

Made Like Him, Like Him We Rise

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Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[0 : 01] Well, please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to the book of 1 Corinthians.! Our passage this morning is the second half of chapter 15.

! It's 1 Corinthians 15, verses 35-58. If you don't have your own Bibles, you can find that in the pew Bibles there in front of you. 1 Corinthians 15, verses 35-58.

And when you found it in your Bibles, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's Word this morning. 1 Corinthians 15, verses 35-58.

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[1 : 27] 1 Corinthians 15, verse 37-58. 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. But it is not the spiritual that's first, but the natural and then the spiritual.

The first man was from the earth, a man of dust. The second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust. And as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I'll tell you this, brothers. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

[2 : 32] Nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment.

In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable. And we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting. The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

[3 : 39] The grass withers, and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Father, we praise you for this word, and we pray again, would you fix our hope on eternity with Christ resurrected in the new heavens and new earth.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. Well, this is week two of our mini-series on the resurrection.

Last week, Easter Sunday, we saw the glorious truth of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. And the plan is, this week and Lord willing, next week, we're going to continue exploring this truth of resurrection as we look at the implications that Jesus' resurrection has for us.

And so I want to ask the question this morning, is it possible to be too spiritual? Is it possible to be too spiritually minded?

You may have heard the quote before. It's often falsely attributed to C.S. Lewis. It says, you don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.

[4 : 50] You don't have a soul. You are a soul. That's what you really are. You're spiritual in nature. You just have a body. The soul is what lasts forever, but this body is kind of an accessory to the soul that eventually will be discarded and done away with.

Apparently, C.S. Lewis never said that, not on record at least. And to be honest, I'm not sure who originally said that. But as we look at our passage here this morning, it may as well have been somebody from the church in Corinth.

Now, apparently, as we saw last week, the Corinthians are having some issues here in the church. They're having some very serious practical, moral issues that Paul addresses in this letter.

They're also having some doctrinal issues here in the church. Some there in Corinth are trying to remove a key fundamental piece of Christian doctrine.

You remember what it was? They could not wrap their minds around the reality of the resurrection from the dead. As we saw last time in the first half of the chapter, Paul confidently argued that if the dead are not raised, then Christ is not raised.

[6 : 00] And if Christ is not raised, then this whole structure of Christianity comes crumbling down to the ground. They had such a hard time wrapping their minds around a physical future for the people of God.

It seems as if the Corinthians were just so spiritual, spiritual, so spiritually minded, so spiritually focused, so spiritually oriented that they simply could not conceive of a physical future.

The physical body for them was an afterthought and the resurrection body was an absurdity. Why in the world would we need or want a new body? As I thought about this issue there in Corinth this week, I thought, you know what, that's not just a Corinthian problem, is it?

I'd be willing to argue that many modern Christians are far too spiritual in their understanding of eternity.

For many Christians, our view of eternity and what happens after we die, our hope for the future, ends with heaven. It ends with us escaping from this world.

[7 : 12] It ends with the separation of body and soul. It ends with us getting rid of these old bodies and going to be with the Lord. And praise God, all of that is true for you in Christ, believer.

But here we see, Paul says, our future hope is even greater than that. The hope that we have in Christ, the hope that Christ has purchased for His people by His resurrection from the dead, is that we too will be raised up like Him at the last day with new, glorified, resurrected bodies.

So let's look at this this morning. I want to look at our text. I just want to ask five questions here this morning about the resurrection. This will be our outline if you're taking notes. Five questions about the resurrection.

I'm sure you have way more than that, and so do I. But here's five. First, what does the Bible say about our hope? What does the Bible say about our hope? Does this really match up with what the Bible says?

And if so, does our hope match up with what the Bible says? Well, I want to go to just a few other places outside of our passage here very quickly and show this to you. One place I think of is John chapter 11.

[8 : 28] The resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. You remember the story? The Lazarus has died. Jesus is not there. That's intentional. And by the time He does show up, Mary and Martha are there, and they're upset.

