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The Majesty of our Resurrected Bodies 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Good morning! It's great to see you there this morning as we continue our study of the power of the resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15. We have two more weeks in this study on the power of the resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15 and then this summer we are going to work through a study on the sound words of salvation. This summer we are going to hold up the gospel like a diamond and survey it from different angles in the hopes that the love of Christ will motivate us to keep living for Christ and we would be willing to keep telling other people about Christ.

One thing I get to do all week is to think about Scripture. When I am not meeting with people for counseling or discipleship I am studying and drinking coffee and trying to drink more water. It's obviously a great privilege to spend so much time studying God's Word. I love going to lunch with Kirk sometimes and he will talk about what he has been learning and then he will say things like, "William (He calls me by my first name) William, this morning I was thinking about Romans 8:39-39 and how nothing can separate a believer from God's love in Christ. It's amazing. I

can't wait to tell our people what I'm learning this week." He's always excited to take what he is learning to share it with us.

I assume you are all spending time in God's Word throughout the week. I also assume there are other things going on in your day that you have to think about other than the Word of God. It can be hard to stay focused on what really matters.

I want to begin our time together this morning in Colossians 3. If you brought your Bible please open to Colossians 3. The last 4 weeks we have been studying the power of the resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15. The reason we are studying this chapter is because what we celebrated about a month ago on Easter Sunday is something we should celebrate more than just one Sunday a year. The resurrection of Christ and our future resurrection with Christ is something we should think about and celebrate every day.

I am praying that our study of one section of the Bible would help us obey another section of the Bible. I am praying for myself and for you that our study of 1 Corinthians 15 will help all of us do a little better at obeying Colossians 3:1-4. As we read these four verses notice the commands. There are two commands in Colossians 3:1-4 so listen and then tell me what they are (Maybe not all of you at once):

Colossians 3:1-4

- 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.
- 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
- 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

What are the two commands in these verses? Seek the things that are above and set your minds on things that are above. At the moment of our salvation God raises us from spiritual death in sin to spiritual life in Christ. We are raised up with Christ at the moment of conversion. This is meant to change what we seek and how we think. Our position in Christ changes the point of our lives. Our value system is completely reversed when God saves us.

Prior to our salvation Christ was not on the radar. We didn't think about Him or love Him or obey Him. We valued ourselves. Our value system was made up of the unholy trinity of me, my and I. Now, because of our salvation, we value Christ. All of us need help to keep our focus upward and outward on Christ. If we are not making an effort to seek the things that are above and set our minds on things above we are in spiritual danger. What do I mean?

This story I read years ago illustrates what can happen if we focus on something other than the risen Christ as our number one focus

in life. Some of you know the name Randy Alcorn. Randy is a reliable Christian author. He wrote a long book on heaven. In the book he writes about a lady named Florence Chadwick. In 1952, a young lady named Florence Chadwick stepped into the waters of the Pacific Ocean off Catalina Island, determined to swim to the shore of mainland California. She'd already been the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways.

The weather was foggy and chilly; she could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam for fifteen hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water along the way, her mother, in a boat alongside, told her she was close and that she could make it. Finally, physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn't until she was on the boat that she discovered the shore was less than half a mile away. At a news conference the next day she said, "All I could see was the fog....I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it."

Alcorn uses that true story to ask an important question, "Can you relate to those words? We live our lives in a fog of trouble, worry, doubt, depression, health problems, unemployment, financial uncertainty, strained relationships...and loss of loved ones. The Bible tells us that if we know Jesus Christ we are headed toward Heaven. A world where there will be "no more death" and "no more mourning," "no more crying or pain." God will wipe away the tears from every eye. That world awaits us on the other side of all this fog that surrounds us.

(Then he quotes Colossians 3:1-2) Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things ([Colossians 3:1-2](#)). Consider Florence Chadwick's words: "I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it." For Christians, that shore is a person called Jesus and a place called Heaven. We are made for a person and a place. Jesus is the person, Heaven is the place."

We all need help to keep laying aside whatever distracts us and whatever sin would destroy us and to fix our eyes on Christ as we run our individual races of faith. I don't think I am alone in this.

The most important thing about you no matter what you are going through is who Christ is and who you are in Him and where He is taking you

Several years ago we went to Washington for a summer vacation. We had just returned to our house in Kansas. Brianna's car was in the driveway and my car was in the garage. A storm came through that dropped softball size hail. I had never heard or seen anything like it. **The hail was hangry, people.** The hail destroyed Brianna's car. It totaled it.

