***7***

***The Ultimate Victory***

***1 Corinthians 15:35-58***

On November 22, 1963, we arrived at Love Field just as Airforce 1 was landing. We made our way through the

crowd and pressed our faces against a chain-link fence, waiting for the door of the plane to open. I still have a

vivid memory of the scene we've all watched on television so many times since then. President Kennedy emerged with his thick hair and big smile. Jackie had on a pink suit and her trademark pillbox hat. They waved to the crowd and then came over and shook hands with many of the people. We all felt like we were seeing royalty! Then they got into the black limousine and drove away.

After we stopped for lunch on the way home, an announcer came on the radio and said that Kennedy

had been shot. Then a few minutes later he said, "The President of the United States is dead." We were all in shock. We had just seen Kennedy thirty minutes before, and now he was dead!

That was the first time in mylife that human mortality hit me with such force. Since then, I've come face to face with death several times: when my grandparents died, when a friend named Jim Worden was killed in a head-on collision, and when my nephew Mark was shot in a gun accident.

***31 The Ultimate Journey***

It is right and natural to grieve when we lose someone we love. Even Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus. But Paul tells us not to grieve as others do who have no hope, because in Jesus Christ we have the great and encouraging hope of the resurrection.

In 1 Corinthians 15, we'll explore that hope in some detail.

1. When have you come face-to-face with your own mortality

or that of someone you loved?

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2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58. In verse 35 someone asks, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?'' How would you summarize Paul's answer (vv. 36-41)?

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3. According to Paul, how will our future bodies be radically different from our present ones (vv. 42-44)?

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4. It's fun to fantasize about our resurrection bodies. If you could have the body you've always wanted, what would it be like?

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***32 Hope***

5. How do the differences between Adam and Christ further illustrate the differences between our present bodies and our future ones (vv. 44-49)?

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6. Suppose that in the next ten years they invent an anti-aging pill that would allow you to live to be 700, 800 or even 900 years old like some of the early biblical characters. Would you take the pill? Why or why not?

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Even if a pill could enable us to live indefinitely, in what ways are our present bodies unfit for the kingdom of God (w. 50,53)?

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7. How would you explain the details of the "mystery" Paul describes in verses 51-52?

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8. In verse 55, Paul paraphrases Hosea 13:14: "Where,0 death, is your victory? Where, 0 death,

is your sting?" How has Christ both conquered death and removed Its sting (vv. 54-56)?

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***33 The Ultimate Journey***

9. How does Christ's victory over death strengthen your faith and fill your heart with thanks to God (vv. 57-58)?

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10. How does the resurrection also make all the difference between meaningful work here on earth and meaningless, futile work (v. 58)?

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11. Many people have an intense fear of death. How does Paul's teaching about the resurrection ease your fears and give you hope?

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