You remember what they said? Lord, if you had been here, none of this would have happened. And they're feeling, they're encountering the grief and the weight of losing their brother.

And how does Jesus comfort them? Do you remember what He said? If it were you and I, we might have said something like, well, Martha, Lazarus is in heaven.

He believed in Jesus. He trusts the promises of God. Lazarus has died, and now he's in heaven. That would be the comfort that we would give them, right? And when I preach at a Christian funeral, often the comfort that we give is that this departed beloved friend is now with the Lord.

But that's not what Jesus says. What did He say? Your brother will rise again. Now, of course, Martha didn't know that he meant in like five seconds he's about to rise again, right?

[9 : 37] But even so, her comfort in the face of death was not heaven, it was resurrection. Your brother will rise again. Philippians chapter 3. Paul says to the Philippians, our citizenship is in heaven.

And if we were to finish the sentence, we might say something like, our citizenship is in heaven, and one day when we die, we get to go there. What does he say? Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him to subject all things to Himself.

In other words, church, we're not ultimately waiting to go there without the body. Ultimately, we're waiting for Christ to come back here and transform everything, including our bodies.

That's what we have to look forward to. But one more place, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Again, we're dealing with death here in 1 Thessalonians. The Thessalonians are worried about their dead friends, their dead brothers and sisters in Christ.

And so Paul says in chapter 4, verse 13, we don't want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, dead, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

[11 : 04] So what's the hope, Paul? What's the hope that we have? Why should they not grieve? And again, if we were to answer that, we might say something like, well, we don't grieve because we have the hope of heaven.

What does he say? For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

He's coming back here. And the dead will be raised. Do you see it? In other words, believer, our hope is not just spiritual.

It is also very, very physical and tangible. We will receive new resurrected bodies at the return of Christ.

[12 : 08] Praise God. And so then my question is, back to our passage, question number two, well, what then will it be like? This is the question we all have, isn't it? Tell us what this resurrected body is going to be like.

And in fact, it looks like Paul, he anticipates that question in our passage, doesn't he? Look there to verse 35. He says, someone's going to ask, how are the dead raised?

With what kind of body do they come? And how does he answer? You foolish person. Doesn't Paul just drive you crazy? You foolish person.

It sounds a little bit harsh to me, doesn't it? I think what this response shows us is that Paul is expecting the Corinthians just to write this whole thing off completely as absurd.

He knows that they're just so obsessed with being spiritual people that the whole idea of resurrecting the body is just ridiculous to them. I mean, how are the dead going to be raised?

[13 : 08] Paul, are you serious? What kind of body are they going to get? You actually believe this, Paul? And Paul says, yes, in fact, I do. In fact, you already have all around you, if you would pay attention, you already have examples of what I'm trying to talk about here.

If you will just look around you at the world you live in, you have examples all around you of transformation. Think of the seeds that you sow into the ground.

For the believer, death is like sowing seeds. Y'all know I'm not much of a gardener or a farmer. Amanda, my wife, likes to garden. I like to eat what comes out of the garden.

That's about the extent of my involvement there. But I know this, the seeds, when you buy seeds at a store, they don't look like the final product, do they? In fact, you get a little packet and it has a picture on the packet for simple people like me so that we know what should come out of the ground if it's successful.

The final product comes from the seed, but if you were to hold up a seed and the final product hand by hand, side by side together, you can hardly believe that this end product comes from this little seed.

[14 : 19] I mean, you hold up a sunflower seed next to a full-grown sunflower, you can hardly believe that this came from that thing. Paul says, so it is with our bodies.

God has put into nature itself examples of life, death, resurrection, and transformation. So don't write it off. You see it every day.

Not only that, he says you also see examples of distinction and different kinds of bodies all around you. You do have a point of reference for this. It's not as absurd as you think.

Look at all around you. Not all flesh is the same. Birds have wings so they can fly in the air. Fish have fins and gills so that they can swim in the water.

They are fit for the water. God knows how to give each part of his creation a body that they need for the realm that they live in. And you have an earthly body that's fit for your life here on earth.

