

Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 (8) - The Resurrection Body

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] So, we're going to begin by singing in Psalm 105, Psalm 105, verses 1 to 8. That's on page 374. Give thanks to God, call on His name, to men His deeds make known. Sing ye to Him, sing Psalms, proclaim His wondrous works each one. See that ye in His holy name to glory do accord, and let the heart of everyone rejoice that seeks the Lord. We're invited to seek the Lord, to do so with rejoicing hearts, hearts that rejoice in Him and in His salvation, and to come and seek in verse 4 the Lord Almighty and His strength to seek that as well, and to think on the works that He has done which breed admiration. So, verses 1 to 8, the tune is Denfield, Give thanks to God.

Give thanks to God, call on His name, to men His deeds make known.
Sing ye to Him, sing Psalms, proclaim His wondrous works each one.
See that He in His holy name to glory do accord, and let the heart of everyone rejoice that seeks the Lord.

The Lord Almighty and His strength with steadfast heart seek He.

[2 : 16] His blessed and His grace, His blessed and His gracious face, seek ye continually.

Think on the works that He hath done which admiration bleed. Think on the works that He hath done which admiration bleed.

His wonders and His grace, His wonders and the judgment's all, which from His path rose ye.
O ye that God of Abram's grace, His servant will abound, and ye that Jacob's children are, the Lord Almighty and His glory are, whom He chose for His throne.

Because He and He only is, the mighty God, the Lord. Because He and He only is, the mighty God, the Lord.

[3 : 44] And His most righteous judgments are, in all the earth, the Lord.

His covenant He remembered hath, that it may ever stand.

Two thousand generations, the word He did command.

Amen. Well, let's once again call on the Lord in prayer. Let's join together in prayer. O Lord, our gracious God, it is so good for us to be taught by Your Word even as we sing.

For You have given us in these words that we have sung so much to think upon, so much to admire, so much to take in and take stock of, concerning the Lord Himself and His works.

[4 : 57] We thank You, O Lord, at the beginning of our service this evening, that we have such great reminders extended to us in Your Word, and that every time we turn to Your Word, we are taught something of importance.

And we pray that we may regard Your Word even this evening as that source of light and truth for us, that will bring to us these foundational truths that You have been pleased to reveal to us. We give thanks, Lord, for all that makes You worthy of our praise, for the beauty that pertains to You, for that perfection of beauty that belongs to You, when all Your attributes combine so completely and perfectly, so that they form that holy God whom we come to worship once again. And we give thanks that that continues, Lord, without any change, without any prospect of change. For not only is Your Word set before us the way in which these attributes belong to You, but also the way that You are unchangeably the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And You are the God, therefore, whom we need as our foundation, one in whom we find our security, for it is in Your own perfection, in Your own unchangeable beauty and perfection, that we find the ground of our confidence.

[6 : 27] O Lord, help us to come before You tonight exercising that faith that believes that You are God and that You are the rewarder of those who diligently seek You.

O Lord, we thank You that these words we have sung remind us of the importance of seeking You. O Lord, while we sometimes refer the seeking of our souls for God to that time in our experience, before we come to saving faith, we thank You that Your Word reminds us that the seeking of the Lord is an aspect of the faith of Your people, and that it is something that goes on through the whole course of life.

O Lord, we seek You that we seek You, O Lord, this evening to come to bless us. O Lord, we seek You in Your power. O Lord, we seek You through Your grace to come to speak to us once again. O Lord, we seek You that we may know that we have met with You here, that we have had such a profitable time together as has come to know more of the wondrous truths of God.

O Lord, we thank You, O Lord, that we have met with us. O Lord, we thank You, O Lord, for all that You continue to be for us. O Lord, however far back we look in history, You have been a faithful God to Your people. However far forward we may look in the promises of Your word, we thank You that You continue and will be a faithful God to Your people.

[7 : 51] O Lord, we pray, O Lord, for that sense of security for us even this evening that would come to You once again and deposit our lives into Your hand and come to trust in You and draw from You all that we require for our life ahead.

O Lord, we thank You that You are the God who forgives sin. O Lord, we thank You that You are the God who forgives sin. And as we come with our confession of sin, as we always must, O Lord, we thank You we come to a God who has demonstrated His willingness to pardon, who has come to reveal Himself as the forgiver of sins in the history and experience of all who have come to know You as their God and Savior.

