

The Resurrection Body

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- [0 : 00] You can open them up to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. And I don't know if, David, you're able to bring up my first slide there.
- How'd you like to take a ride in one of those? Too small. I think that's that secret desire to actually do it talking, but knowing that we probably won't get the chance, or we'll just never be able to afford it.
- But ever since I was young, I've always thought, man, it'd be so cool to ride in a car like that. If I ever got the chance, I would take it, especially if it didn't cost me anything.
- There's something about a car like that, excellence in engineering and design. It even looks good.
- The performance capabilities are just off the charts compared to my Sienna minivan. Hit the next one, David.
- [1 : 13] How about that? Some of you, maybe that's a little bit more appealing. The S790, the latest offering by John Deere with all of the latest features.
- Maybe some of you feel that appreciation for quality design and engineering as you think of having one of those guys. And even though it's green, it does look good, doesn't it?
- The next one there, David. How about something like that? Something that probably more of us can relate to. Apple computers, Apple phones.
- There's something about those that when we look at it, we recognize the design, the engineering, the quality that has been put into it. It looks good in that sleek silver finish.
- It has amazing visuals, and it's light as a feather. There's something that we are really drawn to and appreciate when it comes to excellence in design and engineering.
- [2 : 21] You can put it to the black one. But this morning, we're going to be looking at what the Lord has told us through Paul is one of the most amazing masterpieces in design and engineering.
- We've been working our way through 1 Corinthians 15. We began with a reminder from Paul that we need to hold firmly to the good news and what that is, the message of Christ.
- Then we've heard that there are some who are preaching or saying that there's no resurrection. There's no life after death. And Paul takes time to lay out the implications of embracing that idea.
- He corrects the idea. He says, Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. He goes on to explain a bit of the bigger picture here of what's going on between God and his son and his world and how Jesus is going to return to reign.
- And when he does, those who belong to him will be raised from the dead. Last Sunday, we went on to hear a few more implications that Paul has for denying the resurrection.
- [3 : 47] We heard him appeal to his own life and how he has put himself through all kinds of trials and suffering because he knows that the resurrection of Christ is true and how it wouldn't even make sense for him to be living like he's living if all of this was a lie, to be risking the one precious life that he has.

He's lived consistently with the truth. And now we come to verse 35. Paul says this, But someone will ask, How are the dead raised?

With what kind of body will they come? How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

Paul begins with a couple questions. And at first read, we're kind of, they're probably questions that we would like the answer to. How were the dead raised?

Yes, tell us that. With what kind of body will they come? Yes, we want to know more about that. But what's not as clear is the way that these questions are being asked.

[5 : 04] Are they sincere questions? Are they just kind of questions Paul imagines them asking after what he's been teaching about the resurrection? Or are they kind of cynical questions?

Questions that kind of have a little tone of challenge in them. Paul's answer kind of, I think, gives us a bit of a clue. He says in verse 36, immediately after, How foolish!

Literally, fool! It seemed odd to respond like that if they were just genuine, sincere questions. And so I think these questions are the kind of questions that some have been asking as a subtle challenge to the idea of resurrection.

How are the dead raised? How's it even possible? With what kind of body will they come? Will their remains somehow come back together and be reanimated and their soul go back into their corpse and they come back to life?

That doesn't even make sense. You don't have the answer to that question? Oh, it's probably because it's a bunch of baloney. It's foolishness.

[6 : 28] But Paul immediately turns the table on those who would be offering this kind of challenge. He says, Fool! No! You guys are the ones who are mistaken, who are foolish in denying resurrection and the possibility of resurrection.

And he goes on to give the analogy of a seed as he explains why denying the resurrection is foolishness.

He says, What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. Verse 37, When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

But God gives it a body as he has determined. And to each kind of seed he gives its own body. I don't know if you can see that.

This is a seed. And for those of us who have lived here on earth for a while, we know what this does.

[7 : 55] But how often do we stop to think, isn't it amazing that this tiny little, almost like a speck, when we plant it in the ground will turn into a full-fledged, healthy, vibrant, growing, green tomato plant that produces tomatoes delicious and juicy that are like this big.

