



## **The Apostles' Creed (Part 12) – The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting**

Matt Chandler – November 14, 2015

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[Video]

**Male:** I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth...

**Female:** ...and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord...

**Male:** ...who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born by the Virgin Mary...

**Male:** ...suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

**Male:** He descended to hell.

**Female:** The third day he rose again from the dead.

**Male:** He ascended to heaven...

**Female:** ...and sits on the right hand of the Father Almighty...

**Female:** ...from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

**Male:** I believe in the Holy Spirit...

**Female:** ...the holy Catholic Church...

**Male:** ...the communion of saints...

**Male:** ...the forgiveness of sins...

**Male:** ...the resurrection of the body...

**Male:** ...and the life everlasting.

**Male:** Amen.

[End of Video]

Well, how are we? Doing all right? Excellent. If you have your Bibles, let's grab them. First Corinthians, chapter 15. If you don't have a Bible with you, there should be a hard-backed black one somewhere around you. If you don't have a church background or maybe not a Christian, here's kind of how it works.

The big number is the chapter; the little number is the verse. We're going to be in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 at least to start out with. Then we're going to go over to Revelation a bit. Maybe, if you're not a Christian, that's kind of the fun book. Right? That's kind of the weird dragons eating babies, a lot of apocalyptic kind of craziness.

Before we get started, just a quick survey. How many of you would say the past week has been somewhat-to-really busy? Is that unanimous? No. There are like three of you who are like, "No, man. It was actually a great week. I woke up to come here. I plan on listening to you for a bit, getting something to eat, and I'm going back to bed. It's been a great week." Okay. By and large, we've been busy.

Let me just start off with what I believe to be true distilled from the Word of God. The engine that has driven all the activities of your week is hope. The engine that has driven all of those activities, whether they were your kids' activities or your family's activities, whether it was you going to work or you going out with friends or you driving your kid to football practice or you taking your kid to soccer practice or you taking your daughter out to football practice... It's Texas. Who knows, right?

As you're driving around and frantically doing all of that stuff, what's underneath that, the engine that's pushing that, is actually hope. We never slow down enough to actually think about that, but that's what's driving the activities of your life. What you hope in shapes everything. It shapes everything.

What you hope for or hope in is driving how you see relationships, how you look at money, how you spend your time. It's what you're hoping for and what you hope in that drives everything about how you're living your life. Christian or non-Christian, it doesn't matter. That's the engine that makes our lives go.

When I talk about hope, I'm not talking about general hoping but, rather, ultimate hope, because there's nothing wrong with general hoping. In fact, all of us generally hope. Let me give you some examples of general hoping. By and large, generally, some of us put our hope in money. Do we have bills? Does anybody have bills? Okay. So we're going to put our hope in money. Money is going to take care of these bills, but if we keep working down that line...

We want a house. Why do we want a house? The right answer is shelter. Then our house betrays us by showing us this is much more than shelter. We put our hope in money. We put our hope in jobs and accomplishments. If you don't have a job yet, maybe that for you is grades. You have to accomplish. You have to have a better job. Maybe that hope has been put in your position.

Maybe your hope is in relationships. Your hope is in your wife, your husband, or the future Mrs. or the future Mr. That's where our hope lies. Maybe our hope is in our education. We have an education. We worked hard at this education. I put my hope in the fact I have these two master's degrees and I've paid my dues in undergrad. Sometimes we put our hope in, "I have a GED, and that's a lot more than my daddy did. I'm moving the ball forward."

Some of us put our hope in some sort of hero, whether that is a political hero or maybe a political party, or maybe even a religious leader we put our hope in. We put our hope in some sort of hero. Some of us put our hope in nationalism, a system of government, or a political party. "Here's where my hope is. My hope is in this political party. It's in this man to lead us to the Promised Land." Or we put our hope in our health.

None of these hopes are bad. None of these hopes you should ever be rebuked for. Right? Like, "Man, I really hope I'm healthy." *You idolater!* No. It's not a bad hope. It's not a bad hope to go, "I really hope Lauren loves me and supports me and encourages me and receives my love, support, and pursuit." That's not a bad hope at all.

It's not a bad hope that you might have some money in the bank not just to pay your bills but maybe to play. Play is a gift from God. It's not necessary, but it is a good gift from God. It's not a bad hope. It's not a bad hope to want to do well at work. I hope you do well at work. I want you to climb the corporate ladder. I just don't want you to sacrifice your family or Jesus on the way up.