O Lord, we confess tonight our sins. We confess that we find it at times so frustrating that we sin against You even in ways that we have sinned against You before.

O Lord, we pray that as we contemplate these things, not only may we appreciate and give thanks for Your pardon, but also may we, O Lord, further our interest and further also our longing to be found at last in heaven where there is no sin, where we will be complete people, set in the image of God perfectly.

O Lord God, help us as we turn our mind again this evening for a short time to the wonder, the glory, the prospect of resurrection life.

[9 : 25] O Lord, help us, we pray, to see ourselves in the light of it and to see the hope of Your people set in it, rooted in that resurrection of Jesus Christ, so that we may look forward to the resurrection of Your people.

O Lord, we ask, O Lord, that You would give us, each of us here together tonight, that we may ourselves glory in Your resurrection and find ourselves amongst those whose prospect it is to share in resurrection life at last.

May we be, O Lord, like the Apostle Paul long ago, whose desire it was to go on to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means He might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Bless us then, we pray each one. Bless all that took place already here today in our morning service, and our morning services indeed in Gallic as well.

We thank You for the continuation of all our services, Lord, by Your grace. We pray especially for our young people who heard today of the love of God and the various aspects of that love as was brought before them.

[10 : 46] We thank You for them. We thank You for the way that they sat and listened, for the way in which they obviously showed an interest in filling their worksheets and coming to know more of that truth of the gospel.

We, Lord, pray for them. We pray for them in this age in which they are confronted with so much that would seek to harm them physically, morally, spiritually.

Protect them, Lord, we pray, from the clutches of the evil one, and bless all who seek to instruct them and teach them and guide them in the right way, in the way of Your truth.

May it be so, Lord, within our families, our homes, our schools, and all the ways in which we find groups within the congregation and throughout the church, seeking to have the well-being of our young people catered for the church, seeking to have the well-being of our young people catered for.

And, Lord, we pray that in our own case here in the congregation, these activities may flourish more and more. We thank You for the many young folks who come to the worship services as well.

[11 : 54] We pray that their participation in the worship services of Your church may prove to be of benefit to themselves, not only in the meantime, but as their life develops.

And so we commend ourselves, Lord, to You now. And we pray as so much as taking place in our community in these days in memory of the Metagama and the Marloch and other ways by which people had to leave the island.

We pray as we cast our minds back and as we are informed through the meetings that take place of the difficulties of those days. Lord, our God, make us thankful, we pray, for the relative plenty that You've given us to enjoy.

But remind us too, O Lord, how dependent we are on Yourself. And as we think back on those who faced poverty and lack of work and lack of resources and lack of housing and had to leave this island and other places of our nation to go abroad.

Lord, gracious Lord, make us thankful for the privileges we have. And bless our young people. And bless us, we pray, with employment and work for them as well.

[13 : 06] So that we may see our communities further built up. And that we may see further inroads into Your church as well by people who live around us and who presently don't come to the Gospel.

Be merciful to them, we pray. Bless those who are in authority over us to that end as they wrestle with difficulties imposed by the conditions of our day, economic and otherwise.

Give them wisdom, we pray. Grant Your blessing to those tonight we know who are struggling in these times financially. Lord, we ask that You would help us to take note of them, to seek to help them, to do whatever we can to alleviate them, to counsel them, to give them the help they need.

We ask, O Lord, too, for those who tonight have other difficulties in life. We pray for those who are ill. We ask for those receiving treatment.

Bless them and keep them through that anxious time. Bless those anticipating surgery. We pray that You would maintain them, Lord, to look to Yourself until that takes place.

[14 : 15] Remember, Lord, too, those who are seriously ill, any in hospice or hospital who are grievously low at this time. We pray again for Willie Graham, and we thank You for the measure of improvement in his condition.

And we pray now that he is home in hospital here, that You would grant him, Lord, further progress in his health. We ask, too, that You would bless Mawrak and the family. Surround them with Your love, we pray, and continue to strengthen them all and grant to them as they would seek further improvement in Willie's condition, that they may look to Yourself and that they may come trustingly to draw their strength from You.

Remember us now, then, we pray, and continue with us here with all that we seek in the pardon of our sin. For Jesus' sake, amen. We're going to sing again to God's praise this time.

It's in Psalm 54, 54, and the Sing Psalms version on page 70. And singing verses 1 to 7, the whole of that psalm.

