

From Perishable to Imperishable: The Hope of Resurrection Glory

1 Corinthians 15:35–49

BIG IDEA: *The resurrection body is not a recycled version of our old one but a glorious transformation. Just as God gives seeds new life, so He will raise our bodies in glory, power, and immortality through Christ, the second Adam.*

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND: The Corinthians, influenced by Greek culture, struggled with the idea of bodily resurrection. Many Greeks viewed the body as a prison for the soul, so the thought of a resurrected body seemed foolish or even undesirable. Paul confronts this skepticism head-on. Having already defended the historical fact of Christ's resurrection (vv. 1–34), he now addresses the nature of the believer's resurrection body. Paul's argument moves from nature (*seeds and flesh*), to theology (*God's design in creation*), to Christology (*the difference between Adam and Christ*). His aim is to assure believers that resurrection is not only possible but necessary—and that our resurrection body to come will far surpass the one we now possess.

1. The Question of the Resurrection Body (v. 35–36)

- Skeptics ask: “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have?”
- It was thought inconceivable for the dead to be given a body. Paul's blunt reply: “You fool!”—because resurrection is not a human achievement but God's work (see also Jn. 12:24); By saying ‘fool,’ Paul means someone ignorant w/o wisdom.
- **Illustration:** Just as a seed “dies” before it brings life, so our bodies must die to be raised anew.
- **Application:** Don't measure God's power by human imagination. What seems impossible to us is simple for the God who created life in the first place.

2. The Seed and the Plant (vv. 37–41)

- The seed you sow is not the final body but a bare kernel. God gives it a new body as He pleases.
- Diversity in creation proves God's power: human flesh, animal flesh, fish, birds, heavenly bodies (angels or heavenly beings), earthly bodies—each unique.
- The sun, moon, and stars all differ in glory. Likewise, resurrection bodies will differ in splendor from our earthly ones.
- Paul's point: what God did in creation, he can do in the resurrection of the dead.
- **Illustration:** Just as an acorn looks small and ordinary but grows into a mighty oak, so too these frail bodies will one day be raised in glory by God's power.
- **Application:** Our future bodies won't just be resuscitated versions of these frail ones we have today. They'll be perfectly suited for eternal life in God's kingdom.

3. From Perishable to Imperishable (vv. 42–44)

- Paul contrasts four qualities of the old body vs. the resurrection body:
 1. **Sown corruption, raised incorruption** – no more sickness, aging, or death.
 2. **Sown in dishonor, raised in glory** – from weakness/shame to radiant dignity.
 3. **Sown in weakness, raised in power** – frailty transformed into strength.
 4. **Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body** – not immaterial, but Spirit-empowered, fit for eternity. It is one that resembles Christ's resurrection body (see v.49). It is not limited by time and space, yet one that is material.

- **Illustration:** Think of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. The butterfly is not just a “fixed” caterpillar—it's a transformed creature.
- **Application:** For the believer, weakness, disease, and disability don't get the last word. God will raise us whole, strong, and glorious in Christ.

4. The First Adam and the Last Adam (vv. 45–49)

- **Adam:** the first man, from dust, became a living soul.
- **Christ:** the last Adam, from heaven, became a life-giving Spirit.
- Earthly people bear Adam's image (weakness, mortality).
- Heavenly people will bear Christ's image (glory, immortality).
- **Application:** Right now, we bear Adam's likeness—frailty, decay, and sin. But in Christ, we're promised transformation into His likeness. This is the hope of every Christian: to share not only in His death but in His resurrection glory.

PUTTING IT ALL INTO PRACTICE (CONCRETE STEPS):

1. **Face Death with Hope** – Funerals for Christians are not the end. Consider them a celebration of life—‘sowing’ services—planting seeds that God will raise in glory.
2. **Encourage One Another in Suffering and Loss** – When you visit someone in the hospital or attend a funeral, this passage gives you words of hope. You can remind others: “*This is not the end—this is the seed. God will raise it in glory.*” That turns mourning into hope-filled comfort.
3. **Endure Suffering with Perspective** – Our weak, broken bodies remind us that greater glory is coming. The aches, pains, and limitations of this life won't last.
4. **Live with Eternity in View** – Don't get too attached to this world or this body. They are temporary. Live for what lasts forever.
5. **Cling to Christ** – Only those united with the last Adam, Jesus Christ, will share in resurrection glory and see eternal life with God.
6. **Treat Your Body With Dignity Now** – Even though our current bodies are weak and perishable, they are not worthless. Paul says they are like seeds—God's handiwork destined for transformation. That means how we use our bodies today matters: be holy and honor God with them for His glory (1 Cor. 6:19–20).
7. **Prioritize Spiritual Health Over Physical Appearance** – Our culture obsesses over fitness, beauty, and youth. But Paul says these bodies are temporary, like seeds. While we should care for them, we must prioritize what lasts forever—our walk with Christ and investment in His kingdom.
8. **Find Courage to Age Faithfully** – Wrinkles, grey hair, weakness, and slowing down are not signs of defeat. They're reminders that a glorious, imperishable body is coming. As age advances, so does the anticipation of resurrection. This makes getting older less about decline and more about drawing closer to glory.
9. **Live Like Heaven Is Real** – If your body will be raised incorruptible, then eternity is not a vague idea—it's a certainty. That should change how you spend your time, money, and energy. Live less for temporary pleasures and more for eternal treasures. Forgive others and don't sweat the small stuff—eternity makes our daily worries and grudges look pretty small.
10. **Worship Christ as the One Who Gives Life** – Paul contrasts Adam, who brought death, with Christ, who gives life. That means every breath, every heartbeat, every promise of resurrection points back to Jesus. Our worship should magnify Him as the source of life now and forever. See 1 John 3:2.