

ALL THINGS NEW

Title: Part 2 – “You Get Your Life Back”

Date: January 11, 2025

As we continue in this moment of worship and prepare our hearts for God's Word, let's take a minute and make some space for God to work in our lives. One of the practices we often incorporate into our services is a chance to pause and give God all our cares and worries. For some of you this might be the first time you have really done this in a few days so let's pause now and give God EVERYONE and EVERYTHING. Close your eyes and just say that under your breath, “God I give you everyone and everything...” Now as the band plays softly just take a few moments and give God all the things and all the people on your heart. Lovingly detach yourself from the cares of this world.

[PRAYER TIME]

Hey before you grab a seat take a :30 seconds and say “Hi” to some people around you. While everyone here in the house is saying “Hi” to each other I want to say “Hi” if you are joining us online or on our app, thank you for spending some time with us! We consider you a part of our church family so let us know how we can pray for you or serve you—we'd love to walk alongside you in any way that we can.

Well, we are in week two of “All Things New,” and I want to start with something most of us don't like to talk about: We're all terrified of death. Some of you are like, “Well that's pleasant, can we bring the worship team back out and just sing some more?” But it's true, most of us are terrified of death.

AND I know, I know, I'm the pastor and as Christians, we're supposed to have this conquered, right? We sing songs about heaven, we quote “absent from the body, present with the Lord,” we say with the Apostle Paul, “to live is Christ, to die is gain.” But if we're being gut-level honest, when we think about actually dying—our hearts stopping, our bodies shutting down, being lowered into the ground or burned into ashes—there's this primal fear that rises up.

And here's why I think that is: Deep down, we know something's WRONG about death. We know we weren't made for it! Our bodies know it, our souls know it, everything in us screams that this isn't how it's supposed to be! I spent my birthday last month watching my uncle's body shut down and breathe his last belabored breaths. AND nothing in those moments seemed right or peaceful.

But here's the problem, most Christians think the solution to death is escape from our bodies. Like death wins by taking our bodies, so heaven wins by... not giving them back? That doesn't sound like victory to me.

SO, what if I told you that Christian hope isn't escaping your body, it's getting it BACK? If you have a Bible or the Bible app on your phone, turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15, because the Apostle Paul is about to blow up everything you thought you knew about life after death. 1 Corinthians 15, starting at verse 35. Paul is answering questions people had about the resurrection and says this:

³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"
³⁶ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. [Skip to verse 42] ⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. [Now verses 51 through 57] ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

SO, let me remind us of what we are doing in this collection of messages. Here's the tension: We just spent weeks preparing for Christ's first coming at Christmas. But how much time this week did you think about His second coming? For most of us—zero. Maybe we see some headline about a disaster and think, "Is this the end?" but then we quickly move on.

But here's what's crazy when you open the Bible: Scripture assumes every serious follower of Jesus is constantly thinking about His return!

- Paul says in Colossians 3, "Set your sights on the realities of heaven... think about the things of heaven."
- In 1 Corinthians 1, he says believers are "eagerly waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Jesus Himself said in Luke 12, "Be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected."

SO, then why don't we think about it? Two reasons: First, it feels disruptive to our plans, "I wanted to finish my degree, get married, have kids, have grandkids, take that trip..." Second, we have this warped view of what it will be like—ghostly souls in the clouds, harps, eternal church services. So, we just live for the here and now.

That's why our guiding principle is this:

If you can't imagine heaven, then it cannot produce hope in you.

If it's inconceivable, it can't inspire you or create longing in you. Amen? If I told you next week I was going to take you on a food tour of Italy, 14 days of exploring the beauty, the people, and culinary delights of Tuscany, and Sicily, and Emilia-Romagna [Ee-MEE-lee-ah Roh-MAHN-yah]. But all you could imagine is Fazoli's then how inspired would you be?

SO, last time we talked about how God is renewing creation, not destroying it—that the New Earth is real, physical, and everything you've longed for, and it is where we will spend eternity! But I know what some of you were thinking as you left last week: "Okay, that sounds great, but what does that actually MEAN for me? What am I going to BE like? What am I going to DO? How does this work?"

Those are exactly the questions Paul's answering in 1 Corinthians 15. And what he says is stunning! I'm calling today's message:

You Get Your Life Back

Not "you escape your body." Not "you become a ghost." Not "you exist as a disembodied soul floating somewhere." You get YOUR life back. Your body, your personality, your experiences, your creativity, your relationships—everything that makes you YOU—but perfected, glorified, and eternal.

Some of you are like, "Well, that's frustrating, I was kinda hoping to come back like Chris Hemsworth or Sydney Sweeney... you mean I'm stuck with this double chin forever?" It's better than you think, I promise! SO, let's dive in. If you are taking notes write this down:

Your body matters to God.