The tune is Evan. Save me, O God, by Your great name, with power deliver me. Hear, O my God, the words I speak, and listen to my plea.

[15 : 31] For strangers are attacking me, the ruthless seek my life. For they have no regard for God, and always stir up strife. Words which remind us of our need to bring all our circumstances to God, and assures us that God gives an ear to our cry as we come believingly to Him to seek His help.

So, Psalm 54, save me, O God, by Your great name. Save me, O God, by Your great name, with power deliver me.

Hear, O my God, the words I speak, and listen to my plea.

For strangers shall attack me, the ruthless seek my life.

For they have no regard for God, and always stir up strife.

[17 : 09] Consider this God is my help, the Lord upholds my way.

In faithfulness destroy my foes, their slander, glory pay.

I'll bring a sacrifice to you, a free will offering.

Because your name, O Lord, is good. Your praises I will sing.

For you, O Lord, have rescued me from my disgrace and woe.

[18 : 35] My eyes are blue in victory upon my cruel foe.

O Lord, have rescued me from my life. Readings from God's Word this evening. There are two readings, firstly from the Gospel of John, chapter 5, and then we're coming back to read from 1

Corinthians 15.

First of all, John, chapter 5, and reading from verse 19 to 29.

So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

[19 : 55] The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

[21 : 03] And we turn also to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. We read a short passage there from verse 35 to verse 45.

So 1 Corinthians 15 at verse 35.

But someone will ask, How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come? You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind of humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another.

[22 : 09] There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. For star differs from star in glory. So it is with the resurrection of the dead.

What is sown is perishable. What is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness.

It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Thus it is written, the first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. May God bless to us these two portions of his word this evening.

Before we turn back to 1 Corinthians 15, let's sing once again to God's praise in Psalm 71 on page 91. Psalm 71, the tune is Bunili.

[23 : 13] We're singing verses 14 to 21. But as for me, my hope is steadfast, and more and more your name I'll bless.

I'll show your measureless salvation, and all day long your righteousness. I will proclaim your acts, O Lord God, and your righteousness, yes, yours alone.

For since my youth, O God, you've taught me, and still your wonders I make known. Through to verse 21, from verse 14 to the tune Bunili to God's praise.

God bless us, O Lord God. I will proclaim Your Son. But as for me, my hope is steadfast, I'll show you your salvation and all day long your righteousness.

I will proclaim your acts, O Lord God, your righteousness, yes, yours alone.

[24 : 49] For since my youth, O God, you've taught me and still your wonders I may gloom.

And now, my God, do not forsake me when old and great I have become till I declare your might and power to generations yet to come.

Your justice reaches to the heavens. Who is like you, O God, in strength?

Though you have shown me many troubles, you will restore my soul at land.

From the deep places of air's darkness, you will bring up my life once more.

[26 : 29] You will increase your servant's honour. My comfort once again restore.

Let's turn together this evening again to 1 Corinthians 15. Let's continue with our studies through this chapter.

Tonight we're looking at this passage that we read, especially the early part of it, and particularly these words from verse 42 to 44. So it is, with the resurrection of the dead, what is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.

It is sown in dishonour. It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body.

It is raised a spiritual body. What a difference it makes when you're looking forward to something exciting.

[27 : 35] What a difference it makes if you're, let's say, going to a place on holiday that you've never been to before. You've read up about it. You see all the different aspects of it that take your notice, whether it's into history you are, or whatever aspects of the world you're interested in.

You obviously would have to try and investigate these. Places you go to usually are favourites for those sort of reasons that you want to see various aspects of things you're interested in.

And as you're thinking forward with excitement to the eventuality, to the occurrence of happening, the event that you're looking forward to, it inevitably affects your thinking right now.

Of course, you would never actually book for yourself a holiday in a place where you're going to see a lot of places, a lot of things that really take your interest without meantime making some preparation for it, without meantime studying up some more about these things so that when you get there, you're in a better position to actually do that.

So, the prospect of what you're going to have in the future as you've made your plans and as you've made your bookings, that is obviously affecting the present way of thinking that you have in a positive way.

[28 : 54] Of course, it could easily be the other way about, that things in the future are things which give us concern, but let's keep it to the positive. That's what the passage is about, that positively affects the present.

