

The Resurrection Body

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[0 : 01] Well, please turn back with me to the passage we read in 1 Corinthians 15, page 961 of your church Bibles, that section beginning at verse 35 and certainly we'll take it down to maybe around verse 49, but the section that begins that someone will ask, how are the dead raised, with what kind of body do they come. And for the last few Sunday evening services, we've been considering the whole matter of the Christian's blessing and what God blesses in life after life, the gift of, and the gifts of God's grace to the believer who dies in the Lord. We've been considering the death of the Christian, we've been considering heaven, the place of heaven, the place that the Christian goes to immediately after death. We notice the wonderful truth that God's Word gives the Christian as encouragement to enable you to focus on the gifts that God gives after death. The souls of believers immediately passing into glory after the body dies. The place of heaven, the heavenly place, and not just a state of mind and nothing impersonal, the place of heaven where every believer in his soul and her soul goes to after death. And we're assured that the Lord Jesus has already prepared a place for each one of his people. Not a single room in the Father's house, not a single room extra, nor a single room less. Every single one for whom Christ gave his life has the promise of his, grace of her heavenly abode, awaiting, awaiting the return of the soul from the body from which it came. And that's really what we want to focus on more this evening. If you like the third part of our four-part series. We've looked at the Christian in death, in the death of the Christian. We've looked at heaven. This evening we're going to look at the resurrection of the Christian. And God willing, next week, look at the new heaven and the new earth. And really we want to, as I say, focus this evening on the whole matter of the return of the soul to the body that we read here in 1 Corinthians 15.

The promise of the resurrection of the dead. I mean, Scripture gives us Old Testament and New Testament, the promise of resurrection. But what comfort do you have as a Christian? What comfort does the believer have as a believer have as a believer? That resurrection will happen? And the form of resurrection. What does the resurrection tell us about the body and the soul being reunited when the Lord Jesus returns? Indeed, the question that's asked here, what will our transformed bodies be like at the resurrection? And how do we answer these questions? We answer them through Scripture.

We don't try and make up what Scripture doesn't tell us. We're encouraged. We're given the hope of the believer through the Word of God. To give you that hope, that sure, everlasting hope of life, the life that you will live in that transformed body when it's reunited with the soul, the soul that departs from the body day after day. And so we're going to look at part of this great chapter that we read, this chapter that's given so much comfort to believers through the ages. And comfort, not especially, but certainly comfort that many of you in recent days, weeks, years, perhaps even in times of bereavement have returned to this chapter. And I've found great blessing, great encouragement in the truth that this chapter gives of resurrection. And even I suppose, yes, when we contemplate our own passing, when we contemplate that yes, life is short, time is brief, but an eternity in glory awaits. And so the blessing that the

Christian has, the Christian believer has, knowing that his life is safe in the arms of Jesus, the Scripture gives you that reassurance just at the right time when you need that comfort and need that reassuring. And we find that certainly here in this passage. But let's think of the context. We started at verse 35, but obviously verse 35 isn't the start of the chapter. We need to know a wee bit about the context, why Paul is asking this question.

Because if we'd read from the start of chapter 15, you'd see that Paul is making an argument, a divine logical argument, but an argument that there will be a resurrection of the dead. And really for the first 34 verses, Paul's taken a great deal of time to argue against people that said there was no resurrection of the dead. And you see in verse 35, he's now dealing head on with, well, what really seems to have been the root problem. People denying that there would be a resurrection of the dead. And the questions coming out such as, you know, how are the dead to be raised that you see there? What kind of body will they come?

[5 : 56] And it seems this was the root of the problem for those who are sceptical about resurrection. People that dismiss the fact, the fact, the truth that scripture gives us of the future resurrection of believers. This seems to be a real problem.

You know, how will the body, you know, how will the body be raised? You know, I mean, the natural way of thinking, saying, well, after all the physical condition after death will be so different.

I mean, the whole question of resurrection just seemed to be regarded as nonsense by people who were naturally sceptical. And in that case, God being taken out of the picture. Because to the natural mind, to the mind that excludes God from what we read in terms of resurrection, the natural mind says it's unnatural to raise dead bodies.

The natural mind says it's unnatural to perceive a body having a transformed appearance. And these questions are still being asked today, not just 2,000 years ago. Questions such as, you know, how is it that bodies long dead are going to be raised? What are these bodies going to be like when they're raised?