Before her car was destroyed it had a compass on the dash. One time her car battery went out and I got her a new battery. To reset the compass on the dash you had to drive the car in circles. So there I was in the old Kmart parking lot that was soon to go out of

business driving in circles to reset the compass. I often wonder if anyone from the church drove by what they were thinking. Oh, there's pastor Blake, driving in circles. We knew he is pretty unique. I guess that's what he does for fun on Saturday's. He drives in circles. Bless his heart.

Sometimes life can feel like we're driving in circles. Everywhere we turn we see inevitable hardships. Challenges all around us. What we need is to keep trusting in the Holy Spirit to use the Scriptures, all of them, to redirect the compass of our hearts upward and outward to Christ. Christ is not part of our lives. He's the point of our lives. He is our life. For us to live is Christ. Colossians 3:11 says, "Christ is all and in all."

One reason we are studying 1 Corinthians 15 is to help us obey Colossians 3:1-4. As we go through 1 Corinthians 15 I hope what we are learning is helping you stay focused on Christ. His resurrection is the firstfruits of our resurrection. What He did, rising from the grave, is what we will all do when Christ comes back.

Now, please turn back over to 1 Corinthians 15:35-49. 1 Corinthians 15 is a chapter that can help all of us with our focus. It's 57 verses on the power of Christ's resurrection and our future resurrection with Him as a motivation to keep doing the work of the Lord - evangelizing unbelievers and edifying believers. In the verses we are going to consider this morning, Paul provides the

most comprehensive look at what our resurrection bodies will be like.

Part of our salvation includes a redeemed resurrected body.

In these verses Paul describes what our future resurrected bodies will be like to confront and correct people in the church who were denying bodily resurrection.

The title for this lesson is the majestic resurrection body.

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

- 35** But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”
- 36** You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.
- 37** And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.
- 38** But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.
- 39** For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.
- 40** 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.
- 41** 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.

- 42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.
- 45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became! a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.
- 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.
- 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.
- 48 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.
- 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

There are two answers that Paul provides to those in the church who didn't comprehend or understand how someone who dies and is buried will come to life again in a new resurrection body:

1. The new resurrection body God will give you is **certain** - 1 Corinthians 15:35-44
2. The new resurrection body God will give you is **Christ-like** - 1 Corinthians 15:45-50

Let's look at the certainty of the resurrection body beginning in verses 35-37:

1 Corinthians 15:35-38

- 35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"
- 36 You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.
- 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.
- 38** But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

In this section Paul is responding to objectors in the church. He is responding to people in the church who couldn't comprehend a resurrection body and mocked what Paul has been describing up to this point in 1 Corinthians 15. The questions in verse 35 are not really questions - These questions are kind of like when a husband gets ready to come to church and right before you leave your wife asks you, "Are you wearing that belt with those shoes?" What do men know who are asked such questions? That's not a question. It means you are not wearing that belt with those shoes.

The questions someone asks in verse 35 show that some people still didn't believe what Paul writes. The tone, I think, of these questions is more, Yeah, right Paul. We have been following your logic and we're still not buying it. If people really rise again how are the dead raised and with what kind of body do they come? You're a fool, Paul. You bring us strange teaching.

These people aren't the only people in the Bible to question God's power to raise the dead. The Sadducees in Jesus' day denied the resurrection. That's why they were sad u see. Oh boy. Let's keep moving forward. Remember when Paul stood before King Agrippa in Acts 26. Do you remember what Paul asked him in his defense of the truth of the gospel? **Acts 26:8, "Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?"** Paul wasn't afraid to push back on people who denied the resurrection because he knew it was real, even though it defied human logic.

How does Paul correct objectors in the church? He uses an analogy in verses 36-37. It's the analogy of a seed. The seed represents the body of a believer who dies. A seed is put into the ground. It is sown in the ground and then it comes to life. Look at verses 36-38, "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 kernel, 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."

Do you see the logic in this analogy? The seed represents the human body. Just as seed is buried into the ground and comes out of the ground looking different, so it is with believers in Christ. After we die our bodies are buried in the ground. But then like the seed that is buried in the ground our bodies come back altogether different. There is a difference between what's planted and what eventually grows from the seed.