And of course, that's supremely the case with the Christian life, because all the way through this chapter we've been looking at Paul's treatment of the resurrection, the resurrection of God's people, as that's united to the resurrection of Jesus himself from the dead.

Now, you could go to a place that you had really longed to see, you'd made all your preparations, and your thoughts of it as you made your preparations, were building up all the time, and then you actually get to it, and it's disappointing.

It's not really what you expected. It's, you've got a feeling of just being let down, and of course maybe some of the glossy magazines or adverts are really overdone, and what you end up experiencing is just less than really you were hoping for or less than was presented to you.

Well, of course, it's never going to be that way with your Christian hope. It's never going to be that way. In fact, it's going to be the opposite, because as we're looking forward to the resurrection, as God's people look forward to that, and everything that's on the other side of the resurrection, in the beauties and the glories and the bliss of heaven, the Bible tells you all the way through that it's going to be far better than you can even imagine here.

[30 : 34] And that's why we're saying the prospect of resurrection life, following the resurrection from the dead, is something that fills you here and ought to fill us, and in many ways I find myself saying, maybe you do too, it's surprising how little excitement I sometimes feel at the prospect of the resurrection that is unto life everlasting on the other side of death and resurrection from the dead.

Now, Paul was excited about thinking of resurrection. You'll see that throughout his writings, that he wasn't just excited about the prospect of leaving this world and going to be with Christ, which he says is far better, as he wrote to the Philippians, but it's particularly resurrection that he's got his mind set upon.

That's the terminus. That's the conclusion of the whole thing. That's the thing that God himself has in store. That's what the coming of Christ was all about. That's what his death and his resurrection and his exaltation were designed to actually bring about and lead to.

And I hope we've got something of, even though some of these passages are difficult, in 1 Corinthians 15. I hope at least one of the outcomes is that it's brought us in our mind to think of the wonders that await the Lord's people on the other side of being raised from the dead, and of how there is no prospect of the kind of limitations and experiences of pain and loss that we experience in

this life.

As we turn to this passage, we've already seen the hopelessness of the person who discounts resurrection, who denies such a thing as the resurrection.

[32 : 31] Where is our hope if we don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus and if we don't believe in the resurrection of God's people united to Jesus? There is no hope. There is no ground of hope.

hope. It's just gloom, the darkness of the grave and nothing beyond. And this life in this world, as we've seen already in this chapter in 1 Corinthians 15, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Because if this world and the borders of this world is really all there is to it, what is the purpose of human life? Yes, we can say we can do so much to help each other, and that's good.

We can do so much to help others and make the world a better place. What then? What is the outcome of reaching the end stage of your life in this world if there's nothing beyond?

Well, the Bible, of course, discounts that idea and brings us this wonderful positive emphasis that for all who trust in Christ, this world is not just that it's not the end of things, but it's the end of the limitations of things that we experience in this life.

[33 : 49] So, tonight we're looking at the transformation involved in resurrection from the dead for the Lord's people. And what a transformation it is.

Even the Apostle Paul is struggling to find words adequate to describe what the resurrection body, and that's what he's dealing with mainly, the resurrection body, what our body will be like in the resurrection.

We know what it's like here. We know what we feel in terms of bodily pains and bodily limitations. We know what it's like that aspects of our physical makeup actually themselves are so united to our sinfulness and to our being sinful people and practicing sin.

And the Apostle is excited at the prospect that the body that will be raised from the dead is done with sin, and it's done with these limitations, and it's done with the kind of things you have here in humiliation and in these frustrations of not being able to glorify God a hundred percent as you'd like to.

Let's look at what he's saying. First of all, I want to take what really is a key phrase from the passage, and that's what you find in verses 38 to 41.

[35 : 10] And the key phrase especially is where he talks here about God gives it a body in verse 38, but God gives it a body as he has chosen.

These are really significant words at the heart of the passage. Indeed, some are of the view that that's really the heart of the chapter. God gives it a body. It's not just that there's such a thing as a resurrection and a body that comes out of the grave as a resurrected body, as the risen body that's united then to the soul.

In the case of the saved, Paul is saying, God gives it a body. It is he who is in charge of what comes up from the dead.

And it's interesting how he illustrates this because, well, he begins by actually picking up a couple of skeptical objections, it seems, if you might call it that, in verses 35 and 36.

But someone will ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come? And you can tell that Paul is somewhat annoyed with that because he answers that, first of all, by saying, you foolish person.

