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2026



 **Week 4**

1 Corinthians

Brighton Community Church

Overview

A 20-Day Devotional Reading By Rev Dr William Wan



Week 4 Day 1

Therefore: The Word That Changes Everything

23 Mar 2026

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**The Rhythm of Reliance:
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Therefore: The Word That Changes Everything

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58

1 Corinthians 15:58

⁵⁸Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.



DEVOTION



DEVOTION

Therefore: The Word That Changes Everything

The feeling is all too common: the nagging suspicion that your efforts do not matter. The ministry that seems fruitless, the righteous stand that costs you dearly, the quiet faithfulness that goes unnoticed — it can all feel like throwing seeds onto the pavement. In the face of such discouragement or lack of affirmation, despair whispers that our labour is in vain. The apostle Paul ends his magnificent treatise on the resurrection with one word that silences this whisper and changes everything: “Therefore” (1 Cor 15:58).

This single verse is the practical, gut-level application of the entire resurrection chapter. The unshakeable hope of the future (1 Cor 15:1-57) is meant to produce unshakeable faithfulness in the present (1 Cor 15:58). The word “Therefore” connects your mundane, difficult, or seemingly ineffective work today to the cosmic victory of Christ yesterday and forever.



Why your labour is never wasted:

1. **It is connected to an eternal outcome.** The resurrection is not just a point of doctrine; it is the proof that God's kingdom is a reality that will ultimately swallow up every earthly failure, pain, and death. Because Christ was raised, we know that God's economy is not like ours. He specialises in bringing life from death and glory from obscurity. Your "labour in the Lord" is invested into that eternal, resurrection economy.

2. **The value is in the Lord, not the labour.** Notice the phrase is not "your labour in your own strength" or "your labour for visible results." It is "your labour in the Lord." The eternal significance is not inherent in the task itself, but in its connection to him. When done as an act of worship and obedience to Christ, even the smallest task — changing a diaper, preparing a report, visiting the sick — is caught up into the eternal purposes of God.

3. **Faithfulness is the metric, not fruitfulness.** We are called to be faithful stewards of the gifts, opportunities, and relationships God has given us (1 Cor 4:2). The harvest is his business (1 Cor 3:6-7). Our calling is to sow the seeds, water the ground, and tend the field, trusting that the power of the resurrection will bring the growth in his time and his way.

Yet despite these assurances, we continue to wrestle with a persistent tension — the challenge of immediacy. The pressure of the immediate makes us desperate for quick, measurable results to assure us that we are on the right track. When those results do not appear, we are tempted to quit, believing our effort is wasted. Our shortsightedness is our biggest disparager.



The world measures value by visible, quantifiable success. The resurrection announces a new measure: faithfulness to a victorious King. My labour is not a sunk cost; it is an eternal investment. My perseverance is not a pointless struggle; it is a participation in Christ's victory. Therefore, I stand firm. I will not let anything move me. I will give myself fully not because I see the harvest, but because I know the Harvester. And in his economy, nothing offered in his name is ever wasted.



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Reflect

What are some of the challenges you face when you are serving God or are asked to start serving? How can you persevere in ministry and relationships knowing your labour in the Lord is never wasted?



Journal



PRAY

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Pray

Personal

Pray for steadfastness, refusing to let discouragement or lack of visible results shake your obedience.

Pray for joy in unseen faithfulness, trusting that nothing given to God is ever wasted.

Corporate

Leaders of the Church

Pray that pastors and leaders will remain steadfast and immovable even when ministry fruit is not immediately visible.

Pray for renewed joy, resilience, and faithfulness in every leader as they labour for the Lord.



The Rhythm of Reliance: Giving When It Does Not Make Sense

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

¹ Now about the collection for the Lord's people: do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ² On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. ³ Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.