Nothing on this list should you ever be rebuked for, unless they're not *general* hopes but *ultimate* hopes. The moment these become ultimate hopes, they're misplaced hopes, and because what I said earlier that hope drives all the activities of our lives, misplaced hope is catastrophic. Misplaced hope is catastrophic. What do I mean by that?

Let's just take any one of these. If your ultimate hope is in your ability to make enough money to do everything you want to do, you will constantly enslave to fear and anxiety about money. Do I have enough? What will the future market do? Have I saved enough for my kids' college? Do I have enough to cover this? The idea of whether or not you have enough money will enslave you, and anxiety and restlessness and fear will begin to take over your heart. You will become a slave to your ultimate hope.

Maybe it's relationships. If your ultimate hope is in a relationship with this man or this woman or with this person, then you have put way too much pressure on the other person, and they will not be able to fulfill that hope you have. In fact, you'll smother them and choke them because people make crummy gods.

Misplaced hopes are catastrophic. Because all of this is going on in places we can't hardly see or think about... When you're driving your kid to football practice or you're heading to work at 4:00 a.m. when you plan on staying there till 7:00 or you're thinking about money and whether you have enough to do this or do that, nobody is thinking, "What am I really hoping in here?" No one does that. It's an unseen engine. It's like looking at a beautiful car but not knowing what's really under the hood and driving it.

By the grace of God, fear, anxiety, failure, frustration, controlling tendencies, and manipulation all become the check-engine light. That's what that is. You get restless and you're struggling with that anxiety... I'm not talking about a kind of chemical anxiety. I'm not talking about clinical depression. Take your meds. That's a common grace. Praise his name!

I'm saying unfounded anxiety and fear and restlessness, anger, rage, a kind of crazy snapping at little things... Brothers and sisters, this is a check-engine light, and what that check-engine light should be revealing to you is that you have put your ultimate hope in the wrong thing. You've put your ultimate hope in something that cannot sustain, and because it can't sustain, you're busy trying to control it and manipulate it, which is exhausting, which then makes you anxious.

On all of these things, control is an illusion. It's an illusion. You can't control your money because you don't control the value of said dollar. You might have \$1 million but how much is that \$1 million worth if the economy tanks? Let me help you. Not much. Anybody in the oil business right now? Right? That's way up. Feast. Boom. Famine. At any given moment, the floor can drop out on that. You don't control it. You don't control your health. You don't control your relationships.

We don't like to go here. You're like, "Put the hood back down! My car looks great!" No. You don't control your job, you don't control your accomplishments, and even if you could control them, you would just be a slave to them, and it would just breed more anxiety, fear, restlessness, manipulation, anger, and control. Those things are a check-engine light for where your hopes actually are.

The creed we've been walking through and the phrase we're on, *the resurrection of the body and life everlasting*, is the foundation of Christian hope, Christian courage, and the ordering of the Christian life. These general hopes are good things, like I said, and you should never be rebuked for hoping in any of these things as long as they're not your ultimate hope. They cannot be the engine that drives your life. No, there's an ultimate hope that drives our lives.

So for the last 11 weeks we have stood and have read the creed together. We have said the reason we do that is we want to join in with the chorus of millions of Christians across millennia who have celebrated the Lord of the universe alongside of us. We say when we say the creed together we're rejecting the popular narratives of the day. We're rejecting how the world tries to disciple us, and we're saying, "Our allegiance is to the triune God of the Bible."

We have this week and next week, and then we'll be done with the creed. Next week, we're just going to cover, "Amen," with the kids in with us. It's going to be a good time, but for now let's stand together, and let's read this together as a family of faith. If you're not a believer or this just kind of wigs you out, feel free to stay seated or stand up and mouth it with us. It's not going to save you.

We're not witches. This isn't a spell. Feel free to participate however you're comfortable. Let's read this together, family.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

Why don't you go ahead and have a seat? What I want to do is take these two phrases and just shape very quickly a biblical theology around them, and then we'll plug it into our grid. We've said from the beginning what we think the creed will accomplish in our hearts as Christians is it will help with Christian symmetry.