[15 : 23] And yes, you will have a heavenly body that's fit for your life in eternity. So if that's true, Paul, then again, we need to ask, well, what in the world will it be like?

And look there, starting in verse 42. Because here on, he begins to describe this new body to us. He says, your resurrected body, the body that believers in Christ have to look forward to, he says, your resurrected body will be imperishable.

Look there at verse 42. What's sown is perishable, but what is raised is imperishable. Now, we all know that this present body is perishable.

I don't have to tell you that. Our bodies age, they hurt, they bruise, they bleed, they get sick, they have runny noses and sore throats.

They got to go to the doctor and eventually, for every single one of us, eventually the time comes when they simply cannot keep going and they perish. Paul says, I got good news for you.

[16 : 32] Our resurrected body is going to be imperishable. This body that we get to enjoy for the rest of eternity is not subject to pain or decay or deterioration.

The mind doesn't fade. The body doesn't weaken. Achy knees and arthritis, bad backs, bad breath, carpal tunnel, cancer, all of it's gone. Praise God.

God, if you're suffering physically, and most of us are in some way, if you are suffering physically, Paul has good news.

Yes, you who are in the Lord get to go to heaven and be done with it all, but then you will be made new with a new body that will be totally alive for the first time.

No pain, no suffering, no threat of death. D.A. Carson says, you're not suffering from anything that a good resurrection can't fix.

[17 : 32] Amen. Our new bodies will be imperishable. Not only this, Paul says, your resurrected body will be glorious. Verse 43, it's sown in dishonor, but it's raised in glory.

When we rise, our new bodies will be perfect. Are you in search of the perfect body? You want a plan to get the perfect body? Put your faith in Christ and hope in eternity.

Our new bodies, he says, will be glorious. We'll be finally free from the presence and the power and the penalty of sin in the flesh. We will be as the bride of Christ presented to him without blemish.

Spotless, and pure and glorious and radiant. We will be holy as he is holy at last. Praise God. In fact, he says, this new body will be powerful.

Verse 43, it's sown in weakness and it's raised up in power. It will be raised in spiritual power.

[18 : 44] You think of the garden as Christ went to pray before his crucifixion? What did he say to the disciples? You remember? He tells his disciples, stay awake and pray that you might not enter into temptation.

Why? Because he says, the spirit indeed is willing, but what? Help me. That flesh is weak. All of us experience this.

Paul agrees in Romans chapter 7. Paul says, I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh, for I have the desire to do what's right, but I don't have the ability to carry it out.

That's the tension that every genuine believer in Christ feels in their battle with sin deep down by the grace of God. We desire to live for the Lord, but in our flesh we're so weak, but not in the resurrection.

In the resurrection we will be raised up in power. Why? Because ultimately Paul says, the natural body will be put to death and we will be raised up a spiritual body.

[19 : 52] Verse 44. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. In other words, church, our hope is that because we are united to Jesus Christ by faith, in our resurrection we will be made like Jesus.

Made like Him. Like Him we rise. We just sang. That's an incredible hope, isn't it? Our hope is not just that we can die and escape all the bad stuff in this life.

Anybody can hope in that. In fact, non-believers all over the planet have hope like that. That's why they rob from our comfort when death comes at their door. When death comes around a non-believer they say things like, well, they're in a better place.

They're resting in peace. Anybody can hope in that. That's not the extent of our hope. Our hope is that we will be with Christ.

Not only that we'll be with Him, but that we will be made like Christ. Look there to verse 47. It says, The first man, Adam, was from the earth, a man of dust.

[21 : 10] The second man, the second Adam, that's Christ, is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust. And as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

Here's the key. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so also we shall bear the image of the man of heaven. I know we just had Easter last Sunday, but we need to talk about Christmas and the glory, the miracle of the incarnation of Jesus.

The wonder of what happened there at the birth of Christ is that for the first time in all eternity, the Son of God took on human flesh.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We are made in the image of God. Paul says in Colossians that He is the very image of the invisible God.