What are these bodies going to be raised? What are these bodies going to be like when they're raised?

[7 : 46] You who love the Lord Jesus, you will believe in the miracle of the resurrection of the body that will take place when Jesus returns.

And all the glory, the wonder of the glory of resurrection, Paul wants to explain in this chapter. And Paul is writing through divine inspiration, God's inspiration, and Paul is using different ways of explaining this marvellous truth.

He wants to bring home truth to those who have been sceptical. So you see in verse 36, he says, you foolish person. You know, all these questions about how the body is going to be raised.

He's saying, these are questions from a fool. The Old Testament notion of a fool who denies God. And Paul's saying, you know, anyone who asks these kind of questions, they're actually taking God out of the picture.

Saying, well, how can the body be raised? Where is the power in the body already in the grave? But Paul's saying, you know, if that's the kind of way that you're thinking, you're not taking God into the equation, God into the picture.

[9 : 02] And the kind of question that you see there in verse 35, these aren't, if you like, honest, genuine questions that Paul's condemning.

He's condemning the atheism, the atheism behind these questions. So Paul's going on the attack. And he's refuting these questions, the people that are asking these questions.

And he's using an analogy from the agricultural world, the example that he gives there from verse 36. It's an analogy, it's a metaphor, I suppose, that whether you're from an agricultural background or not, you can still follow, you can still understand.

Whether you've got a knowledge of plant life, an intricate knowledge, or, like myself, very little knowledge. You can still follow the argument, as you see from verse 36 to 38.

Look at the example. Look at the example from agriculture. I mean, obviously the readers in Paul's time may well have been very familiar with this kind of expression, but it doesn't matter.

[10:08] We ourselves in our sophisticated 21st century, we can still follow the argument. Look at the argument. The seed. The seed that's sown in a field, maybe a wheat field.

It's got no resemblance to the mature stock that's fully ripened. You know, that stock that comes from the seed. And yet, you know, the stock has come from the seed.

In one sense, they're not separate entities. The corn, that corn that stands, the stock of corn has come directly from the seed. It's the same organism, but obviously a different form.

The corn that stands there, the ripened corn, it's so unlike the original seed. If you put them together, you think, well, it's so different. And yet, they have the closest of connections.

But the seed from which the corn, the stock of corn has come from, that seed had to be planted in the ground. You see the analogy of death there.

[11:09] The seed had to be planted in the ground, under the soil. And from that same seed that was buried, the fully mature corn emerged.

That corn, that fully formed corn, only possible through the planting of the seed. I mean, if the seed had just remained outside the ground, outside the soil, there'd be no corn, no stock of corn.

And you see what Paul's saying here. The body that we have at present. If you like, it's like the seed in this example. But the body that we now have has to be, if you like, planted in day.

So that the resurrection body emerges. And if you follow the argument through, the resurrection body, yes, as Paul says, will be very different in form and appearance.

But at the same time, there'll be a continuity. There'll be a connection. I mean, our resurrection bodies aren't going to be, you know, brand new bodies. You know, wholly detached from the ones that God has given us.

[12:16] Not at all. That wouldn't be resurrection. But they'll be transformed. They'll be glorified. And they'll retain some connection with what God has blessed us with in this life.

This evening, after our service, we're going to hear two testimonies. Well, every Christian has a testimony. But this evening, we're going to hear from two individuals who are going to tell how the Lord Jesus changed their lives.

Now, in one sense, and I think we can broaden that out to every Christian. In one sense, it's the same person who's going to be standing before us. The same person who was, you know, before his conversion.

And yet, they're different. And the difference is clear. Because grace changes. They may be physically of the same, although I would argue that grace changes even the appearance of a person.

The love of Christ shining in the heart. The love of Christ shining through an individual. And that person, the converted person, seemed to be in Christ even through appearance.