[36 : 24] And he goes on to explain why he is so vehement in such language, you foolish person. It's as if he's dealt with all that the chapter has contained so far.

There were some in Corinth who didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead. And we've seen how Paul has dealt with that. But there may well have been some people who still, as far as Paul was concerned, were still skeptical, still really not taking this in, that there is such a thing awaiting God's people as the resurrection from the dead.

So he's saying, someone will ask, well, how are the dead raised then? As if he's saying, well, if you believe in the resurrection, tell me how they are raised. Or what kind of body will they have when they are raised?

And Paul's reaction is, you foolish person. That's very strong language because what Paul is concerned for is that they haven't really exercised their minds to follow what he's saying even so far.

So he's now adding to it. And he uses an analogy. He uses the illustration of what happens to a seed when you place it in the ground and the contrast between the seed that you place in the ground, whatever it might be, and the plant that grows from that when it reaches its fullness.

[37 : 42] That's the contrast that he's drawing and he's using that to illustrate why these people that are raising these questions really are foolish. They're not really thinking things through properly.

And of course, one of the great important things for you as a Christian, for us as Christians, is to use your mind. Use the mind, as Paul says so often, to consider God's truth.

Apply your mind to it. And this is what he's saying. You foolish person, what you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. Now, you see what he's saying? That you actually place the seed in the ground, wheat, whatever it might be.

And then what comes up from it, in a sense, of course it's still attached to the seed, but it's not exactly the seed that you planted in the ground, although it is in essence the same plant.

[38 : 45] And what he's really concerned for is that the Corinthians will understand that there's a process that needs to be gone through. Because the final plant requires the death of the seed before it actually comes to its full fruition.

The seed dies. You look at a potato. Some of you might have planted potatoes already. If you plant potatoes, and you know very well when you come to find the potato plant growing, yes, it produces all these other potatoes underneath, you hope.

The plant grows. The leaves are there. Everything comes out of the ground. You go to the original potato. You can't use it again. It's rotten. It's disintegrated. It's given its life to the plant that grew from it.

And it's that principle that Paul is applying here when he says, that which dies is placed in the ground, and out of it grows the plant from that seed.

And the process is death first, then comes life from that. Now, Jesus used this very interestingly, used the same principle, same illustration in John chapter 12.

[40 : 00] If you turn to that for a moment with me, please, there's a few verses there we can see are important. John 12, verse 24. This is Jesus applying this principle to himself.

I'm not going to spend much time on this, but just to illustrate how Jesus himself used this same principle as well. Here are, from verse 20, people who are coming up and seeking to see Jesus. Philip and Andrew are involved. And this is Jesus answering. He says, The hour has come for the Son of Man, that's himself, to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. He's talking there of himself, firstly. And as far as I'm aware, it's true that in the tombs of Egypt, grains were found that were buried with some of the kings or important people that were buried in these large tombs or found in clay vessels, still intact, but still just as seed as they had been placed in the earthenware jar or whatever.

But I believe it's true that when some of them were placed in the earth, they actually grew. They still had life in them. The point is this. Unless the seed dies, it remains, Jesus is saying, on its own.

[41 : 33] And he is saying that about his own death. Unless he dies, there is no fruit from him, from his life, without him first dying and then rising from the dead.

But he doesn't leave it at that. He says then that whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Now, see what he's saying there.

He's saying about himself, it must be the case that there will be death in my experience, in my case, for there to be life as the outcome. The Son of Man must die just as the seed goes into the ground. But he applies that then to our lives as human beings. There must be a dying or a death in our life. And this is not just in terms of when our body is laid into the tomb.

[42 : 38] That's not what he's dealing with there. It's a matter of you dying to yourself, dying to your self-righteousness, dying to your own preferences, as it were, dying to everything that's a contrast to or an opposition to placing your life in the hands of God.

Whoever keeps his life shall lose it. You hang on to it. It's like the seed that's never been planted. It doesn't grow. It doesn't produce the fruit. But if it dies, if you die to yourself, remember that's what you're doing, when you give your life over to Christ, when you come to trust in Him by God's grace, what you're doing is really handing over your life for Him to look after it, for Him to keep it in security, for Him to bring ultimately that fruit of righteousness into your life.

There has to be a dying to self, and he said that elsewhere, didn't he, in the other gospel, speaking about what it is to be his disciple. If any man would follow me, let him take up his cross, deny himself, and follow me.