Does that surprise you? It's true! God cares deeply about your physical body. Like, REALLY cares!

Sadly, though many of us have been taught, directly or indirectly, that the physical is less important than the spiritual. That our bodies are just temporary shells. That the real "us" is our soul, and the body is just the vehicle we're driving until we die.

But that's not Biblical Christianity—that's Greek philosophy! The Greeks believed matter was bad and spirit was good. That the body was a prison the soul needed to escape. But that's NOT what the Bible teaches. In fact, go back to Genesis 1:27. Genesis 1:27 says:

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. [Then verse 31] ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Physical bodies are part of what God calls “very good.” Not “tolerable until we get to the real spiritual stuff.” No, VERY GOOD! Then look at what happened when God wanted to reveal Himself most fully to humanity. John 1:14:

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Jesus didn't just appear to have a body. He actually took on flesh and blood. He got hungry. He got tired. He felt pain. He experienced joy and pleasure.

AND here's the thing that should blow your mind: After His resurrection, Jesus STILL had a body. In fact, He went out of His way to prove it wasn't a ghost or a vision. In Luke 24 Jesus says to His freaked-out disciples, “Look at my hands and my feet. It is still Me! Touch and see; a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones, as I do.” THEN He ate breakfast on the beach with them. Because He could! Because He had a real body!

Here's why this matters: Jesus' resurrection body is the prototype for ours when He returns and makes all things new. 1 John 3:2 says:

² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him.

We shall be like Him! Physical. Real. Tangible. But also glorified, perfected, and immortal.

BUT if we are going to be like Jesus according to John, then what did Paul mean in our opening text where he talked about our “spiritual body.” And honestly, this is where a lot of us get confused. Paul talks about our “spiritual body” and that seems like calling something a “square circle.” If it's spiritual, how can it be a body? And if it's a body, how can it be spiritual? Right?

SO, when you dig into what Paul is saying when he says, “spiritual body,” he doesn't mean “made of spirit” or “ghostly.” The Greek word Paul uses actually means “Spirit-

empowered" or "Spirit-directed." It's contrasted with our "natural body" which that Greek word literally means "under the power of our fallen nature." Does that make sense?

A spiritual body isn't less physical—it's MORE physical! It's a body perfectly responsive to the Holy Spirit, uncorrupted by sin, operating at peak capacity.

Think of it this way: Right now, your body fights against you. You get tired. You get sick. You age. You experience pain. Anyone's body fight them this morning as you lay there in bed debating if you were actually going to get up and come to church today? Your body rebels against what the Holy Spirit wants to do. That's the natural body under the curse of sin.

But the spiritual body—the resurrection body—is what God always intended. A body that serves you perfectly. That never breaks down. That never experiences disease or decay. That allows you to do everything you were created to do without limitation.

I love how New Testament scholar N.T. Wright puts it:

"The point of the new creation is not to escape the old but to transform it. God's plan is not to abandon this world, the world which he said was 'very good.' Rather, he intends to remake it."

Your body matters to God. That's why He's giving it back to you perfected! No double chin to worry about!

AND that leads us into this. Here's the second take-a-way I've got for you:

Bodily resurrection means upgrade, not escape.

Let's get really practical here. What will your resurrection body be like? What can you do that you can't do now? The Apostle Paul gives us some clues in 1 Corinthians 15, look again:

⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

Four contrasts: Perishable vs. imperishable. Dishonor vs. glory. Weakness vs. power. Natural vs. spiritual. Let's break those down, first:

Imperishable. Your resurrection body won't decay. It won't age. It won't get sick. It won't break down. No more cancer. No more arthritis. No more chronic pain. No more migraines. No more disability. Whatever is broken now gets healed then!

And listen, this is HUGE if you've struggled with physical limitations. If you've been disabled in this life, you won't be in the New Earth. If your eyesight is fading, it'll be 20/20. If you've been hard of hearing, you'll be able to hear a pin drop. If you've had chronic illness, it's gone! Your body will work perfectly, forever!

SO, imperishable, then Paul says:

Glorious. Your resurrection body will be beautiful. Not by the world's standards—but by God's! Philippians 3:21 says Jesus, "will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body."

Whatever insecurity you have about your appearance now, it's gone then. You won't wish you were taller or shorter or thinner or more muscular. You'll be exactly what God designed, radiating His glory and beauty! Third:

Power. Your resurrection body will be strong. Not just "healthy" but powerful. The Bible says it will be raised in power, in contrast to the weakness we experience now.

What does that mean practically? We don't know all the details, but we can look at Jesus' resurrection body for clues. He ate real food. He could be touched. He had physical substance—flesh and bones, He said. But He also wasn't limited by physical barriers the way we are now. He appeared in locked rooms. He traveled from place to place in ways that seemed instantaneous.

