

# Coach House Church **BEACONS**

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## **WE HATE THE UNKNOWN**

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**25TH OCTOBER 2020**

Everyone has to live with it, and we all have different ways of handling it. Most of us would not hand a car salesman our bank account details and tell them to surprise us with any type of car, nor would we go to a restaurant and tell the waitress to surprise us with anything on the menu.

And while we might enjoy not knowing a baby's gender until it's born, most of us would agree that the higher the stakes the less exciting and more fear-provoking living with the unknown becomes. This is especially true when we're talking about matters of life and death.

What happens when we die? What will heaven be like? These are questions Christians, including the church in Corinth (located in Greece), have asked for centuries. God gives us as many details as we need, but maybe not as many as we'd like.

As we get to know the character of God, it's easier to trust Him with everything, even the unknown.

So Paul explains what we do know using a metaphor the church can relate to — planting a seed and seeing what grows. Just like a seed looks nothing like the plant that grows from it, our heavenly bodies will be beautiful and unlike anything we know right now.

Likewise, we don't have all the answers to anticipate eternity in heaven. Just like a gardener knows plants come from seeds, we know eternal life will come for those who put their faith in Jesus.

So, we look forward to heaven with the same anticipation of a gardener waiting for an unknown seed to grow. Instead of staring at the seed trying to figure out what

the plant will look like, he cares for it daily, trusting and waiting to see the end result.

We nurture our faith by spending time with Jesus, going to church, and growing in our understanding of the Bible. And as we get to know the character of God, it's easier to trust Him with everything, even the unknown.

And the beauty is we, even though we aren't perfect, we cannot fail in the eyes of Jesus. And this brings me onto my next point.

What would you do for Jesus if you knew you couldn't fail?

Would you travel somewhere dangerous to spread the Gospel? Start that ministry for sex-trafficking victims that's been on your heart for years? Share your story with your boss? You may be listening to this thinking of the exact thing. to mind. So, what's stopping you?

For most people, the worst possible outcome of any decision is death. But Paul reminds us that if we're in Christ we don't need to fear death.

Our current bodies will perish, but will be replaced by bodies in heaven that'll never die. Though we're mortal now, if we're in Christ when we pass from this life to the next, we'll be immortal, living forever with Him in heaven (1 Corinthians 15:54). There will be no tears, pain, or suffering (Revelation 21:4).

For Christians, death is not something to fear. What would it look like to adopt that fearless mindset in our lives here on earth? What if we dedicated our lives to serving Jesus without fear knowing that even death can't hurt us?

Paul encourages us, "...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" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

If we don't have to fear the loss of our lives, then we don't have to fear the loss of relationships, jobs, money, or public opinion either. We can devote ourselves fully to God, and continue to take our next steps knowing we'll spend eternity celebrating in His presence.

Let me tell you a story.. Vinod Nelson had just barely left Bern, Switzerland when the train came to an unexpected halt, and terrible news came over the speakers. The train would not be continuing to Frankfurt, and Nelson would miss his flight back to Afghanistan if he could not find another way to get there.

He asked a cab driver how much the journey would cost and heard "200 euros" – a price well within the 350 euros he had in his pocket. An hour into the drive, the meter ticked past that figure, and Nelson questioned the fare.

"2,200 euros, as I told you," the cab driver said.

Panicked, Nelson explained to the driver his genuine mistake and implored that he did not intend to fool him. Though he couldn't pay the fare, Nelson still needed to reach the airport. The driver considered the situation in silence.

"Somehow I trust you," the driver said. "I have no reason to, but I do think you will make sure you pay me when you get home. If you don't... well, I would learn my lesson."

Thanks to the blind faith of a stranger, Nelson made his flight home, and honoured his promise to the driver when he got there.

Occasionally, in the midst of all the media's doom and gloom, we hear a heartwarming story about radical love and generosity that touches our hearts and moves us to tears. Stories, like this one, go viral because they offer hope in a suffering world.

These stories also surprise us because we're naturally inclined to reserve love and hospitality for those closest to us. We often cling tightly to people, money, and belongings that we fear losing. It can be scary to give to and love people without knowing if they will love us back, or repay us. They may even reject us.

But as Paul reminds us in his closing thoughts to the Corinthians, following Jesus means embracing an open-handed, sacrificial love. Jesus was the perfect example of radical love and generosity, boldly reaching out to sinners, lepers, outcasts — those who could give nothing in return.

Jesus gives us the courage to pursue acts of love, rather than waiting a feeling to motivate us.

As we walk with Jesus, we begin to understand that everything we have is a gift from God and belongs to God (James 1:17). We learn to trust in His sovereignty and ability to provide for us. And, He gives us the courage to pursue acts of love, rather than waiting a feeling to motivate us.

God loves us with radical love, and calls us to love others radically, too (1 John 3:16-18). Christian love requires action. Jesus tells us the world will know us by our love for one another (John 13:35). Love is demonstrated in acts of kindness, forgiveness, generosity and hospitality, especially for those can offer nothing in return.

Mother Teresa once said, "We can do no great things; only small things with great love." If each one of us does everything in love, we can and will make a huge difference in the world (1 Corinthians 16:14).



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