It will shape us to be more symmetrical Christians with head, heart, and hands. It's going to help shape that. We said it was going to help us when all is said and done understand with clarity who God is and what God calls us into as his people. It's going to help us understand what the community of saints is supposed to be. Finally, it will help us counsel ourselves and others. Quickly, these two phrases, and then we'll get into our grid.

First, we have *the resurrection of the body*. Several weeks ago, when we talked about Christ having risen from the grave, we talked about Jesus being the firstfruit of a second resurrection that would be you and me, so I won't spend a terrible amount of time on this, but let's look again at 1 Corinthians 15:42-44. You can read that most of 1 Corinthians 15 deals with the bodily resurrection of the saints. I encourage you as you gather in home groups this week and as you get together to consider the bodily resurrection out of 1 Corinthians 15, but let's look there in verse 42.

**"So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."**

Don't misunderstand that "spiritual body" language there. He's not saying you're a ghost; rather, there's a physical body that is more like the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. It's a physical body.

It's not that you're ethereal. You're not just floating in air. You have a physical body, and if there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body.

Let me just make a quick point, because I think I spent 20 minutes on this three or four weeks ago. What we're talking about when we're talking about Christian hope and the bodily resurrection is we're talking about resurrection and not resuscitation. Does that make sense? We're talking about resurrection and not resuscitation. Let me tell you why that's such a big deal.

There is coming a day, and I don't know where you are on the spectrum of life, but there is coming a day when your body has full-on betrayed you and you don't want to be alive anymore, and you certainly get frustrated having woken up again. For most of us, that's off our radar. We're either on the ascent, we're at the cruising altitude, or we've just started to descend, but the Bible is very clear in Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, there is coming a day if we live long enough that we don't want to be here anymore, and we certainly don't want to come back!

If I had to guess, you've probably already had days like that regardless of your age, except for maybe you guys up here. Not if you're like 7. You're like, "What?" Most of us have had that day where we're sick or it has just been such an awful experience, we'd be fine just going home to glory. The writer of Ecclesiastes says it this way in Ecclesiastes 12, starting in verse 1.

**"Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" ("I have no pleasure being alive.") "...before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease..."**

Here's what you need to do. We're reading poetry, so you're not really able to see. Your grinders are gone. The keeper of the hands tremble. You're not able to do things. **"...the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed..."** It happened to me. I'm 41. It happened to me the first time this week. I was trying to read something on a lunchbox, and I figured out I had to move it to here to read it. Let it begin. Let it begin. That's what it means. Shutters are coming. I think I'll be able to get away with reading glasses. Some of you have trifocals. It looks like you work for NASA.

**"...in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird..."** Are you serious? You're like going to bed at 4:30 in the afternoon. You're like waking up at 2:00 in the morning.

**"...when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low..."** They can't hear. **"...they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way..."** The world starts moving too fast for them. They're frightened.

**"...the almond tree blossoms..."** That's white. **"...the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails..."** A lot of men are like, "Desire failing? Nuh-uh." Live long enough, bro. I have to stop this. I'm just playing. Let's keep reading.

**"...because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—before the silver cord is snapped..."** That's your spine. **"...or the golden bowl is broken..."** That's your head. **"...or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity."**

Our hope is not in resuscitation. I don't want to come back to this failing body. Here's the kicker for Lazarus. He had to die again. Listen. Legit. Getting resurrected by Jesus? That's legit. That's amazing, but the dude still had to die again. He's like, "Not again!" He had to die again. He had to die twice.

We're not talking resuscitation; we're talking resurrection. I will not be raised from the grave in the power of Christ to a tweaked back and aching knees and needing to put in my thing at night so I don't grind my teeth down. I don't get resurrected into being tired and weak and slow and weary and fearful. I'm not resuscitated; I'm resurrected. You won't be resuscitated; you'll be resurrected.

That takes us, really, to the life everlasting, but here this is the space in which our hopes lie. I have hope in this ultimate hope in this, that I will be bodily resurrected in a body that's not like this one, so all the kind of ailment this one can face, all the fear this one can face, will be gone. It's just going to be gone because it will be unable to be killed, unable to die, and death will be dead. This is where Christian hope lies.

