

Sermon 74: Embracing Our Eternal Hope: 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly..."

Introduction: Review of the big picture of the chapter:

- **Problem:** The church was experiencing a controversy regarding the nature of the believer's eternal state.
- **Teaching:** Believers will possess a literal eternal body.
- **Paul's approach to addressing the controversy:**
 - **First: The resurrection is an historic fact and a foundational piece of the gospel: 15:1-11**
 - **Second: There are inescapable corollaries to the resurrection: 15:12-34**
 - **Third: Resurrected bodies are physical bodies, but different than our current physical bodies: 15:35-49**
 - **Fourth: The resurrection is the final piece of the gospel's triumph over sin and death: 15:50-57**
- **Application: 15:58**

Truth 1: We should accept that God can do improbable things: 15:35-37 "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it

die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain..."

- **Anticipating push back:** "But some man will say..."
 - **15:35** "How are the dead raised up?"
 - **15:35** "With what body do they come?"
- **Background to this attitude:**
 - The physical/temporal is incompatible with the eternal spiritual.
 - The physical is corrupt and the spiritual is pure.
 - This attitude is not a scriptural attitude.
- **Paul's attitude toward the anticipated question:** "Thou fool..."
 - If God says something, we need to accept it.
 - If He limits what He shares, we need to accept that limited information.
 - If we cannot understand something, it does not mean it is untrue.
 - We should resist the temptation to pose questions with predisposed skepticism.
 - We should accept the sufficiency of Scripture, not fret against it.
- **Example for nature: 15:36-37** "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain..."
 - Farmers for thousands of years have planted seeds without a complete understanding of how a seed turns into a plant that produces fruit and more seeds.
 - There is a specific kind of seed that produces a specific kind of plant, but the seed and the plant are not the same.
 - A seed does not produce a plant until it is first put into the ground.
 - There are similarities between this example from nature and death and the resurrection.
 - The seed is not made alive unless it dies first.
 - The seed planted is not the same as the plant that will germinate from the seed.
 - God causes the transition from seed to seedling to occur.
- **Conclusion:** If God says that something is true, we need to accept it and accept what the limitations He has put in what He has revealed.
 - **Deuteronomy 29:29** "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law..."
 - **2 Timothy 3:16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...That the man of God may be perfect, throughly

furnished unto all good works...

Truth 2: God delights in variety: 15:38-41 "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory..."

- **God's creation reveals His glory and creativity:** "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body..."
 - Body
 - His seeds' body
- **Three examples:**
 - **Example 1: Living creatures: 15:39** "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds..."
 - **Example 2: Heavenly and earthly bodies: 15:40** "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial..."
 - **Example 3: Varying degrees of glory: 15:40-41** "The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory..."
- **Three principles:**
 - **The continuity principle:** seeds produce after their own kind
 - Corn seeds produce corn not tomatoes
 - Dogs produce dogs not cats
 - **The distinction principle:**
 - Varieties in plants
 - Varieties in animals
 - Varieties in inanimate objects
 - **The glory principle:**
 - Not all celestial bodies are equally glorious
 - Not all stars are equally glorious
- **Conclusion:** Since creation is filled with examples of continuity, distinction, and varying glories, we should have no problem recognizing that God can incorporate these same principles in the relationship between temporal and immortal bodies.

Truth 3: Our future state will be far better than our current state: 15:42-44 "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body..."

- **Not only are these principles incorporated, but so also is another more glorious principle:** What we will have is far better than what we do have.
- **Three ways what we will have is far better: 15:44** "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body..."
 - **Corruption vs. Incorruption:** "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption..."
 - Sickness
 - Disordered thinking and passions
 - Deterioration
 - Death
 - **Dishonor vs. Glory:** "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory..."
 - Shame
 - Humiliation
 - Guilty
 - Disrespect
 - **Weakness vs. Power:** "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power..."
 - Physical infirmities
 - Physical deformities
 - Natural human limitations
- **Three passages:**
 - **Ecclesiastes 12:1-8** "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then

shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity..."

- **Romans 8:18-18-23** "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body..."
- **Revelation 21:3-5** "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful..."
- **Conclusion:** Rather than arguing for the impossibility of the resurrection, we should be living with a hopeful expectancy of that future state.

Truth 4: Our union with Christ will allow us to experience the resurrection in Him: 15:45-49 "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly..."

- **Paul's logical argument:**
 - If there is a natural body, then there must also be a spiritual body.
 - If there is a first Adam who failed, then there must be a second Adam who will triumph.

- Those who are of the first Adam have an earthy body like his earthy body.
- Those who are of the second Adam, will have a spiritual body like His spiritual body.
- **Breaking down the doctrine:**
 - **Fact 1: God gave life to the first Adam: 15:45** "The first man Adam was made a living soul..."
 - **Genesis 2:7** And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul..."
 - **Fact 2: He created him out of the dirt: 15:47** "The first man is of the earth, earthy..."
 - **Fact 3: That first Adam sinned and brought death to all who are in Him.**
 - **Romans 5:12** "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..."
 - **Romans 5:14** "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come..."
 - **Romans 5:18** "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation..."
 - **Fact 4: God gives life through the triumph of the second Adam: 15:45** "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit..."
 - **Romans 5:19** "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous..."
 - **Romans 5:21** "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord..."
 - **Fact 5: The resurrection is from the heavenly realm: 15:47** "The second man is the Lord from heaven..."
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord..."
 - **1 Corinthians 15:51-52** "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and

the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed..."

- **Fact 6: All who are united to Him will experience that triumph: 15:49** "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly..."
 - **1 Corinthians 15:22** "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive..."
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:14** "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him..."
- **Conclusion:** Our future hope is entirely connected to our union with Christ.

Applications:

- Do not allow yourself to reason away the clear statements of scripture.
- Do not allow yourself to become frustrated with what He has chosen to conceal.
- Examine God's creation and marvel at what it says about Him.
- Realize that there is yet more that is beyond what we can currently see, which is far better than what we can see.
- Never forget that everything you have is in Him, so take comfort that and delight in it.