All of that is right there in here. Isn't that amazing? What's the lesson here that Paul is giving?

The lesson is this. He says, what you sow into the ground, when you sow, you do not plant the body that will be but just a seed.

What goes into the ground is not the same as what comes up out of the ground. Verse 42.

We're going to connect back to this verse again and again because Paul's going to use a whole bunch of analogies here. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. The body that we have now, the body that is buried, the body that turns into a pile of dead bones after it's been buried for a while is not the body that comes out of the ground.

[9 : 29] Just the same as this little seed is not what comes back out of the ground. Something totally different, new, and better is what comes up out of the ground.

Verse 38. But God gives it a body as he has determined and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

body. So what kind of body will we have at the resurrection? Well, just as God has designed each different kind of seed to turn into its own unique kind of plant, in the same way at the resurrection he will give us the body that he has determined according to his design, according to his plan.

and notice the word gives. But God gives it a body and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

The body that we will have when we are raised from the dead comes from God. It's something that he gives as he has determined to those who belong to Christ.

[10 : 51] And I think there's a bit of a subtle point that we're meant to take from this. I mean, the question how is it possible for the dead to be raised? What kind of body will they come with?

I think that what's implied in this analogy just like we have really when it comes down to it no idea how this tiny little thing can turn into a full-fledged plant.

It's a miracle. So too is the resurrection. It's not something that we're meant to theorize about and try to figure out how will God gather up the remnants of our dead bodies?

What if some of the parts of our body were eaten up by a fish or something? How is he going to do that? How is he going to reanimate and put our soul back into a corpse?

That question is foolishness says Paul. Just the body that we're going to go into the ground with when we die and are buried is not the body that we will be raised with.

[12 : 01] God's going to do something miraculous and it's not a natural process. It's not something that you can explain with science. It's a miracle. It's something that he's going to do by his own life giving power.

His own amazing ability to engineer and design and give life as he raises our bodies back to life from the dead.

And what's even more amazing about this, I mean, you think about that little seed. Here's kind of a skill testing question. We'll see if our agronomist is up on his game.

Is that little seed alive or dead? Kind of a trick question. I asked that to my wife.

I don't know. Is it alive? Is it dead? You can Google this online later. But kind of the consensus out there is that that seed is alive. It's dormant, but it's alive.

[13 : 05] And you can actually kill it so that it doesn't sprout. these are not coming from people of faith or anything. This is science. They're saying, yeah, it's alive.

We don't but it's amazing how quickly you'll come to find out that they'll admit we have no idea how it stays alive for years and years and years. There's some processes going on in there even if they're very slow and yet there's no input.

The metabolism is not active and going in the same sense as when it's germinating. It's amazing. Very easily I was able to find all kinds of people saying this is an amazing process and it's not one that's well understood.

That's a seed. That's a living thing like that turning into a living thing, a plant. Or you think about the miracle of life and how each one of you in this room began as a single cell, a single human cell.

And even in that case, you came from living things, you came from a living sperm and a living egg, but the resurrection is something else.

[14 : 25] Those are natural in the sense that they do naturally occur. and we should admit that yes, they are miraculous. We can try to observe it, but do we understand how it works?

Can we reproduce that? No way. But the resurrection is not living things turning into living things, but something that's dead turning into something that's alive again.

Now that is amazing. When your body dies, dies, it's because the organs that sustain your life have stopped.

They've failed. They've ceased. All of the processes, all of the biological functions that sustain your life have permanently ceased. That's what death is.

The living organism that is your body, from that point on, it just decomposes. And up to a month later, I read one source that said the term they used was it begins to liquefy.

[15 : 36] And depending on how you're buried, eventually, all that's left is a bunch of dead bones in the ground. ground. And yet, God is able, if he is able to do what he can do with this, this, and turn it into a plant, with a single cell, and turn it into you, absolutely, he can do the most amazing of all, and give life to the dead.

It's a miracle of God. We don't need to be able to explain the resurrection in scientific terms or in terms of how the parts of the body will come back together.

It's something that God does by his amazing power. Paul goes on to give a few more analogies. Verse 39, he says, not all flesh is the same.