- [13 : 31] Different to what he was before. So, when we think of the resurrection body, as Paul is explaining here in terms of transformation, I think we can follow his divine logic.
- Because that logic gives you that comfort, that joy, you who trust in the Lord. Some of you are grieving the loss of loved ones.
- A loved one in Christ. Be comforted with the knowledge that Paul is giving us here. Of that loved one, the assurance that he, that she will rise. That he who's in Christ now is in Christ eternally.
- And whether the body of that believer has been buried or cremated, that body will rise and will be changed. Yes. Different. Different in glory.
- Different in power. Different, as we'll see in true spirituality. It's a mystery, as Paul says here. It's a mystery that's still to be fully revealed, of course.
- [14 : 31] But what's clear is that God is the one who will do the raising from the dead. God will be the power behind the resurrection.
- And God will be the one who will give all who have died in Christ these transformed resurrection bodies. You see that in verse 38. God gives it a body as he has chosen.
- And to each kind of seed, its own body. You have different kinds of seed. Different kinds of plants in the plant world. Different kinds of fruit.
- Different varieties. And perhaps that of looking at our resurrection bodies. We're not going to be clones of each other. Every believer will be distinct.
- One from other, as we are now. And yet, having bodies adapted to the glory of the new heaven and the new earth. And, you know, Paul wants to show by this example, or this analogy of the bodies.
- [15 : 32] Creation. Creation actually displays the glory of God now. I mean, that's what we read there from verse 39 to 42. Our glories display the glory.
- Our bodies display the glory of God. As Paul talks about different kinds of glory in human beings and animals and birds and fish. As God has so designed for us to live in the environment that God has given us.
- To live and to function. Sun, the sun, the moon, the stars. Likewise, having a splendor, a glory. As God has created these planets.
- The moon, the sun, the stars. To function in the universe. God's so designed his creation in that way.
- Then we can be sure that God will give bodies of resurrected believers. A glory that will fit, be fit the new heaven and the new earth.
- [16 : 35] The sinless, perfect, glorified environment. And that you will function and operate, if you like, in the eternal kingdom of God.
- The resurrection body. A transformation from the old body. A new kind of body. Suitable for its new form of existence.
- That's what Paul's spelling out here from verse 42 to 44. For these four distinctive qualities that God's word tells us the new body will have. Let's look at the first one in verse 42.
- Imperishable. What is sown is perishable. What is raised is imperishable. Let's see if we can explain this. I mean the body that we have now is perishable.
- It will perish. You know, we're all prone to disease. We're all prone to various forms of illness. We're prone to old age. We're prone today.
- [17 : 38] Why? Because the fall of man. Adam's fall. And Adam brought about the corruption of the body. And all the corrupting influences of the environment. The universe.

The universe itself is perishable. We're part of this decaying universe because of man's first sin, original sin. But the seed.

The perishable body. That body that's known decay. God's word tells us is going to be raised and raised imperishable. In other words, it's going to be a body that's not going to decay.

I mean the new heavens and new earth are not going to decay. God will give by his power every believer a resurrection body that's not going to know disease or illness or old age or death or sin.

And so we have to say this. That the imperishable body that's raised from the grave, that will be raised from the grave, that's going to leave behind all the marks and consequences of sin.

[18 : 42] All the tendency to sin will have disappeared. The eyes will know more lust. The feet will know more walk and sin. The ears will know more hear lies and falsehood.

The hand will never again touch anything unclean. The sins of the flesh will be no more. The imperishable body itself will no more be subject to death.

It won't be limited by weakness. It can't perish. This is our own physical weaknesses. Atrophies and go to that form of weakness.

I mean, we're not told. We're not given to know the kind of qualities that the new body of the Christian is going to have. But we're assured, as God's word assures us, that the Christian has that eternal prospect.

And it's not just at the prospect of heaven. Not just heaven with Christ, which is glorious in itself. But the Christian has that prospect of the new heaven and the new earth.

[19 : 48] And there, where our transformed bodies will be changed to live eternally. Never to decay. Never to decay morally or spiritually or physically or mentally.

Imperishable. And then secondly, glorious. It is sown in dishonour. It's raised in glory. I mean, Paul's just spoken about the splendour, the glory of the body that God has given.

But, you know, even though our bodies now have that splendour as God has created us, there's still dishonour. There's still humiliation. You know, even there is that lowliness, that humiliation being part of humanity.

Because, you know, in our human nature, our sinful nature, we crave sin. We seek the good that we would. We do not the evil which we would not that we do.

But the resurrection body will be glorious. It's going to be raised in glory. No more misery to endure. No more suffering. The mark of Adam's sin will be no more.