What could man do to me? It's where our hope lies in Christ. It's going to be a physical resurrection. This is why I'm saying this is the base of Christian hope. This is the base of Christian courage. We order our lives based on this. I have eternity (we're going to get there), life everlasting, and I'm in a body that doesn't experience what this body experiences. It's not going to get afraid. It's not going to get sick. I'm not going to need TUMS. I'm not going to need gummy vitamins. It's over! That brings us to *the life everlasting*. If you have your Bible, flip over to Revelation 21. We're going to start in verse 1.

**"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.'**

**He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'** Also he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

**And he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.'"**

I am physically resurrected in bodily form to life everlasting. The thrust of Revelation 21 is that my soul and my body and this holistic picture of me is now where it was meant to be, and that's not just in New Jerusalem, but it is with God. I am with God and he is with me, and there's not this faith in it. He's there. It's not just hope anymore; he's there.

Hope will be realized, and here's what life everlasting looks like. Look at verse 4. **"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more."** That's life everlasting. No more funerals. No more breaking news. Death is done. Later on in 1 Corinthians 15, there's this kind of mockery of death. **"Where's your victory? Where's your sting, death?"** "What's up now?" That *what's up now* I added. That's not going to be in your Bible. If you turn there, you'll be like, "I don't see that." It's not there. There are no more tears, because death shall be no more.

**"...neither shall there be mourning."** You can mourn other things besides death. Has anybody ever found your heart mourning over something you thought was silly? My hand is up right now, so I don't know. Maybe you're just better than I am. Yeah. We mourn things. We mourn loss. It's a right thing to mourn. The Bible gives us permission to mourn. In fact, there are few things more ungodly than fake joy when you should be mourning. There are few things more ungodly than you Spirit sprinkling when you should be weeping. Right? We've been given permission to mourn.

In fact, in this world, in a Genesis 3 world, it's supposed to happen. Even something silly, you're allowed to mourn, but on that day, there won't be any mourning. Do you know what life everlasting looks like? There will be no more mourning. There will be nothing to go, "Oh, man, that hurt." There just won't be anything to mourn.

**"...nor crying, nor pain anymore..."** Have you ever had a loved one in pain or been in pain yourself and not really have been able to do anything about it? This all goes back to the illusion of control. It all goes back to the check-engine light. It's an awful thing. Do you know what life everlasting looks like? That's not on anybody's radar. Let's keep going.

**"...for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'"** Do you know what everlasting life looks like? Let's talk for a second. I get a little giddy about this one. How many of you have been marked by a tragedy or a specific event that has shaped your life in a way that you're still trying to work through and still trying to bounce back from? Is there anybody here who would be bold enough to say, "There are some dark things that have occurred in my life, and I'm still trying to recover from them"?

God help us. We have buried a lot of children at the Village Church because of the demographic. In fact, I've been pastor here for 13 years in just a little bit, and I've done one funeral for a 70-year-old. Everyone else has been younger than that. We've had very few funerals at the Village Church where this was a faithful saint who went home and we're rejoicing in his faithful service to King Jesus over the last 50 years.

It has been husbands who went fishing and didn't come home. It was babies who went down for a nap and didn't wake up. It was cancer that destroyed and ravaged. If you have these anxieties, forgive me; I'm not trying to play into those, but more, I want to say those leave marks. Some have been abused that leaves a type of soul wound that's not easy to recover from.

Do you know what everlasting life looks like? Those are gone! They're gone! Those things we have to fight through... Listen. I am praying the junk that has consumed and destroyed the last 12 generations of Chandler men go in the ground with me so that I have new issues to pass on to my son because nobody doesn't pass junk onto their kids. Everybody will limp because of the inadequacies of their parents.

It will be on them to handle it, but I'm hoping the kind of really dark, horrific, disgusting things that have marked Chandler men for the last few centuries dies with me because I'm constantly fighting, getting counseling, working through, pulling in my accountability group, and asking for prayer, and I'm going to fight the good fight so my son doesn't have to.

But I don't have to fight anymore with everlasting life. I don't have to struggle anymore. I don't have to war against those wounds and my flesh. Everlasting life doesn't look like that. I'm free. Finally and forever free. That's everlasting life. No energy, no vitality, no mind-space having to work through this or figure out that or try to forget it. It's just over. It's everlasting life.

**"And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' And he said to me..."** Listen to this. **"It is done!"** I love the feeling of being able to say about a project, "It is done." This is Jesus saying, **"It is done."** If we had time to cross-reference and all of that, there's this, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Come on in to the reward because it's done. It's over. The wrestle, the fight... It's over. Come in forever." A resurrected body for life everlasting.