Randy Alcorn, in his comprehensive book "Heaven," speculates that we might be able to travel vast distances instantly! He says:

"Since we will rule with Christ over a vast New Earth, and possibly over faraway places in the new heavens, it seems likely that we might be able to be instantly transported great distances... Perhaps we will be able to travel to the far ends of the New Earth, or even to the remote parts of the new universe, in the blink of an eye."

We don't know exactly what that means for us, but it's clear our bodies will have capabilities beyond anything we can imagine now. No more weakness from disease. No more limitations from disability. No more exhaustion. Just power that can do everything God designed us to do, perfectly.

Finally, Paul says they will be:

Spiritual. As we said, this means Spirit-empowered. Your body will be perfectly responsive to God's Spirit. You'll be able to worship without distraction, create without frustration, work without fatigue, and relate without conflict.

AND here's where it gets really fun. Let's look at what Jesus did in His resurrection body, because that gives us even more clues about ours as well.

Jesus ate food. Luke 24 says "They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence." You're going to eat in the New Earth! Isaiah 25:6 talks about a feast God will prepare, "A feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine." You think tacos are good now? Wait until you have them without the heartburn!

Jesus also had physical features people recognized. Mary recognized His voice. The disciples on the road to Emmaus recognized Him when He broke bread. You're going to be recognizably you—not a different person, but the perfected version of you.

This is interesting, Jesus also had scars. In John 20:27, Jesus showed Thomas His scars. Even in His glorified body, Jesus kept the scars that told His story. I don't know exactly what this means for us, but it suggests our experiences—even painful ones—will somehow be part of our resurrected identity, redeemed and glorified.

Jesus also did physical activities. He walked. He talked. He created. He cooked. Meaning you're going to DO things in the New Earth. Not just exist, but live! Actively. Physically. Joyfully.

Let me tell you what you're NOT going to be: You're not going to be a ghost! You're not going to float around on clouds! You're not going to play a harp for a billion years with nothing else to do! You're going to have a real life. A physical life. A joyful, creative, relational, meaningful life. But without the sin, sorrow, and suffering that corrupts everything now.

Does that help anyone today? Does that do something for your soul, for your hope? How about this, number 3:

Everything you love about being human will be perfected.

Let me ask you a question: What's your perfect day look like? Not "what's the most spiritual thing you could say..." I mean what's your perfect day really like? For some of you, it's hiking in the mountains or sitting by the ocean. Some of you, it's cooking an

amazing meal with your family. Some of you, it's creating art or writing music or building something with your hands. Some of you, it's playing with your kids or grandkids. Some of you, it's reading a great book or watching a sunset or having a deep conversation with your best friend.

Whatever you just thought of, that's going to be in the New Earth. But better. Way better! Isaiah 65 gives us this incredible picture of the New Earth. Verses 21 through 23 say:

²¹ In those days people will live in the houses they build and eat the fruit of their own vineyards. ²² Unlike the past, invaders will not take their houses and confiscate their vineyards. For my people will live as long as trees, and my chosen ones will have time to enjoy their hard-won gains. ²³ They will not work in vain, and their children will not be doomed to misfortune. For they are people blessed by the Lord, and their children, too, will be blessed.

Did you catch all that? Building. Dwelling. Planting. Eating. Working. Creating. Enjoying. These aren't metaphors—this is literal description of life on the New Earth.

You're going to build things. You're going to create things. You're going to work—not as a curse, but as a joy. Work was part of paradise before the Fall. God gave Adam work to do in the garden. Work isn't the problem—frustration, futility, and exhaustion are the curse. But on the New Earth, you'll work with joy and see your work succeed!

If you love cooking, you'll cook in the New Earth. And the ingredients will be perfect, and your skills will be perfected, and everyone you cook for will have taste buds that work perfectly. If you love music, you'll make music in the New Earth. Better music than you've ever made. With better instruments. For an audience that appreciates it fully. If you love sports, you'll play in the New Earth. With a body that doesn't get injured. Against competition that makes you better. For the sheer joy of it. If you love learning, you'll have eternity to explore the universe God made. To discover how things work. To understand what you never had time to learn here. If you love relationships, you'll have perfect relationships. Without conflict. Without jealousy. Without dysfunction. Every conversation life-giving. Every interaction joy-producing.

Again, Randy Alcorn from his book "Heaven," which I think we still have a copy of in the lobby, says it like this:

"The doctrine of the resurrection means we're not going to be some new person with whom we have no connection. We're going to be ourselves—but made new. Restored. Enhanced. Better than we ever were or could be in this life."

In other words, I want you to hear this, you're not going to miss anything you loved about this life. You're going to experience it all—but perfected.