He took on flesh. Why did He do it? In order to redeem His people. He came to be as we are. He came to live in the place of His people, die in the place of His people, and then rise up from the grave bodily with a new, imperishable, powerful, glorious, spiritual body so that we might be made like Him.

[22 : 37] He came to be as we are so that we might go to be as He is. Made like Him, like Him, we rise. Robert Candlish, he says it like this.

He says, He is risen for them. Then they rise in Him. They rise because He has risen. They rise as He is risen.

They rise to be as He is and where He is now that He is risen. They rise as His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

Our hope is not just that we get to be with Him, but that we get to be like Him. We who trust in Christ by faith will be raised up from the dead, physically, in new, glorified bodies.

That's our hope, church. So third question, why must it happen? Never think about that. Why is this whole thing even necessary?

[23 : 40] Why do we need that sort of transformation? Look there to verse 50. Verse 50 tells us, Paul says, I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

In other words, we are not currently in our present state fit for eternity. Something's got to change. The kingdom of God itself is imperishable and glorious and full of power and spiritual.

And for it to be filled with citizens, those who are made to enjoy it for the rest of eternity, well, then they too must be made imperishable, glorious, full of power, and spiritual.

This is the key issue, isn't it? Our flesh and blood, as it currently is right now, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. We must be transformed.

Our capacity and our capability is far too limited in our current state to enjoy all that God has in store for us who believe. Yeah, every now and then, we have a meal around here.

[24 : 54] It's about time for another one. A potluck or a Thanksgiving feast and there's never once been a shortage of food, right? Not in my time, at least.

Every time we go, there are meats and veggies and casseroles and pies and cakes. There's more food than we could possibly begin to enjoy. And then we got that whole table of desserts.

It's all there. Now, I will never understand it. Every time we do it, I stand up right here and I say, if you don't have lunch plans already, come and join us. We want you to come.

There's a feast back there for you to enjoy. There's a seat at a table for you. Come and enjoy it. And every time, there are people who leave hungry without eating. I stay.

All right? And every time, as I stay, I run into the same two problems. For one, my plate is always too small. Miss Ann breaks out the heavy plates. We can't mess with the flimsy ones for Thanksgiving meal.

[25 : 51] We get the heavy plates out. We know we got to hold some weight. But even so, try as I may, even with a big plate, my appetite can't handle all of it.

I simply, as much as I might want to, I cannot try. I can't enjoy all of the feasts that's laid out before me. My capacity is too small. Well, friend, in the gospel, we are called, invited, invited, to come and to feast on the goodness of God.

That's what I stand up and do every single week. I say, come, repent of your sins. And by faith in Christ, you get to enjoy all that God has to offer now and into eternity.

I make that invitation every week. And every week, there's some who walk away hungry. But for those who have come to faith in Him by the grace of God, what happens in us is that we've been given a desire for the Lord.

It's a hunger for Him. Now, that didn't come from us. That came from Him. And it's evidence of new life that you've been born again. We desire Him and we love Him and we lose our appetite for sin.

[27 : 02] We gain an appetite for Christ. But in this present life, we simply don't have the capacity to enjoy all that He has in store for us.

The feast is there, but our plates are too small. The desire in a believer is there. Our appetite is limited. One prayer that we all ought to pray regularly is, Lord, would You increase my desire for You?

Lord, would You increase my appetite for You? Lord, would You increase my capacity to enjoy You? We pray that now. But when we are resurrected, guess what?

We won't have to pray that prayer anymore. Why? Because we will be made capable of enjoying God in His eternal kingdom for the rest of eternity.

That's what awaits us in Christ. The more you spend time thinking on that and meditating on it and putting your hope in it, the more you desire it and the more you ask, well, when will this happen?

[28 : 15] When will this come? When can I come and enjoy God forever in the new heavens and the new earth? When will I eat and drink with Christ Himself in the kingdom of God? And that's our fourth question.

When will it happen? Look there to verse 51 with me. Paul says, Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound and the dead in Christ will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable.

