the bodies of things around the

purposes of God for those things. So it will be, Paul explained, for the resurrection body. We do not know in molecular terms what the body will be. Nor do we know what it looks like. What we do know are the ways that the resurrected body will contrast with the body of this life in this world.

| Body of this Life | Body of the Resurrected Life |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Perishable (Subject to decay) | Imperishable |
| Dishonorable (A body of humiliation) | Glorified |
| Weakness | Power |
| Natural | Supernatural |

Paul sets out the resurrected body in sharp contrast. It is not one subject to the frailties of this life and world. It is one that is worthy of life and existence beyond the elements of the natural universe. It is fit for the eternal kingdom of God! Paul added that nothing that is simple flesh and blood of this universe could exist in God’s eternity. The body must become imperishable to dwell in the imperishable kingdom!

Having discussed the ideas of what a resurrection body would be like, Paul then moved to the subject of how the resurrection would come about. The change would not be one that was gradual, like growing a new limb to replace an old one. It would happen in the blink of an eye. The transformation would come at the ends of days, and the perishable would become imperishable, the mortal become immortal. This resurrection will be the final destruction of the apparently unstoppable power of death. Victory will swallow death.

Death is inevitable, but beyond it is the equally inevitable eternity where those in Christ will live in the resurrection of God. This is not a lottery option. It is the real and true destiny for all who are found in Christ. Paul was driven by this truth, not only to teach it, but also to pray that his friends and fellow Christians would understand it. This was his prayer for the Christians in Ephesus he had long ministered to and grown to love:

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Eph 1:16-23).

For Paul's readers to argue against a resurrection was, in Paul's mind, tantamount to arguing against God. The God who is, the God who takes a personal interest in people, the God who communicates, the moral God, has reached out to take humanity into eternity. This is done by the death *and* resurrection of Jesus Christ. May we all take refuge in this God and his redemptive work, even as he transforms our lives until that day of our own resurrection.

CONCLUSION

As we conclude this brief study into God, we note again an amazing aspect of God. He is never out of date. God is not a fiction that fits only a certain culture or state of knowledge. He is the one who pre-exists and will exist long after this universe is over. He is of a grander state than what we could ever fathom or imagine. Just when we think we have a handle on how great God is, we should always pause and remember: He is more. Whatever we think, our experiences and human understanding limit our thoughts. We will always be searching for ways that our God is still too small!

Endnotes

¹ Ropeik, David, and Gray, George, *Risk: A Practical Guide for Deciding What's Really Safe and What's Really Dangerous in the World Around You*, (Houghton Mifflin 2002), at 421ff.

² Fee, Gordon, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians (New International Commentary on the New Testament)*, (Eerdmans 1987), at 741.

³ *Ibid*, at 760.

Points for Home

1. *“Even when we were dead in our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him”* (Eph. 2:5-6).

One of the most profound elements of the work of God as Paul described it, is the existence of God beyond time. Some might ask, “If God is really good, and if he cannot fellowship with anything of less goodness, then how does he fellowship with us while we are still sinning?” The answer, at least in part, lies in the existence of God out of time. God accomplished the work of redemption and resurrection before we were born. It was fully planned before the creation of the world. It came to pass in space and time at the right moment in history to fulfill all prophecy and to accomplish what God wanted how God wanted it.

We must remember this same God outside of time is the God who now works in each of us to accomplish his will, even as we choose whether to be willing accomplices or not! The beauty is that we can make that choice. We can choose to live in the power of the resurrecting God, seeking his will on earth as it is in heaven. Let us make that choice with joy in our hearts and worship in our actions!

2. *“You foolish person!”* (1 Cor. 15:36).

Paul made short shrift of those “intellectuals” of his day who deemed themselves wiser than he, and beyond his teaching. It was a particularly vexing problem in Corinth, as the early chapters of First Corinthians makes clear. Paul noted the self-proclaimed wise people were foolish where it came to truth. They were answering questions about truth without accounting for the real God who really acts and cares. They were living with a little “g” god, rather than the true God. Foolish indeed – yet a foolish mistake we are too prone to make ourselves. How often do we assess the everyday situations of life without taking into account the grandeur of our caring God? Let us set aside such foolishness!

3. *“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain”* (1 Cor. 15:58).

This is the final verse in First Corinthians chapter 15. It is a classic Paul move to take his profound theology and turn it into a practical point for home. Paul did this with the resurrection reminding the Corinthians that the promise of our resurrection is a motivator for us to be steadfast, immovable, to work ever harder for God, and know that the work has a purpose! It is not in vain! May we work ever harder for God and his kingdom!