You know that moment when you're on vacation and everything is perfect and you think, "I wish this could last forever..." That's what eternity will be like. Except the moment does last forever! No Sunday night dread. No "back to reality." Just unending joy.

You know that feeling when you're with someone you love and the conversation is so good you lose track of time? That's what relationships will be like. No awkward endings. No "we should do this again sometime." Just perfect connection, forever.

You know that satisfaction you feel when you finish a project and step back and think, "I made that." That's what work will be like. Except you'll never run out of projects, never hit creative blocks, never experience failure.

Church, do you understand what this means? Everything you love about being human—everything that makes life worth living—it's all going to be there! But without the pain, the frustration, the disappointment, the ending!

You love sunsets? There will be sunsets on the New Earth—more beautiful than any you've seen! You love good food? The banquet is prepared! You love adventure? You've got a whole renewed creation to explore! You love creativity? You'll create forever without limitation!

God isn't asking you to give up what you love—He's promising to give you MORE of what you love! Come on make some noise, give Him a shout of praise if that stirs your soul and excites something deep inside you!

See here's the final takeaway for today:

Live now like you believe it.

Here's the danger: We hear all this about the resurrection and the New Earth, and it sounds amazing, but then we go back to living like it's not real. Like it's just a nice fairy tale we tell ourselves to feel better.

But Paul doesn't end 1 Corinthians 15 with "Isn't that nice?" He ends with "Therefore..."
Verse 58:

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

"Therefore" meaning because of the resurrection, because of what's coming, because you're getting your life back, NOW here's how you should live now. Three commands: Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Give yourselves fully.

Paul says stand firm. Don't compromise. Don't give in to the pressure to live like this world is all there is. Don't let the culture's materialism, hedonism, or nihilism [nile-izm] shape how you live. Stand firm in the truth that the best is yet to come!

Then he says let nothing move you. Stay committed. When following Jesus gets hard, when obedience is costly, when faithfulness requires sacrifice—don't quit, because you know what's waiting on the other side! Paul could face martyrdom because he knew resurrection was coming. You can face whatever you're facing because the same hope is yours!

Finally, he says, give yourselves fully. Meaning don't hold back. Don't coast. Don't just do enough to get by. Pour yourself into Kingdom work because you know it counts forever. Your labor is not in vain.

SO, let me get specific because if you really believe you're getting your body back, perfected and eternal:

It changes how you treat your body.

You're not abusing it. You're not hating it. And you are also not obsessing over it. You're stewarding it well because it matters to God.

It changes how you view disability or chronic illness.

You're not defined by your limitations anymore because you know they're temporary. Your identity is as a resurrected person of the New Earth, not broken person of this fallen world.

It changes how you handle aging.

You're not terrified of getting older because you know this body is just the seed that will bloom into something far greater.

It changes how you grieve.

When you lose someone you love who knew Jesus, you're not grieving like those without hope. You WILL see them again—in the flesh, recognizably them, with all of eternity to enjoy each other.

It changes what you pursue.

You're not chasing temporary pleasures that fade. You're investing in eternal realities that last. You're building relationships that are forever. You're creating beauty that will be purified and preserved. You're doing work that counts for eternity.

BUT here's what I need you to understand: This isn't just about the future! This hope changes your present!

When you know you're going to live forever in a resurrected body, you stop obsessing over things that don't matter! You stop living for appearance or accumulation or achievement as if those things define you!

When you know your best days are ahead, not behind, you stop living in regret and nostalgia! You engage the present with hope because the best is yet to come!

When you know your relationships are eternal, you invest in them differently! You forgive more quickly! You love more deeply! You serve more sacrificially! Because you've got forever with these people!

When you know your work matters eternally, you do it with excellence! Not for your boss's approval or your paycheck—for God's glory! Because nothing good is wasted!

SO, let's stop living like this is all there is! Stop acting like death wins! Stop believing the lie that the best you can hope for is to make the most of your seventy or eighty years and then disappear into oblivion!

- You've got a FUTURE!
- You've got a BODY that will be raised!
- You've got ETERNITY ahead of you!
- You've got meaningful WORK to do!
- You've got perfect RELATIONSHIPS waiting!
- You've got JOY unending!

So, stand firm! Let nothing move you! Give yourself fully to the work of the Lord! Because your labor is NOT in vain!

Last week I told you the life you've always wanted is the life God promises. Today I'm telling you: you get your life back. Not "part" of you. Not your "soul" while your body gets left behind. YOU—body, soul, spirit—perfectly integrated, glorified, and eternal.

Everything you love about being human will be perfected. Everything you grieve about this broken world will be healed. Everything you long for will be satisfied.

And knowing that should change everything about how you live today. Let's pray.

[PRAYER TIME]