He always mentioned this, deny himself, die to yourself, and die to the life of sin's dominance. So important, isn't it?

We can't expect to live spiritually without dying to self. I said I wasn't going to spend too much time on it, but it is an important point. I want you to take that with you and just ponder it.

[44 : 12] Have you died to self? Have you given your life over to Christ? You see, your life is either in the hands of Christ or it's in your own hands. Your life is either being looked after by Him or you're trying to manage it yourself.

And when you come to die, you're either going to die in the hands of Christ or you're going to die, sadly, trying still to look after it without any prospect of resurrection unto life.

And so, coming back to 1 Corinthians 15, here is what he's saying regarding the same principle. What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but God gives it a body as He has chosen. Now, He extends that to really pretty much to the whole creation. He talks about animals, birds, fish, and what He's really demonstrating is that God gives them their own body.

God gives them, each of them, the body that He has designed for them. And He goes through to say, in the creation, there are heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies.

[45 : 17] There's the sun and the moon and the stars. They all have their own different bodies, their own shape, their own properties, and their own glory.

And so it is, He says, with the resurrection of the dead. He's answering these objections, these questions. But the point is this, if God, as He is, is giving their own body to these objects, to these planets, to these stars, to these creatures in His creation, if God is giving them a body as He has designed, He is the one who is going to give His people the body in the resurrection.

If God has done what He's done already, Paul is really saying, you can put it into words like this or similar, if you think of God having done this already, why should you doubt that God will give a body to those who died and His bodies initially were laid into the dust and death because He will give it a body in the resurrection.

And that brings us to the second part. What kind of body will they be? Well, it's from the natural, He says, to the spiritual.

Let's read from verse 42. So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable. What is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor.

[46 : 49] It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. So, in a sense, you have the same as you have with the seed.

There's discontinuity. It's not the seed that rises. And yet, there's continuity because what rises is from the seed that was planted. Let me read to you what Confession of Faith, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and how it puts it in chapter 32, paragraph 2.

This is dealing with the resurrection. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed. He's talking here about Christians, the people of God.

Such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed. And all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies. Now, isn't that interesting?

With the self-same bodies, the bodies that were laid into the grave, into the tomb. In other words, it will be your body and my body that comes out in the resurrection.

[48 : 00] It won't be a body different in essence to the body that you had. Let's continue with the confession. With the self-same bodies and none other, although with different qualities.

Although with different qualities. And that's what he says here, Paul is saying, in verses 42 to 44. The same body as was placed in the grave, it is sown a natural body.

It is raised a spiritual body. The same body in that sense. But what is sown is perishable. What is raised is imperishable. Your body, my body, that's what comes forth from the grave, but it comes

forth imperishable and in power and honor and glory.

And if we look at these briefly, we can follow through in what he's saying there. So they're different. Not the same in substance, but they're different. It's very difficult for us to find adequate words. I mean, I can't possibly find adequate words. The apostle was struggling, so who am I to try and put them into English? But this is what he's saying. Let me see if I can put it this way. He deals with four contrasts to set out this indescribably great change that comes about, a change from what was put in the ground to what you see coming forth.

[49 : 30] Same body in substance, but very different in qualities. That's how the confession puts it. And he gives it that here. He's putting that here. Paul is saying, it is, what is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.

Perishable, of course, means subject to decay, subject to dissolution. Our bodies return to the dust. We have to contemplate that.

That's something that has come about by, in God's response, if you like, to our sin against him. As he said to Adam, from dust you were made, and to dust you shall return.

It was part of what God brought upon human life as his response to our sin against him. Never mind, this is what he's saying.

It is sown, what is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. Now again, I'm not going to spend time with each of those. Let's take them together. Perishable, subject to decay.

[50 : 40] That's what your body is when it goes back. When it's buried in the grave, it's subject to decay. It's a very solemn point. Something that we find difficult to comprehend, even to accept, that that's what's going to happen to us.

But that's what it is. But it's raised imperishable. What is raised is imperishable. And it's not just the opposite of what is perishable, it's the actual reverse of what's perishable. because what's perishable was always leading towards that end. All the way through from the time you were born, you were going through the process of dying. But what is raised is imperishable. There is no such process with regard to the resurrection body. It remains imperishable. Never again will there be something to enter into it as a process of decay, a process of decomposition. It will in fact, in other words, have fullness of life associated with it. We're going to be raised to a fullness of life.