DEVOTION



DEVOTION

The Rhythm of Reliance: Giving When It Does Not Make Sense

Financial instability triggers our deepest survival instincts. When the market dips, expenses rise, or the future feels uncertain, our natural impulse is to clamp down, hoard, and protect what we have. It is precisely into this anxiety that Paul speaks a counter-intuitive word about money. His instructions for the Jerusalem collection are not dry administrative footnotes; they are a profound theology of generosity designed for unstable times: “Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income...” (1 Cor 16:1-2).

Paul is not asking for a spontaneous, emotional reaction. He is instituting a discipline — a rhythm of reliance that builds spiritual muscle memory for trust.

The Principles of Faith-Fuelled Generosity:

1. **It is planned and regular.** This is not haphazard. It is a conscious, weekly priority. By giving first, before the week’s expenses and anxieties take over, I actively dethrone money as a source of security and crown God as my Provider. It makes generosity a default setting, not an afterthought.



2. **It is personal and proportional.** This is not a one-size-fits-all religious tax. It is a personal act of worship based on what God has given to me. The amount is less important than the posture: a conscious, proportionate setting aside of resources for God's work. It is an acknowledgement that it all belongs to him anyway.

3. **It is purposeful and practical.** The goal is relief for suffering brothers and sisters. This generosity is not abstract; it connects the local church to the global body in tangible care. It moves resources from where God has placed abundance to where there is need, embodying gospel unity.

Yet we often struggle with scarcity mindset. The scarcity mindset says to us that we do not have enough for ourselves, therefore we cannot afford to keep on giving. It breeds fear and faithlessness. The discipline of regular giving is a tangible act of defiance against that fear and lack of faith. It is a declaration that our security is found not in our bank balance, but in our faithful God. It is putting our money where our eschatology is: we believe in a God of resurrection and provision, so we can live and give like we truly believe in it.



In a world shouting ‘Save! Hoard! Protect yourself!’ the Spirit whispers, ‘Give. Trust. Invest in what lasts.’ Generosity is not a bill to pay; it is a rhythm of grace. It is the regular, tangible reminder that we are not owners but stewards, that our security is found in the cross and empty tomb, not in a stock portfolio. Your bank statement is a theological document. Let it tell a story of trust, not fear; of open-handed worship, not tight-fisted anxiety. Practise the rhythm of reliance. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. A heart anchored in God’s faithful provision is a heart that can truly be at peace, no matter what the market does. John Wesley’s dictum is still relevant today, “Earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can.”



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Reflect

Are you practising regular generosity even when resources feel tight or uncertain? How can your giving become an act of worship and trust in God's provision?



Journal



PRAY



Pray

Personal

Pray for a generous heart, freed from fear and scarcity, trusting God as your Provider.

Pray for discipline in giving, making generosity a planned and joyful rhythm of worship.

Corporate

Church Staff and Service Teams

Pray that staff and service teams will embrace rhythms of reliance, trusting God for provision and strength.

Pray for generosity of time, energy, and gifting among ministry teams as they serve his people each week.



Your Posture for the Storm

Read 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

¹³ Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. ¹⁴ Do everything in love.



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Your Posture for the Storm

In the midst of a long letter addressing complex issues, Paul concludes with a burst of concise, powerful commands. It is as if he boils down all the necessary counsel for living in a fallen world into four essential postures. In the face of everything VUCA represents — Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity — he charges the church: “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Cor 16:13-14).

This is not a passive wish but an active call to arms. It is a command to assume a specific stance, a spiritual posture that will determine whether we withstand the pressures of our age or are swept away by them.

The Four-Fold Posture for Overcoming Life in a Broken World:

1. **Be Watchful (Be on your guard)**. This is the call to vigilance. We are to be spiritually alert, discerning the times, and aware of the schemes of the enemy (1 Pet 5:8). In an ambiguous world filled with conflicting messages and subtle deceptions, we cannot afford to be spiritually asleep or naive. This means we need to guard our hearts, minds, and doctrine with proactive awareness.



