

## **To Remain Unmovable**

1 Corinthians 15:58

Sunday Morning, March 7, 2010

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### **Introduction:**

*1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

First, let me give you some definitions of the Words that are used in this passage. The first word is steadfast. It means to be sedimentary, to be settled. The next word is unmoveable. It comes from a long Greek word ametakinetos. The idea of the word is that we are not able to move, not able to change. The third word is the word abounding. It means to go beyond.

Now, I want to paint a picture for you from this verse. We have said that God wants us to change, and yet, we have also said that God does not change. It seems strange to talk about God wanting us to change, to be conformed to His image when God does not change. The act of being conformed to the image of Christ involves a process that is not God like. We must change and God does not change. God is using an instrument in our lives that has never been a part of God's character throughout eternity.

There are several doctrines that are impossible to comprehend. Eternity future is comprehensible. But eternity past is incomprehensible. Why? Because if God existed for eternity past, then we would never have come to today. The idea of God being in existence for eternity eliminates the possibility of ever getting to any future point. God Himself, had to interrupt eternity and change something that had been in existence, his kingdom, for eternity. He created Satan and that in itself was a change. He created Him with the ability to choose which was a change. Satan's fall changed heaven. God created man which was a change, a change in eternity which again is a concept that cannot be fathomed. Man sinned and changed God's creation. That change was a destructive change which required God to send His Son to the earth, which changed for a period of time the attributes of Christ. He died which was a change, a first in all of eternity. He rose from the dead and became the firstborn of many creatures. The word "first" signifies a change. That had never happened before. There are a lot of firsts in creation, which means that even though God does not change, God created change and placed man in an environment of change. When He created the world with the sun, moon and stars, he set in motion time, and the evening and the morning were a huge change. Every day this world constantly changes from light to darkness and then back to light. It is an illustration of His plan. Eternity is interrupted and change occurs on this earth every day and every moment of every day. The clouds and the wind and the weather all signify change. Now, originally in the garden change was very minor, but the longer the world exists the greater the events of change, and the greatest change will occur in the coming years. In the tribulation, the sun will be darkened, the moon turned to blood. That is a huge change. Then we have the change of the millennium when God once again restores the earth to sovereign rule. Finally, the world and the heavens are destroyed and God creates a new heaven and a new earth, and once again, change is eliminated. Nothing changes in eternity future..

Honestly, we love change. We love to see the seasons. That's why we live in Minne-

sota. A heaven without change is a problem in our thinking. We are not sure if we will enjoy doing the same things for eternity.

But having said all that, we are still required by God to change. We need to become more like Him and less like this world. God requires us to understand His Word and apply it to our lives. And this is where the verse fits in. ONCE WE ARE CHANGED, THEN THAT CHANGE NEEDS TO BE MADE PERMANENT. There are several areas in which we need to be steadfast, unmovable.

## **I. We Need to be unchangeable in knowledge.**

God does not want us to learn of Him and then reject the knowledge that He has given. That is really the background of this passage. In Chapter 15, in verses 3 and 4 God gives us a clear definition of the gospel. He says,

*1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

*4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

The Apostle Paul writes under the inspiration of the Spirit to those who will hear. This is the first thing that is delivered to us, first in time and first in importance. Logan preached last Sunday night on “the cross centered life.” Our Christian life begins with the cross, and it is also the thing that empowers us. The cross needs to envelope every area of our lives. It is the pillar of our faith and the pillar of our doctrine. That is why Paul writes in verse 2,

*2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

Paul is not saying that you have to keep on and try hard to maintain your belief. It is not a matter of working hard at your faith. What he is saying is that there are certain things that are indispensable to salvation. You can believe that Jesus died on the cross, you can believe that He died for you, but if you don't believe that He died and rose again, your faith is useless. It is empty; it is void. You are believing in vain. Belief requires a faith that accepts the resurrection of Christ. There were many in Paul's day that denied the resurrection. They could accept Jesus as the Messiah, but they could not accept that He rose from the dead. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. But if you deny that Jesus rose again, then what you are also denying is the fact that you will rise from the dead.

Paul also makes it clear, that the resurrection is the proof of the propitiation. The word propitiation means that God was satisfied with Christ's death. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then He did not conquer death, and if He did not conquer death, then that means that His sacrifice was not sufficient to pay for sin. If Christ is not risen, then your sins have not been paid for.

*1 Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

This chapter is a treatise on the resurrection. It says in no unequivocal terms that Jesus rose from the dead, that the dead in Christ will also rise. And we are to hold fast to this truth. We are not to let this part of our belief falter. It is too important. We must believe in the resur-

rection.