Jesus uses this word picture. Jesus uses a seed as an illustration of the life-multiplying effect of His impending death in John 12:24, "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." Jesus is going to the cross. Jesus is going to die. But his death is not the end. His death will bear much fruit. Then He says in verses 25-26, "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."

To gain eternal life you and I have to die. Not only physically one day. We have to die to ourselves. Whoever loves his life, Jesus says, loses it. This isn't varsity Christianity. This isn't for the serious Christians. This is whoever wants to be a Christian. These are the terms set by Christ. Faith in Christ leads to following Christ. True faith results in a new life of living for Christ and no longer for ourselves.

The reward for following Christ is that where Jesus is we will be for all eternity.

If anyone serves Jesus, the Father will honor that person. God the Father will do for us what He did for Jesus - raise us from the dead and glorify us together with Christ. What God will do for us is so glorious. Because of sin, these are bodies of sin and death. But because we have spiritual life in Christ, when our bodies go

into the ground, like the seed, when Christ comes back we will receive new glorified bodies.

Are any of you thankful that you will receive a new body one day? I assume most of you wouldn't rate your current body a a 10 out of 10. Maybe you walked by a mirror at the wrong time recently and stopped and looked at your reflection and this thought popped into your mind, "What happened? How did this happen? How did I get this way? It must be all the chicken fried steak."

Then we try and make some changes. We try to eat better and exercise and it kind of helps but then hair starts growing out of our ears and we can hardly see through the long eyebrow hair that dangles in front of our eyes. Maybe that's just me. Our current bodies are made in the image of God but our current bodies are bodies of sin and death that are passing away.

What's our hope? God is able to give us a new body. How do we know God is powerful enough to do something like that? Look at verses 39-41:

1 Corinthians 15:39-41

- 39** For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.
- 40** 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.

41 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.

Just as there are different plants that come from different seeds there are different creatures God has made and different heavenly bodies. God is a glorious Creator who creates different bodies. There are earthly bodies and heavenly bodies and they're not the same. Paul's basic point is that God can create new bodies for believers because not all flesh is the same. God's creative power is seen on earth and in the sky.

I don't know about you - one thing I find interesting about what Paul teaches about the resurrection is how so much of this flows from Genesis 1-2. Paul writes a lot about Adam and he writes a lot about creation in 1 Corinthians 15. Why? God is a powerful creator. He doesn't stop creating in Genesis 1-2. He keeps working.

What is Paul's point? If God is able to do that, He is able to give us a different body when this one is put in the ground. I think another word that we could use to summarize these verses is different. The heavenly bodies differ from each other in glory as far as the human eye is concerned. Even so, our bodies fit for the new heavens and the new earth will be physical bodies but they will be different than our current bodies. **They have to be different.**

Close to 30 years ago now a famous golfer named Payne Stewart died in a plane crash. The reason the plane crashed is that the people inside the plane lost oxygen. A loss in cabin pressure and a failure to get immediate oxygen led to their death. What's my point? Their bodies on the plane were not fit for a loss in cabin pressure so they died.

Even so, these earthly bodies are not fit for glory. They have to be transformed. Notice the first three words in verse 42. What are they? **So it is.** There's certainty to Paul's language. Paul is not describing what might happen when we die and Christ comes back. He is describing what will happen. So it is.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

- 42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Back to our seed and sowing analogy. Our human bodies are perishable but raised imperishable. They are sown in dishonor they're raised in glory. They're sown in weakness and raised in power. They're sown natural and raised spiritual. This contrast should brighten our days, especially when we find out we or someone we love has an incurable disease. "The earthly body is sown perishable, in corruption, dishonor, and weakness as a natural body, but the heavenly body is raised imperishable in

incorruption, glory, and power as a supernatural, Spirit-empowered body."

I hope 1 Corinthians 15:35-44 encourages you. Spend time in these verses this week. Spend time thinking about the difference between your body now and the body you will receive when Christ comes back. Let this give you hope. What you see in the mirror is going to change one day. Erich Sauer says, "So the graveyards of man become the seed plots of resurrection. And the cemeteries of the people of God become, through the heavenly dew, the resurrection fields of the promised perfection."

The first answer to the question how are the dead raised is answered by Paul in the verses we just considered. The second answer to the objection, with what kind of body do they come, is answered by Paul in verses 45-49.

Remember our two basic points:

1. The new resurrection body God will give you is **certain** - 1 Corinthians 15:35-44
2. The new resurrection body God will give you is **Christ-like** - 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

What makes our new resurrection bodies majestic?