Let's plug that into our grid. How does that form Christian symmetry? How does that make us more symmetrical as Christians? Let's start here. Some of us, some of us who even who love Jesus and claim Jesus, are putting undue hope on things that can't deliver, and that has led us into anxiety, restlessness, and fear. We've begun to manipulate and try to control relationships and situations in our lives.

We are not relying on the Lord. We're relying on us, the check-engine light of anxiety and restlessness falling back into sinful patterns, trying to manipulate and control, flying off in a rage, getting frustrated and you're not sure why. That's the check-engine light, guys. If you dig... If you stop, what are you putting your hope in? All this frantic activity? What have you placed your hope in? What's driving your life right now? Is it a good hope misplaced?

Secondly, some of us need to take a bit of a disciplined time-out and start viewing our lives today from 10,000 years from now looking back. I have been there on the day where you feel overwhelmed and done and question the goodness of God and wonder if he's going to make real on his promises. Has anybody been there?

What helps our hearts is to go... Use your imagination not for sinfulness but for righteousness. I say this to you all the time because I want it to be the default in your thinking when the stuff hits the fan. Ten thousand years from now, the day the doctor sat across from me and told me I had malignant brain cancer will not seem that huge of a deal. That was one of the worst days of my life. It undid me. I'm about to celebrate six years, but...

You can clap at that, but my point was more like on that kind of day the net that caught me is that 10,000 years from now I'll just be chuckling about that day like old warriors do after they survive a nasty battle and then they get back together. "Oh, my gosh, man. Remember when they were flanking us and we didn't think we were getting out of there and you got shot in the leg? That was crazy." Ten years later, they're rejoicing in the fact they survived.

Ten thousand years from now, I didn't just survive; we thrived. We see then how God used difficulty to shape us, to expose the check-engine light of our misplaced hopes to refine us, to rescue us, to turn us more and more and more into what he designed us to be.

What about clarity? Two things. First, there's a physical bodily resurrection. Look right at me. You will never be an angel. When it comes time for you to go to a funeral, give the eulogy at a funeral, or do something like that, please don't say, "They're an angel now." They're not angels. Angels wish they were us. That's what the Bible says.

The book of Hebrews says angels look upon our salvation and go, "Man, that's awesome!" They want to be us. We shouldn't want to be them. Praise God for them. They are instruments in God's hand to press back what's dark, to lift oppression, and to destroy the work of the Enemy, but God has bigger things in store for you and for me.

We're not angels. Look at me. We're not going to be ghosts. As much as you want to, you will never haunt anyone. You don't get to. You don't get to haunt anybody. I've used some of my unsanctified imagination to imagine haunting some folk if I died, but the Lord has something better for me than that. He has something better for you. There is a physical bodily resurrection, and you and I will live

forever. With that clarity, how does that shape our community? There's an awareness that drives us to kindness and compassion because we know all of us are eternal beings. Here's how C.S. Lewis put it.

"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—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. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn [or somber]. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption."

We are a community of people who are immortal. Lewis' argument is that the United States of America is not immortal. In fact, compared to us, it's a gnat. Institutions, the arts, or the Mona Lisa compared to you and me is a gnat because it is not immortal. We are immortal, and that shapes how we see our community. Whether you're a Christian or not, you're immortal, which leads me to counsel. If this is true, how do we counsel ourselves and how do we counsel others?

Since we are eternal creatures, then we take serious the eternality of our souls. Christian or non-Christian, because this is true, we must be very (according to Lewis) sullen, serious about the fact we are eternal. An awareness of our eternality... By the way, I'm not sure if that's a word, but I'm just going to keep using it confidently like it is one.

In the end here, our awareness is going to help us take sin more seriously. I was never so serious about my sin as after the doctor told me I had two years to live. Never more serious about my sin! Never had an easier time walking away from my flesh than when I thought standing in front of Jesus was imminent.

When you realize and dwell on and you think about the eternality of the soul, you're serious about sin. You begin to order your life because of where your hope is placed. The engine that begins to drive the activity of your life is now no longer a misplaced hope, but a rightly placed ultimate hope in what Christ has done for us on the cross.