## **II. We Need to be Unchanging in our Manner of Life**

We need to be “always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

So let’s get back to the definition. The word for unmovable is a meta kenetos. Let’s break that down. A is a negative prefix. It changes the meaning of the word. It means not. The word meta in this case refers to change. We know that metanoiw, the word for repentance, means a change of mind. We know that metamorphosis is a change of form. Meta kenetos means a change of movement. When you put “a” in front, it means, “unable to change any movement.”

The word kenetos is the word that we get kenetic from. Kenetic is a different type of energy than potential energy. Kenetic energy is energy of motion. We are sitting on a couch and we have great potential energy, but that energy is not visible without motion. When we get up, there is a different energy. Our bodies are exerting energy and calories are burning to produce the energy for that motion.

God has placed within us the ability to change. That energy is the Holy Spirit. We have no energy within us that would enable us to change without God. We have no potential energy. The Holy Spirit has the power of God to produce the change that God desires. And we need meta –change and we need kenetos - the energy, to change.

Understand that when we talk about the potential of a Christian to change we are also talking about an eternal attribute of God. God has not given us the Spirit by measure. We do not have more or less of the Holy Spirit. If one word of God can create the universe, then your potential for change is as great as the power of God. God did not create you to :”barely make it.” If you try and then try a little bit harder you can change into His image.” God wants you to change and has not pulled any punches or held back any reserve. You have all that you need. **YOU ACCORDING TO THIS VERSE HAVE THE POTENTIAL ENERGY TO BE ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.**

However, once we change any part of our life into the image of Christ, then we can’t allow that change to revert back to the way we were before we were saved. It must be “locked in.” I have a welder at home and it has this giant knob that you pull up and then you can adjust the amps that you are using to weld. But then, once you get that temperature, you can push down on that rod and it locks it in place. Well, a long time back that arm quit locking in the amps. And it is very frustrating. If I am using a real heavy welding rod, I will start to weld and the temperature will begin to drop as I weld. In a few moments, I no longer have enough amps to keep going. The other day, I took a drill and drilled through the arm and put a screw into it so it can’t move any more. When I weld with a heavy rod, I screw it down so it can’t move on me. When I weld with a smaller rod, I have to take that screw out.

Again, we need to change into His image, and once we have changed, we never want to change in that area again. I shared with you a passage the other day from John 6. It is the chapter of the “bread of life.” Jesus said,

*John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

Man is searching for things, but nothing satisfies. Everything you try only makes you more hungry to have more. We eat three meals a day and still we are hungry. But there is

something that can satisfy. Jesus is the bread of life. Those who have Him, need never hunger again. That is potential energy. But, there are many who take the bread of life and then leave it for the things of this world. Peter says that some were as a dog returning to his vomit.

*2Pe 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*

What a disgusting thought. Once you have tasted of the good Word of God, why would you return to your own vomit. But that is what we do when we go back to the way we were before we came to Christ. The first thought that we are looking at is not changing in our doctrine. In this chapter, I Corinthians 15, once we determine that Jesus rose from the dead, then that doctrine is unchangeable because it is based on the Word of God that can't change. We read,

*Matthew 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

In the Hebrew language one of the letters is a yod. It looks like this in the Greek ~. It is the smallest of all the letters. And yet, it is used in some very important words. For instance, the word Jehovah. Yahweh - the first letter is the Yod. We translate it with the J sound, and so any word in the Hebrew that starts with a J sound in English starts with the letter yod. Though it is small it is very important.

The tittle that he is talking about in this passage refers to small pointings in the Hebrew. For instance, the letter sin, has a pointing on this side, and the letter shin has a pointing on that side. The meaning of a word can change based on the placement of that marking. That is also important. If you remember the story, that tittle caused many men to die in the book of Judges. The Ephraimites went to war against the Gileadites, Jephthah was the captain of the Gileadites. The Gileadites took the fords of the river and would not allow any Ephraimites to pass until they said the word shibboleth. Unfortunately, that was not easy for the Ephraimites to say. They did not pronounce it right and said instead said sibboleth. When they could not pronounce it, they were put to death and some 42,000 men of that tribe died, many becomes of that little pronunciation mark.

Barnes states "To change a small point of one letter, therefore, might vary the meaning of a word, and destroy the sense. Hence the Jews were exceedingly cautious in writing these letters, and considered the smallest change or omission a reason for destroying the whole manuscript when they were transcribing the Old Testament." God says that the Word of God will not change. Not one jot or one tittle will pass from it.