People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another, and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies, and there are earthly bodies.

But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another, and the stars another.

[16 : 58] And star differs from star in splendor. Now, there's at least three or four different analogies all packed into there, so we're going to start with the first one.

He says, not all flesh is the same. And then he walks backwards through the days of creation. creation. There's different kinds of bodies that God has given in the various creatures that he has created.

There's you and I, and the kind of body we have. We've got two legs, we've got two arms, we're built to walk, we're built to work. Then there's the animals.

Some of them are built differently, they have a different kind of body. Some of them have a tail so that they can balance in trees, or on steep cliffs. Or they have four legs so that they can run really fast.

Or they have fur so that they can endure the coldest of climates and temperatures. Then there's birds. They're a whole other kind of animal.

[18 : 07] They've got wings so that they can fly through the air. They've got beaks so that they can break open seeds. Then you've got fish, totally different.

They've got fins and a tail and they're sleek so that they can move quickly through the water. They've got gills, something totally different than we have. What's Paul's lesson in this?

Because as we said earlier, he comes down again to verse 42, so it is with the resurrection of the dead. God has uniquely tailored each different kind of creature that he has made for the environment that he intended for it to live in.

In the same way, when we are raised from the dead, he will give us the body that we need for the life that he has for us in the forever kingdom that Jesus is coming to bring we will be perfectly suited to eternal life.

The body we have will be engineered perfectly for that. Paul goes on, he says that there's heavenly bodies and earthly bodies.

[19 : 30] He goes on to talk about how there's different levels of splendor or glory between stars and various things in the heavens. You almost get the sense that Paul is just reflecting on what he has seen of what God has done in the universe.

God's created all kinds of stuff. What a variety we see on earth, but that's not it. I mean, God has done an incredible variety of stuff in the heavens beyond the earth.

And as our technology improves, we're able to see more and more of that beauty through Hubble telescopes and satellites and all kinds of things like that. And we haven't even begun to scratch the surface of this vast universe that we live in.

I'm going to give a bit of a teaser. We're going to go here more next week because Paul gets to this a little later, but the point that he is, I think, making here is that we are earthly, but there will come a day in the resurrection where we will bear the image of the heavenly man.

This resurrection thing, it's not just the body that we went into the ground with coming back up again. No. It's like the seed.

[20 : 55] I mean, there's nothing spectacular looking at that little seed. It just looks like a little speck. But compared to that speck, the tomato plant, when it's fully bloomed and grown and the tomatoes are on it, no, that's glorious.

That's beautiful. So it is with the resurrection. Our bodies will go into the ground, a thing of the earth, but they will be raised to be glorious and beautiful, a marvelous work of God.

God. Verse 42. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. We've already talked about this.

Paul's kind of relating this. These are all analogies that are pointing to how we will be raised from the dead when Christ returns. But we want to know more.

We want to know the details. Well, what's it going to be like? What's my new body going to be like? Paul goes on. He gives us a few descriptive words.

[22 : 08] He says in verse 42, the body that is sown is perishable. It is raised imperishable. The word perishable refers to decay.

The bodies that we have right now, they're subject to decay. They wear down. They run down. They, after a period of time, they expire. Our organs fail.

That's the kind of body that will be sown into the ground when we die. But it will be raised imperishable. A body that will never wear out.

A body that will never expire. A body that is not subject to decay. Paul says it is sown in dishonor.

It is raised in glory. There's some back and forth over what it means to be sown in dishonor. Some people see that as kind of how death in itself is kind of a humiliating thing.

[23 : 15] You can think back to Jewish, the Jewish religious laws from the Old Testament. Even to touch a dead body would make you unclean. And that view kind of sees dishonor as referring to the ugliness and the shamefulness of death.

others have said, well, no, perhaps dishonor refers to more to kind of the consequence that death is.

That they died is evidence that they were a sinner, that they lived a dishonorable life. And which it is of the two, I'm not sure. But what we're really looking at is the contrast that Paul gives.

It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory. And while it's true that being raised from the dead is a glorious thing, to have the terrible consequence of death reversed and undone, I think what Paul is really pointing to is the body and what the body will be characterized by.