[51 : 55] A life, we may say, with which your present body just couldn't cope because the body presently is still affected by sin, even the body of the saved people of God.

And when you see in the Bible briefly, dimly, how coming into the presence of God or into the glory of Christ, such as Paul saw on the way to Damascus, his body couldn't cope with it. He immediately fell to the ground. He was struck with blindness. And what Paul is saying is, God will give us a body, all God's people will be given a body that we'll be able to cope with, we'll be able to manage, we'll be able to actually have this everlasting life without it having a destructive effect on you.

It's the reversal of death. It's fullness of life. There's these beautiful words in the psalm, isn't there, in Psalm 16, words that were applied to Jesus himself, of course, that he would not see corruption. In your presence there is fullness of joy. Fullness of joy. Raised up to fullness of life.

[53 : 17] So it's imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. Because what is presently the case even with our Christian life, with our Christian bodies, they're still attached to sin and our sinning, aren't they?

When you put our bodies in a coffin and they're then laid into the dust, you still associate that body with dishonor, in the sense that it's humiliation for us even to come to be returning to dust.

It's something that really, again, brings to us the fact, the reality of sin, the reality of death as the wages of sin. It is sown in dishonor.

Sinful desires right up to the very moment, perhaps, when we die, are still attached to this bodily existence. But it is raised in glory.

It is raised in glory. There will be no sinful thoughts, no incapacity as far as glorifying God is concerned.

[54 : 37] Do you not long for that? Do you not long to have a body where your eyes, where what you see, what you hear, where your mouth, where your tongue, where your speech is not so attached to sin and dishonoring God as it presently is?

Do you not long to have a body that's no longer a body of humiliation or a body that's got dishonorableness attached to it due to sin? Do you not long to have that body where all your physical dimensions and your physical abilities and capabilities are all perfectly aligned with the glory of God, with the praise of God?

That's what Paul is saying. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is raised in such a way that no longer is there any further attachment in any way to sin.

And it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. The incapacity and lack of capability that we find now is gone.

You know, it is exciting when you think of the body with which Jesus was raised from the dead, or the body of Jesus raised from the dead. That is the pattern for the body of Christians raised from the dead.

[56 : 02] And you can see in the Gospels what that was capable of. Jesus actually traveled through solid walls.

He manifested himself in the middle of his group of disciples and the doors were locked. Why does it say the doors were locked? Well, so that we can actually conclude that Jesus' entrance must have been by some other way.

And it wasn't just a spiritual entrance as if they were seeing a ghost. He was there bodily. He invited people to touch Him. How did He come bodily into the presence of that gathered group of disciples? Well, we can't say absolutely for sure the spiritual mechanics of it, if you like, but His body had properties different to or above the properties He had before His death.

He came in His resurrected body. That's the pattern for our own. It's sown in weakness. It's raised in power.

[57 : 15] Can you put a measure on what our resurrected bodies will be capable of? I can't.

But it's exciting to think of how our physical, the physical aspect of our bodies, how the physical aspect of our being will no longer be as limited as it is.

It will not be divine. It will not be all powerful, but it will be capable of so, so much more, perhaps even in terms of travel, who knows?

But it's certainly going to be way above our capacity in this life, in our bodily existence now. It is sown in weakness.

It is raised in power. You know, when you place a coffin into the grave. Let me say it's something that's important to see.

[58 : 17] I know some people find it difficult to be there at a graveside. Of course, it was the practice that women didn't go to the graveside long ago or in more recent times.

But now that's, I think, a good thing that is no longer the case. Everybody's got their own personal opinion and not interfering with that. But seeing a coffin going into the grave, coming to just show the very last respects by scattering sand or earth into it, and the grave being filled in, that has its own point to make.

That has its own solemnity. That has its own level of teaching. And indeed, that has its own level of finality as well for this life as we say goodbye to those we love.

It is sown in weakness. But as you put that coffin into the dust, as the grave is filled in, one thing you're absolutely sure of when you leave that spot, that coffin and that body inside is not going to move until God raises it from the dead.

It is sown in weakness. weakness. But it is raised in power. And it is raised in power in such a way that we find it difficult even now even to estimate what it would be like.