[21 : 00] There'll be no more death. There's a great glory that awaits the resurrection body. But you might say, well, how's that glory going? What's it going to look like?

Well, listen. Listen to the words of Jesus. Let scripture interpret scripture. You go to Matthew chapter 13. Jesus taught the parable of the weeds.

And this was in relation to the resurrection. Listen to the words of Jesus. The Son of Man will send his angels. And they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all lawbreakers.

And throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place they'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Listen to these words. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father.

The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the father. Now keep that truth there of the righteous shining. Shining in the new heaven, in the kingdom.

[22 : 01] Now bring that to what Paul writes in Philippians 3.21. Where Paul writes of the Lord Jesus transforming our lowly bodies so that they'll be like his glorious body.

So if we're to have bodies like the ascended glorious body of the Lord Jesus, you who are a Christian, you who are in Christ, you're going to know a glory.

You're going to know a weight of glory that at the moment we're quite unable to bear. But perfect, sinless, resurrected bodies, God's word tells us, will be like Christ.

Like him in his glorious body. A body that reflects the image of God in flawless perfection. Glorious bodies. Bodies like the glory of Christ's body.

And, you know, thinking as we've been doing in the theme of our communion weekend of being brought from darkness to light, well surely that light in the glory of God in Christ, that light will shine in our glorious bodies.

[23 : 10] But then you might ask, well what about Christ's glorious body? What was that like? Well Paul certainly saw it in the road to Damascus. Paul saw Christ's ascended glorious body.

He spoke of that, Christ's appearing to him as a bright light from heaven. The disciples, Peter, James and John, saw Christ's glorious body when Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration.

Yes, it was before Christ's resurrection. But as we read in scripture of Jesus in his transformed body, in his transfiguration, his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light.

Yes, we're given a glimpse. A glimpse of the glorious body of Christ. And a glimpse then of what our glorious resurrected bodies will be like.

You know, the body of the risen Christian on the resurrection day, that day when Jesus returns, that body's going to be glorious. That body will shine.

[24 : 16] It won't be a sin-stained body anymore. There'll be no proneness to sickness, to illness, to sin. The body's going to be raised from the grave or wherever the body is laid to rest.

The body raised in glory. And wonder upon wonders, united, reunited with the soul that departed from it at death.

But remember, that soul that left the body, that soul will have been in heaven. That soul will have known the glory of heaven. That soul will have been fully sanctified.

That soul will have seen the Lamb of God on the throne. That soul will have enjoyed the fellowship with the Lord Jesus and with all the saints in heaven.

And it's that soul that's going to be reunited with the body. The body of risen in glory. And the body itself will have been purified and glorified. The suitable, perfect body.

[25 : 21] For the perfected soul. I mean, this is wonder upon wonders. This is truly the mystery of God's doing, God's power. To be assured that the glorious reunion of sanctified soul, perfected body will happen.

And Christ returns and the bodies of saints risen, raised. And so we can surely say this. No eye has seen, no ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined what God has prepared for those who love them.

What the fullness of the glorious body of the Christian is going to be like, we don't fully know. But we go by faith in the promises of God. And you wait with that anticipation and expectation what our great God and Lord is going to do in His power on that resurrection day.

We deserve nothing of that power, nothing of His love that God gives out of His grace and out of His love. And the glorious body that He's going to bless His people with will be just that.

The image of God fully restored. The transformed body, resurrected body, reflecting the glory of God. The glorious body.

[26 : 42] Then thirdly, we're told that the resurrected body will be powerful. Verse 43, again, it's sown in weakness. It's raised in power.

What we are as we are now. We're weak. I mean, we're perishable. We're limited in so many capacities. We're limited in our intellects. We're limited in our physical abilities.

But the resurrected body is going to be raised in power. And God, as we said, God's power active in raising what were once weak, powerless bodies to that newness of life.

Our bodies possessing power. Power to do all that God will give you to do in the new heaven and the new earth. How that power is going to be exercised.

It's not been revealed. There's not much speculation, but it's not been revealed. But it's not going to be a spirit. It's going to be a body. And a body that bears, as we said, bears the weight of glory.

[27 : 42] A body that's going to possess power so that it functions in the new heaven and the new earth. And however that power is going to be seen in practice, I think we can say this.

