

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 NIV

Nike!**For Jesus and For Us!**

Easter Sunday, April 20 at 7 AM and 10:45

The Resurrection of our Lord – 2014

Monday Divine Services at 7 PM return on April 28

Wednesday Bible Studies in May – both at 11 AM & 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: *He is risen!* (He is risen indeed!) Jesus' resurrection guarantees our resurrection, *but is that good or bad?* Some may say: "Let's eat, drink, and be merry *today* – for *tomorrow* we may die, **and that is the end!**" In other words, they *believe death IS the end* and even *WANT death to BE the end!* Why? Because they have done wrong and *there is nothing they can do to make it right!* Therefore, they are *terrified* at the prospect of being raised to stand before God *who is both holy and almighty!*

But I have good news: **Jesus, who is God in human flesh, has fixed our unfixable problem!** If our burden was left for us to bear, we should be fervently praying *there is no resurrection!* **But** – because of → who Jesus is, → what He has done, and → our God-given trust in Him as our Savior – *we can gladly anticipate the day we will be raised back to life!* We now focus on the end of what we call *the resurrection chapter* – 1 Corinthians chapter 15:

1. **Whether We Live or Die, Everyone Will Be Changed:**

- a. Notice when the change will occur: ⁵¹ **Listen, I tell you a mystery** [*μυστήριον, something previously unknown but now revealed by God*]: **We will not all**

sleep [*physically die*], **but we will all be changed--⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.** // So note the speed of the change – “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye...” Then note when – “at the last trumpet.” These things will also occur at *the very same moment*: The Bible says that “the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” (1Th 4:16 NIV) So the change will occur *at the very moment when Christ returns!* And when will He come? At a most unexpected time – *like a thief in the night* (1 Thess. 5:2)!

- b. Notice who will be raised: **For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.** ⁵³ **For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.** // So not just those who died in Christ, *but all the dead will be raised!* Jesus said: “...an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth...” (John 5:28-29 NAS) The Bible also records these words of Paul: “...there will be a resurrection of **both** the righteous and the wicked.” (Acts 24:15 NIV) So for us who know Jesus as Savior, *we long for His coming and the great resurrection;* but, *for those who continue to reject Him as Savior,* they should know that ♦He is coming **and** ♦they will be raised – *not to life, but to judgment* (John 5:29)!

Hymn Verses: “The Strife Is O’er, the Battle Done”

LSB 464, vv. 1-2

2. **Nike Is a Past Reality and a Future Promise:**

- a. Won but not yet revealed: ⁵⁴ **When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”**
(Isaiah 25:8) // When Jesus was nailed to His cross, *He received all sins and all punishment*; then He declared: *It has been paid in full* (τετέλεσται, John 19:30)! That is *when* He defeated sin and death, *but people still sin and they still die!* So “**death [being] swallowed up in victory**” will **be seen by all when He returns!**
- b. Law > sin > death – we are defeated: ⁵⁵ **“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”** (Hosea 13:14) ⁵⁶ **The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.** // Ouch! We as people have two huge problems: **(1)** We cannot perfectly keep God’s law, *so we have all sinned*; **(2)** we can do *nothing* to remove our sins! Therefore, left to ourselves, we are defeated, helpless, hopeless, losers!
- c. But there is good news through Jesus: ⁵⁷ **But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** // Jesus said: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (Mat 5:17 ESV) So Jesus solved our two huge problems: **(1)** He perfectly kept the law for us; **(2)** He took the punishment that we deserve! So, God the Father is kindly inviting everyone to share in Jesus’ nike! What does that

mean? “Nike” (νίκη) is the Greek word for “victory”! **Let’s think about God’s great goodness to us:** We messed up big time, *so He sent His Son!* Then, Jesus won the nike, *the victory!* Now, through our God-given relationship with Jesus, *His nike is also our nike!* In Jesus, **+**we are spiritually alive, **+**physical death is not the end, and **+**we have eternal life; so, **in Jesus, we are winners!**

Hymn Verses: “The Strife Is O’er, the Battle Done” **LSB 464, vv. 3-5**

3. **Faith Responds with Boldness:** ⁵⁸ **Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.** // Note the first word: “Therefore,” it indicates that what follows will explain the intended result of vv. 51-57, or even *all of chapter 15!* Since Jesus was raised **and** our own resurrections are certain, **we can now:**
- “**stand firm**” on the truth of God’s Holy Word!
 - “**Let nothing move [us]**” away from the One with whom we share the nike – *the victory over sin, death, and the devil!*
 - “**Always give [ourselves] fully to the work of the Lord,**” *rather than being consumed by our own selfish interests.* Then, *as we do God’s will*, God will work through us to accomplish His purpose!

Conclusion: May the joy of Jesus’ nike ***fill us with joy and *encourage us to live for the Lord!** And all God’s people said: **Amen!**