If we're talking about counsel, we counsel ourselves with the eternality of our souls. It also helps us take seriously the eternality of the souls of others. That means the Christian brother or sister of

mine who grates against, not just my nerves, but my last nerve...? I see them through the lenses of their immortal souls.

I wonder how their past experiences and their highs and lows and their wounds have shaped them and affected them, and I extend more grace knowing they will be with me worshipping Jesus forever, and I feel an angst for my neighbor and my co-worker and friend who want nothing to do with Jesus.

It doesn't paralyze me to the point where, as we look at either the life of Paul or the life of Peter or even what Lewis says here in regards to play... It doesn't paralyze, but it creates a seriousness about the people I come across. It creates a seriousness in my prayers and desires to see Jesus save. Remember, I said a little earlier on that this truth is the foundation for Christian courage, because if eternity is real for the Christian and the non-Christian, then I'm really serious about those who don't know Jesus.

I'm really serious about that because a lot is at stake, so I'm going to swallow my cowardice and walk in the courage of knowing eternity is real. I'm not going to balk at being misunderstood or maybe made fun of or maybe, God help us, we're just a bunch of dorky high school kids. That's how we live our lives? "I don't want them to think I'm not cool." You're 40 years old. Stop. You're 50. Stop. We're going to be courageous. We're going to share the gospel. We're going to have them into our homes. We're going to invite to church with us. We're going to pour into. We counsel ourselves with eternity, and we counsel others in light of eternity.

Two questions I want to ask us to consider as I conclude here. Here's the first one. It will take a second, so I want to give you some time. *Where are you placing your ultimate hope?* As you think about the frantic pace of your life, what's driving you? What's the engine that's moving your car? What are you actually hoping in? What's driving you at work, driving you at home, driving you to gain and to get that thing your heart is consumed with? What are you really driven by? That's a tricky question. I think it's one that takes serious thought and contemplation. I want to just give you a time to begin it. I don't think you'll be able to finish it tonight.

Where are you placing your ultimate hope? Are those places leading to anxiety, control, fear, anger? Brothers and sisters, that's the check-engine light. Something is wrong under the hood. Misplaced hope. Where is it? Where have you misplaced hope if the engine is rattling? We're going to spend

some time, maybe a couple of moments, before Communion, confessing that before the Lord, asking for the Lord's grace, and receiving the Lord's grace in Jesus.

My second question for you as we end here is...*In what ways have you shown a lack of concern for the eternity of your own soul?* Do you take your sin lightly? Have you categorized things God says he hates as no big deal in your life? What about the souls of others? Is there any urgency in your heart, your mind, or your life at all for those who are outside the saving grace? Are you burdened to pray? Does cowardice mark your walk outside of these walls far more than Christian courage does?

I'm not doing a drive-by guilt. I'm trying to get you to dig around in your heart and see what's going on in there. Listen. The reason we don't like to ask these kinds of questions is because we know the answers. Right? It's ugly in here. It really is. Most of us are cowards. Most of us don't think in light of eternity. Most of us can't get out of the here and now. Gosh, most of you are having a hard time not rolling your head to the football game you're watching right after this. Yet, you and I are caught up in something that has no beginning and no end and invited to play this beautiful role.

Those are my questions for you. Where are you placing your ultimate hope? If you walk in anxiety, control, and fear, what might that be revealing about where your hopes are? In what ways do you show a lack of concern about the eternity of your own soul and the souls of others? Let's pray.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the coming resurrection. That there's a day coming when our bodies don't hurt, where we don't cry, where the fight to forgive, the fight to heal, and the wrestle over doubt all gives way and we get to rest in that final, "It is done." I pray, Holy Spirit of God, that you would give us insight. Where is our ultimate hope? Where have we placed our ultimate hope? Spirit, it's easy to get lost in ourselves. Will you bring clarity to us?

Father, where there are those around us who, either because of a lack of courage or a lack of thinking well, we have not engaged with the good news of the gospel, we have not prayed for them, we have not invited them into our homes for dinner, into our church, into our home groups, or into a conversation about you, will you convict our hearts? Will you prick our souls with the weight of eternity? Help us, now, as we confess and consider your goodness and grace to us in Jesus. We thank you, even in the ugliness of our hearts, that you love us and your love for us has not wavered in our foolishness. We love you. Help us. Amen.