Since the Word of God will never change, once we learn the meaning of a passage, we need to lock that in. It is not subject to revision. When we learn that salvation is a free gift, we lock that in because it will never change. Not for 10 million years into eternity, not a jot or tittle will change. There are areas that are unchangeable, and so they must be in our lives.

### **III. We must not change in our labor for the Lord**

*1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Once we change in our work or in our attitude toward God, we need to lock in what we have become. Hit the save button. Put it in your thoughts and never change. For instance, if you learn that you have a certain gift, that gift is a permanent gift from God. He says to us,

*Romans 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

The word repentance means that God does not change his mind. He is not looking to see what we are good at. He made us and gave us all of our abilities. He does not have to experiment. He not only knows what we will do, but He knows what we would do. But there is very little difference in potential. Every gift is divine and every gift is divinely empowered. The difference is not in potential energy. The difference is in kinetic energy. That is the energy that is released when we move.

Once we discover what God has given to us, and it should not be hard to tell. You know, there are many people who have no idea what their spiritual gift is. But the difference between a natural ability and a supernatural ability is like the difference between heaven and earth. If you have a hard time seeing the difference between your five year old daughters painting and the painting of Rembrandt, then you might be able to plead innocence. But there is so much difference between the gift of the Holy Ghost and the ability of Dwight LaPine. Dwight LaPine is characterized by can't and failure. The gift of the holy spirit is divine and can is the idea of what we have with Him. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. The entire trinity is involved in your work for the Lord. The Holy Spirit empowers us. The Son of God, our Lord strengthens us. The Father equips us. The Word of God guarantees the results. But that is based not on what we do, but where we find our strength to do what we do. If we can't tell if our work is divinely empowered, the chances are that it is not. We work in our effort, and our effort is failure.

Paul said,

*1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

WE are what we are by God's grace. That does not mean that we do not labor. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord. Think about what that means. There is nothing that you do that will be worthless to the Lord. Your labor will always produce if it is done in God's strength. If we labor in God's strength, then we know that His grace is not bestowed in vain. We also know,

*1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

God did not create the world in vain. We read,

*Isaiah 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.*

God did not create the world in vain and He did not create my life in vain. He gave me

my abilities and he gave me His word so that my work would not be in vain. The only way that I know not to work in vain is to preach God's Word. God's Word is the only object and the only learned device that will always produce results. In I want my labor to matter, if I want to affect change on this world for good, then I need to use the Word of God to teach men the source of strength.

People labor on this earth, and everything that they do, they will have to do again. It is the reason that we learn. My son brought home a wood puzzle made of wood blocks cut in shapes. So one morning, I put it together, and it wasn't that hard. But the crazy guy took it apart the next day. I thought, I can put it together easily now, that I have done it already once. After all, I know what the finished shape looks like. So the next day I tried to put it together again. This time it took me three times as long. I was glad when he came home and put the finished puzzle in a plastic bag to bring to school. I walked in the front room, and there it is on the couch all apart. What? So I started to put it together again. I had put it together twice before, and you think I could remember how I put it together. I was sure that the pieces went together this way, but I had remembered wrong, only now that I was sure I was right, I wasn't about to try to change the way I did it. So it took me five times longer this time. Everything on this earth it designed to do again. The reason we go to college is so we will learn how to do it, because we will have to do it again and again. All of our labor on this earth will be in vain. Eventually all of it will be gone. It won't matter how many houses you built or how many cars or computers you fixed.

A friend of mine had a great skill. He could repair IBM adding machines. That was a great skill, but that skill is a wasted skill. We don't need adding machines. We don't need to know how to fix them. Nor typewriters, or 286 or 386 or 486 computers. It is a wasted skill. All of our labor is in vain. But the Bible says,

*Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

C. A limited time. Change is connected to time. All of the events of change in this universe are all matters of time. When time ceases to exist, so will the need for change. We live in a world given to time. Time is one of the most important aspects of our lives, and time changes things, all things. Evolutionists say that with time all things will change. In that they are right. But when you are a child of God, your purpose is not connected to time, nor is your labor for the Lord. The Bible says,

“Always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

God wants our lives to produce. He wants us to abound in His work. And when we serve Him, we should produce and never stop. We should change into His image and then stop changing. We need to be steadfast in our service. We need to be unmovable in our commitment. We need to abound in His work. The most important thing to remain is a constant service to a changeless God. We need to stop changing when we come into conformity to what God wants us to be and what He wants us to do.