2. **Be Firm (Stand firm in the faith).** This is the call to doctrinal stability. The “faith” here refers to the body of truth delivered to the church. When cultural currents shift and popular opinions challenge biblical authority, we are not to drift or compromise. We are to plant our feet on the solid rock of God’s revealed word. Our identity and worldview must be anchored in objective truth, not subjective feelings or cultural trends.

3. **Be Courageous (Be courageous; be strong).** This is the call to action. The Greek word here literally means “act like men,” implying mature, courageous strength. It is not enough to see the danger and know the truth; we must have the fortitude to act upon it. This is a strength that endures hardship, faces opposition without flinching, and does the right thing even when it is costly. It is strength fuelled by the Spirit, not mere human grit (Eph 6:10).

4. **Be Loving (Do everything in agape love).** This is the call to motivation. This final command is the lens through which the first three must be viewed. Watchfulness must not become paranoia. Firmness must not become rigid harshness. Courage must not become brash aggression. Agape love — selfless, sacrificial, Christ-like agape love — must be the engine and the aim of all we do. It is the distinctive mark of the Christian and the ultimate proof of the Spirit’s work (1 Cor 13:1-3).



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Reflect

Are you spiritually alert and standing firm in truth, or easily swayed by challenges? How can you cultivate courage and love as your daily posture in a volatile world?



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PRAY

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Pray

Personal

Pray for vigilance and courage, standing firm in truth amidst spiritual, cultural, or personal storms.

Pray that you will do everything in love, making love the posture that governs strength, conviction, and action.

Corporate

Missions

Pray that missionaries will stand firm in storms — remaining watchful, courageous, and loving in spiritually challenging environments.

Pray for openness among unreached people groups to receive the gospel through the posture and witness of missions workers.



The Cry That Changes Everything: Maranatha!

Read 1 Corinthians 16:22

1 Corinthians 16:22

²² If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed!
Come, Lord!



DEVOTION



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The Cry That Changes Everything: Maranatha!

In the midst of final instructions, greetings, and personal notes, Paul erupts with a sudden, powerful cry that would have stopped every first-century reader in their tracks. It is a cry that transcends time, culture, and circumstance: “If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord!” (1 Cor 16:22). That final, two-word plea—*Maranatha*—is Aramaic for “Our Lord, come!” This is not a theological footnote; it is the beating heart of Christian hope. In a world torn apart by power struggles and injustices, this cry anchors us to the one certainty that changes everything: Jesus is coming back.

The early church lived in the light of this “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13). It was the lens through which they viewed suffering, the motivation for their mission, and the source of their purity. Paul’s sharp contrast makes the point: a failure to love Christ is ultimate folly because the One we are called to love with all our heart, mind, soul and strength is the very Judge who is returning. But for those who love him, his return is not a threat but the fulfilment of our deepest longing.



How “Maranatha!” Reshapes Our Lives:

1. **It purifies our motives.** The certainty of Christ’s return and our coming accountability (2 Cor 5:10) forces a sober evaluation of our short lives on earth. It asks the penetrating question: is what we are doing done for the approval of our soon-returning King, or for the fleeting applause of the world? This hope purifies us from hypocrisy, selfish ambition, and sin, as we seek to be found faithful at his appearing (1 John 3:2-3).

2. **It fuels our endurance.** When suffering seems meaningless and faithfulness feels costly, *Maranatha!* reminds us that this is not the final chapter. Our present struggles are “light and momentary” compared to the eternal glory that awaits (2 Cor 4:17). The hope of resurrection and reward empowers us to persevere, knowing that our labour in the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor 15:58). The volatility of this world is overshadowed by the unshakable reality of the next.

3. **It clarifies our priorities.** The imminence of Christ’s return makes worldly priorities — accumulating possessions, building a legacy, chasing comfort — seem suddenly foolish. It shifts our investment portfolio from the temporal to the eternal. We are compelled to invest our time, resources, and energy in what will last — the people we can bring with us and the work that advances his kingdom. It introduces a joyful urgency to our mission.