And this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying.

Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?

[29 : 17] The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now Paul is quoting here from the book of Isaiah, chapter 25.

I'll read the passage to you. He says, On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food, full of marrow, of aged wine, well-refined.

And He will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever.

And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces. And the reproach of His people He will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Behold, this is our God.

We have waited for Him that He might save us. This is the Lord. We have waited for Him. Let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation. And believers have hoped in this for hundreds of years.

[30 : 32] This is the days of Isaiah. When will it happen? When will death be swallowed up? When will the Lord wipe away every tear? When will we get to enjoy this feast? When will we be resurrected?

When will all things be made new? At the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's our hope, church. Revelation picks up on this.

John says in Revelation chapter 21, I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

[31 : 34] Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. And He who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new.

Church, the realization of our hope, the end of death, the end of suffering, the renewal of all things, the full enjoyment of the presence of the Lord in His eternal kingdom will come at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, our hope is not simply that we would escape from this world and get away from all of it, but that Jesus Christ would come and finish what He started.

That He would come and finally put an end to sin and an end to death and an end to the devil and that we would be made fit for eternity with Him in the new heavens and the new earth.

That's what awaits us who believe in Christ. Our hope is not just heaven as good as that will be. It is the new heavens and the new earth and we, the new Jerusalem, fully prepared and adorned for all eternity with the Lord.

[32 : 52] Friend, is that your hope? If not, then you're called right this moment to turn and to put your faith in Christ and receive this certain hope of life forever with Him.

And if so, if this is your hope, then friend, we need to ask one final question here as we close. Fifth. Fifth question. So what? So what?

You know, Paul is never content to just give us doctrine without application. He wants theology that walks. What difference does all of this make?

God wants you to look there to verses 57 and following. And here, Paul closes out with four applications. Application number one, thank God for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thank God. If this is what awaits us, then we ought to live a life of thankfulness to God in Christ right now. Thanks be to God, he says, who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[34 : 02] Thank you, God, for rescuing me from this body of death. Thank you, God, for hope beyond the grave. Thank you, God, for the hope of freedom from the pain and the aches and the suffering that I feel in this life.

Thank you, God, for the certain hope of eternity forever in a physical, real, tangible, remade universe. Second application.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast. be steadfast. In the midst of an ever-changing world, our culture changes day by day, ever-changing expectations and norms for what's wrong, what's right, what's acceptable, what's not.

The certain hope of eternity with the Lord in an unshakable, unchanging kingdom encourages God's people to be faithful. Life is just a vapor.

And then, eternity. Be steadfast, believer. Third application, he says, be immovable. Be immovable. You know, when your heart and your mind and your soul are so anchored anchored in eternity, you will not be easily shaken by the present.

[35 : 27] When you're so full of hope and eager expectation for the joys of the kingdom to come, you will not be easily uprooted by the trials of the present. When your mind is steadfastly fixed on the truth, you will not be easily swept away by every wind and wave of false doctrine.

Be immovable, believer, as you hope in your certain future. Application number four. He says, always abound in the work of the Lord.

Always abound in the work of the Lord. Church, we have a mission here in this life. We have a mission that Christ has given us as the church here in this world.

So long as we have life and breath in this physical body, we are to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. We have a mission to accomplish. Y'all know the mission of our church.

We exist to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Three ways we do it. As we enjoy God, as we equip the saints, as we evangelize the lost, our hope in our certain future does not mean that we just check out and wait for death and wait for eternity with the Lord.

[36 : 53] No. We know that we ought to always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain, but will echo into eternity to the praise and glory of God.

Let's pray. Lord, Lord, God, we thank you for the hope of eternity with Christ. We thank you that Christ has come to be as we are, that he might make us as he is in resurrection power.

We thank you, Lord, for the certain hope that we have that we get to enjoy you, feast forever on all of your glory, all of your grace, that we'll be made fit for eternity.

Lord, we pray that in light of this we would hope in what you've given us and that we would always abound in the work of the Lord.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.