You know, the very fact that Paul here in Scripture focuses on the resurrected body, you know, surely should draw us away from any kind of, you know, super spirituality that says, oh, you know, the body doesn't matter.

You know, all we are, we're just souls. Let's just call ourselves souls. No. God has gifted us with physical bodies that are going to be transformed at the resurrection and empowered to do wonderful things and do so for the glory of God.

How will that, what will that mean? It will mean your intellects are going to be empowered. Your physical capacities are going to be empowered. They're going to be empowered not for self's sake, but for the glory of God.

A powerful body. Glorious body, imperishable body, powerful body, and finally a spiritual body. Verse 44, it's sown a natural body, it's raised a spiritual body.

[28 : 52] It's a body, it's not a spirit, remember. But then you might say, well, okay, if it's not a spirit, a body that's not going to be a spirit, you know, without form. But yet Paul's saying here it's going to be a spiritual body.

If he's saying that somehow we're going to be non-material, non-physical, you know, just like the angels and the glory of heaven. No, that's not what Paul's saying. There's no such thing as a non-material body, surely.

But what Paul's saying, surely, is that our bodies will be spiritual in that connection with the Holy Spirit. The connection with the Holy Spirit.

A spiritual body. Because if we've been raised in power, raised in the power of the Holy Spirit. And what is led, directed by the Holy Spirit.

And no more will you grieve the Holy Spirit. No more will you resist the Holy Spirit. No more will you quench the Holy Spirit. You'll be led and animated, directed by the Holy Spirit.

[29 : 57] And there'll be no resistance at all. And part of any. Now, all that we've said so far has concerned the Christian. Has concerned the one who's in Christ.

Who knows the joy of salvation in Christ. But what if you haven't yet trusted in the Lord Jesus? What if you need still to give your life to the Saviour?

Because you see, if we're told in Scripture that there's going to be a reunion of soul and body in the Christian when the Lord Jesus returns, we've got to say there's going to be a corresponding opposite for all who are outside of Christ.

Because there'll be no imperishable glory for the non-believer. There'll be no glorious power for the atheist. Instead, what do we read of in Scripture?

We read, for those who have not given their lives to Christ, we read only of the eternity of that separation from God in that place called hell.

[31 : 05] But Jesus proclaimed, Matthew 25, 41, Depart from me, you cursed into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Those cursed will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

And I pray here that there's no one who will hear these words of condemnation on that day when Jesus returns. But I pray that all who are here this evening will know the blessedness of the fullness of eternal life and know that in the resurrected body, in that reunited, glorified body and soul.

And that you have that prospect before you even now. Yes, you live for Christ as Christ has given you breath. You live for Him now on earth. And you have the comfort of knowing that your soul has that prospect of glory in heaven.

Remember you have that prospect too of the return of the soul and the body when Christ returns and you dwell forever in the new heaven and the new air.

Have that prospect before you. Live, yes, live in the light of eternity. Live for the glory of God. Live in thanksgiving for all these great promises that God gives you to bless you, to keep you and to make His face shine upon you.

[32 : 31] And so may God bless to us His word. Amen. Let us pray. Lord, our God, our Heavenly Father, You give us much to dwell upon and much to reflect upon.

And You give us much to praise Your name for. And so Lord, may all that we have considered this evening have been acceptable in Your sight. May Your people rejoice in heart to know the blessing, the sure blessing of eternal life only in and through the Lord Jesus.

And we thank You, Lord, that the many are here this evening who can testify to that saving grace in the Lord Jesus. And may You fill them then with Your love and Your grace and that strength and power to continue in following You and glorifying Your name.

So help us, Lord. Help us, Lord, even this week to live in Your strength, to live for Your glory and for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Hear us, Lord, as we continue in praise before You.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, let's close in Psalm 118 on page 156.

[33 : 56] And we'll sing from verse 17 down to verse 24. We normally sing the older version to this at communion Sunday morning. The words are very, very relevant for us this evening.

Verse 17. I shall not die, but I shall live. The Lord's great works I will proclaim. The Lord severely chastened me, but rescued me from death's domain.

17 to 24, and the tune is Weirum. 18 to 23x actions of the Lord Jesus did. The Lord desärës my name.

Amen. ■■■. Peace. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.