In a world of uncertainty, *Maranatha!* is our certainty. In a time of volatility, it is our anchor. This cry dismantles the power of fear, the lure of materialism, and the despair of suffering. It proclaims that the story of the world is headed toward a glorious climax, not a chaotic dissolution. Live today in the light of that certain tomorrow. Work, love, and pray with one eye on the horizon, your heart tuned to the shout of the archangel and the trumpet call of God. Let your life be a continual, confident, and joyful echo of the Spirit and the bride who say, “Come!” (Rev 22:17). Our Lord, come!



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Reflect

Does the hope of Christ's return shape your priorities and motives today? How can you live with an eternal perspective in the midst of present challenges?



Journal



PRAY

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Pray

Personal

Pray for a longing for Christ's return, letting eternal hope guide daily decisions and desires.

Pray for readiness, living a life that you would be unashamed to present to Christ if he were to return today.

Corporate

Brighton Connection

Pray that Brighton Connection will become a beacon of hope and compassion in the community, reflecting Christ's imminent kingdom.

Pray that through Brighton, many will encounter the love of Christ and be drawn to his salvation.



The Atmosphere of Heaven

Read 1 Corinthians 16:23-24

1 Corinthians 16:23-24

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

²⁴ My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.



DEVOTION



DEVOTION

The Atmosphere of Heaven

After a letter filled with sharp correction, complex theology, and challenging application, Paul's final words are breathtaking. He does not end with a warning, a list of rules, or a final rebuke. He ends with an atmosphere. He concludes his letter to a fractured, arrogant, and struggling church with the only two forces powerful enough to heal them: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen." (1 Cor 16:23-24). In a VUCA world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, Paul does not give the Corinthians a new strategy; he points them to a Person and the posture that Person creates.

Grace and love are the antidote to every VUCA challenge:

1. **Grace is the foundation.** Everything — our salvation, sanctification, and standing before God — begins and ends with "the grace of the Lord Jesus". It is his unmerited favour, his empowering presence, and his finished work on the cross. In a volatile world that defines us by performance, grace announces our identity is secure in Christ. In uncertain times, grace is the one constant we can always rely upon. When life is complex, grace simplifies our standing: we are accepted. When motives are ambiguous, grace cuts through, assuring us of God's unwavering favour.



2. Love is the expression. Paul's final gesture is to send his love to all of them — likely even those who opposed him or were causing problems. This is not a sentimental feeling but a deliberate, Christ-centred, wilful commitment to seek the good of others. This agape love is the inevitable fruit of a life saturated in grace. Having received limitless grace, we are empowered to offer selfless love. In a world of division, love is the unifying force. In complexity, love provides a simple, guiding principle for action. In ambiguity, love chooses to believe the best and pursue reconciliation.

Together, grace and love create a supernatural ecosystem — the very atmosphere of heaven— that can withstand the pressures of earth.

Paul began this letter by addressing them as those “sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people” (1 Cor 1:2). He ends by bathing them in the grace and love that alone can make that calling a reality. The world offers complexity; Christ offers grace. The world offers volatility; Christ offers love. Let these two forces — the receiving of grace and the giving of love — be the air you breathe and the environment you create. For in a VUCA world, a community drenched in the grace of the Lord Jesus and bound by his love is not just a safe harbour; it is a foretaste of the kingdom to come, and the most powerful testament to the truth of the gospel.



REFLECT



Reflect

Is your life and interaction with others saturated with grace and genuine love? How can you embody Christ-like love as your most powerful witness in a complex world?



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Pray

Personal

Pray that you will be saturated with grace, offering to others the same acceptance and mercy you have received in Christ.

Pray for love that heals, asking God to make your presence and relationships a foretaste of heaven.

Corporate

Cell Groups and Members

Pray that members of the church will be a community marked by grace and love — an atmosphere of heaven on earth.

Pray for spiritual health across the church: restored relationships, strengthened faith, and genuine Christ-like love in every group.