It will be imperishable and it will be raised in glory. It will be a glorious body. Think back to what Paul said in his letter to the Philippians.

[24 : 33] He says that we are awaiting a savior, Jesus, who by his power will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

There's that same idea. Our bodies, when we are raised from the dead, are going to be nothing like the kind of body that we had.

I'm not going to talk about whether we'll have two arms and two legs today. We can talk about that next Sunday. But in terms of the quality, the permanence of our bodies, the splendor, the glory of our bodies, it will be the difference between this tomato seed and the full-grown plant with the fruit on it.

Like Christ's glorious body. Paul says, it is sown in weakness. It is raised in power.

Weakness. That's what describes the bodies that we have right now. They're frail. They're fragile. They break. And we have a limited ability to heal ourselves.

[25 : 53] But the bodies that we will have in the resurrection, it will be raised in power. And yes, I think that that describes how God will do it.

He will do it with his power. But I think Paul is really describing what the body will be like. It will be imperishable. It will be glorious. It will be a body of power, characterized by power.

The life-giving power of God will be in it. Perhaps we will have capacities or abilities that we never had before.

I'm not going to go too much into that kind of speculation. But for sure, the capacities that we will have, the abilities that we have, will be perfected. in that body.

We'll be strong. We'll have energy. Lastly, Paul says, it is sown a natural body.

[26 : 56] It is raised a spiritual body. And we're actually going to focus in on that next Sunday. It's one of those verses that I think we have often misinterpreted.

And Paul has quite a lot to say about it in the next whole paragraph. So we're going to save that for next Sunday. What is Paul's point in all this? Paul's point is that it's foolish to think that the resurrection is impossible because we can't imagine how it works.

We can't even imagine how that little seed turns into a tomato plant. God will do it. He can do it by his amazing power, by his design and engineering ability that is completely unrivaled and like nothing else that we have ever seen.

If we think that the Ferrari is impressive, we ain't seen nothing yet. If you think that that S790 is awesome, a work of true ingenuity, you ain't seen nothing yet.

If you think that the best of art and music and film that people are able to create is something today, you ain't seen nothing yet.

[28 : 18] And the evidence of that, Paul says, is in the world that we live in. Look around. Open your eyes. Look at the world that he's created. All of it points to his ability to do this, to give life from the dead.

And he will. He will for those who belong to Jesus. For those who belong to Jesus.

It's not something that will be given to everybody. The resurrection to this life and this new body, this is a gift that God will give as he determines to those who belong to Jesus.

Do you belong to Jesus? If you have any doubts in your heart or if that's something that you want to know more about and you're not sure, come talk to me after the service.

I'd love to have that conversation with you. The last thing that I want us to reflect on for a moment.

[29 : 31] I mean, this is Paul writing to the Corinthian church. You might think, well, that's so long ago, that's so out there. What does this have to do with my life today?

And what I want to press home is simply this. Isn't it amazing that for those of us who belong to Jesus, God is going to give us this amazing gift of a new, glorious, imperishable, powerful body to live in, that will be us for eternity.

What do we do to deserve that? Nothing. In fact, we've done all kinds of things not to deserve it, and yet this too is part of the good news that Jesus has done this and he gives this to us as a free gift of his love and his grace.

The one thing that totally beats us all, death. He is going to flip on its head and give us life and a new body.

won't it be something to have a body that doesn't have problems with sickness? Won't it be something to have a body that doesn't have any issues of disability?

[31 : 02] Won't it be something to have a body that doesn't have any problems with hormonal imbalances and not feeling the way that I should about different things? a body that doesn't have problems with achy joints and pain with parts of it that just wear out and don't work right anymore?

This is the gift of God for his people, for all of those who belong to Christ. Isn't that amazing? God, let's pray.

Father in heaven, thank you that we have this to look forward to. Lord, some of us don't feel it. We're young. We bounce back pretty quickly when we get sick. But we pray and ask that you would increase our faith, that we would not be like the skeptics who doubt your abilities and your power.

increase our faith and fill our hearts with joy as we trust in the good gift, the good future that you have prepared for us.

We ask this in Christ's name. Amen.