[59 : 41] But that's what we're told. The opposite of what's put in the ground is what comes out in the resurrection. And it is sown a natural body.

It is raised a spiritual body. Now, it doesn't mean by that that the body that's raised, the resurrection body of God's people, has no physical dimensions, that it will no longer have flesh and bones and the substance of our bodies as we now know it.

That's not what's meant by having a spiritual body. He says there is a natural body, there is a spiritual body. It is sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. What he means by that, I think, is it is sown as the body that belongs to this life, the body that belongs to our existence now, this side of the grave.

It is raised a spiritual body. In other words, Paul's use of the word spiritual usually means, and I think means the same here, it is raised in the energy of and in the dynamic of the Holy Spirit.

Because these will be bodies that will be able, through the power of God, the power that God gives them, will be able to have the Holy Spirit's residence to the fullness that God will himself bring about.

[61 : 03] So you see, it all comes together, imperishable, glory, power, spiritual, lived fully in the dynamic of the Holy Spirit, which is not what we are capable of here now in our existence.

presence. And of course, we need to retain this in our mind too, that Paul is dealing here with the resurrection body, but you mustn't think that eternal life is just a body with some spiritual life to it. What he's talking of here is God's saved people, coming as they now exist in heaven, in their souls, coming to be reunited with their bodies as they are raised, the bodies are raised from the ground to meet the soul and to be combined with the soul.

The whole entire person is redeemed and the redemption of the body that Paul finds so important is concluded at the resurrection from the dead.

Well, what changes? What prospects we have? What encouragement we have?

[62 : 20] What an incentive really to be, as Paul put it, as he wrote to the Philippians in his great testimony in Philippians 3. Our encouragement, our incentive, our prospects.

How did he put it? Well, he says, I have suffered the loss of all things. I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

And for his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God that depends on faith, that I may know.

Why is he saying I've put everything that I once used to trust in behind me? Why do I think that now is worthless, he's saying, as far as my relationship with God is concerned? Because, he says, I want to know him.

God has delivered me from myself so that I may know him. And the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[63 : 46] Well, what a prospect. Is that what you're living for? Is that your prospect? Is that your hope?

hope? When you come to die, will it be in the expectancy of being raised imperishable, in glory, in power, in the energy of the Holy Spirit?

Or will it be, as Jesus said, as we read in John's Gospel, raised to condemnation, to the darkness of hell forever?

Because that's the alternative of all that we've looked at this evening. Everybody is going to be raised, but not everybody is going to be raised to eternal life.

life. But let's finish on the positive. Make sure that you're found in Christ. Make sure that being found in Christ, your hope, is the hope of the Gospel, the hope of eternal life, the hope of resurrection, imperishable, powerful, glorious life in heaven.

[65 : 15] Let's pray. Lord, our God, we thank you that, although we find it so difficult to handle these aspects of your Word that take us so deeply into your truth, we thank you, O Lord, for the clarity of that prospect that you have given to your people that is revealed to us in these words.

And we give thanks tonight, Lord, for the way that that prospect is contained in the hope that you give to your people, the hope of eternal life, the hope that's anchored in the resurrection of our Lord himself.

Oh, bless to us, we pray, this word this evening. Bless us in the life that we presently live so that those prospects may be those of glory with you.

Help us, we pray, to approach life every day in the spirit of the psalmist who could say that God would guide him by his counsel and afterwards receive him into glory.

Hear us, we pray, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Our final psalm this evening is Psalm 84. Psalm 84, again, it's in the Scottish Psalter.

[66 : 32] Verses 8 to 12, the tune is Wetherby. Lord God of hosts, my prayer here, O Jacob's God, give ear. See God our shield, look on the face of thine anointed dear.

Prospect of God the Lord in verse 11, who is a sun and shield, heal grace and glory give. So these verses 8 to 12, Lord God of hosts, my prayer here.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer hear, O Jacob's God, give ear.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer here. Lord God of hosts, my prayer here. For in thy core, one may excel, hath a thousand is the tenical My God's will I keep adorn, Thine dwell in tents of sin. For God the Lord has sound and shield, In grace and glory give, And will behold the good of them, That are right to live.

[68 : 55] O thou that art the Lord of whose That man is truly blessed, Who by the adjured of the end, On thee alone the best.

Amen. I'll go to the main door again after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the communion of the Holy Spirit, Be with you now and evermore.

Amen.