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

- 45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.
- 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.
- 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.
- 48 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.
- 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What makes our new resurrection bodies majestic is that they will reflect the image of Christ. Remember Christ is the firstfruits. He's the first one to die and rise again never to die again. He's the firstfruits and we're the harvest. God is powerful enough to do this for us. We can't do it. We're dead! God does it.

Randy Alcorn answers this important question - What will we look like in heaven? "Jesus had a physically resurrected body that allowed him to walk, talk, and eat (John 21:1-14; Luke 24:36-43). We're told that our bodies will be like his (1 Corinthians 15:20, 48-49; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2). After his resurrection, Jesus invited the disciples to touch him and said, “Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost [disembodied spirit] does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:39).

Christ's physically resurrected body is the model for our resurrected bodies on the resurrected Earth. After our resurrection, we will not be ghosts; we will be physical human beings. When God speaks of our having "new bodies," do we shrug our shoulders and say, "I can't imagine what a new body would be like"? Of course not. We know what a body is—we've had one all of our lives—and we can remember when it looked better! We can imagine a new body, without pain and weakness. We are not past our peak—we will be raised to a new life and a new body on a new Earth, all beyond our wildest dreams. In our resurrected bodies, we will be as physical as we are now. After the New Earth is established and we are relocated there, we will be forever physical but no longer subject to sin, death, suffering, and the Curse (Revelation 21:4).

Christ is a carpenter. Carpenters not only create things; they also fix things that need repair. Do our bodies, minds, and attitudes need fixing? He's going to fix us. He's going to fix the universe itself. Don't underestimate God's plan and Christ's redemptive work. He created us, our bodies, and the earth. And he hasn't given up on us, our bodies, or the earth. He's committed to repairing them . . . permanently."

Listen to Philippians 3:20-21

20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

This is one of the truths that kept Paul going when the going got tough. This is one of the truths that Paul used to encourage other Christians to keep living for Christ when the going got tough. The believers in Phillipi had real gospel opponents. When Paul took the gospel to Philippi he got beat up and thrown in jail. Now, people were harassing these believers for worshipping Christ as God. They were being persecuted for their faith when Paul wrote this letter.

Friends, what keeps us all going in the work of the Lord - Evangelizing unbelievers and edifying believers - is knowing God's future plan for us. When we know God's plan and we know that what God has planned for us is so wonderful that it is beyond our ability to fathom, we want to keep living for Christ. Do you need to be motivated to keep living for Christ in a hostile world? Yes. What do you do? Study the power of the resurrection. Start with Christ and then think long and hard about God's plan for you because you are one with Christ. Let this sink in, especially times when you feel like you're sinking in.

I want to close this lesson with something I hope encourages you. God is still using the power of the resurrection to save sinners. Even as our world spirals out of control all that God the Father has given to the Son are being saved. This past week I watched a fascinating testimony of what we might call an unlikely convert.

Her name is Molly Worthen and she is a professor who teaches in the history department at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Yes, people still need to be saved who attend that college at the University of North Carolina no matter what Kirk says.

Molly graduated with a BA from Yale University in 2003 and then received a PHD from Yale in 2011. She is really smart. She's a historian and a journalist who has written extensively and critically in the past about evangelicals and evangelicalism. Basically, she is a really smart person who was skeptical of Christ and even more skeptical of Christians.

A while back Molly began meeting with a local church pastor in her area. She was told to read several books on the resurrection. One of the books was over 800 pages. She began to see that reliable scholarship confirms the credibility of Jesus' bodily resurrection. As she began to take serious the credibility of what the Bible teaches she came to this place where she had to make a decision. She had all the facts, she had done all the research. Clearly, the Lord was working in her heart. Then she came to Romans 10:9-10, "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

To become a Christian Molly had to embrace who Jesus Christ is and where Jesus Christ is. To become a Christian this is what you must believe, right? You must believe that Jesus is Lord and you must believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. No one who denies either of those is saved. People who deny who Jesus Christ is as Lord or say that Jesus didn't really rise again are not saved.

God saved Molly Worthen. How? The resurrection. The Spirit of God used the Word of God to show Molly her sin and her need for a Savior and then the same Spirit used the Same Word to show Molly that Christ died for her sins and rose again. His death and resurrection is what atones for sin. It is by confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead never to die again that we're saved.

That's what appears to have happened to a professor of history at the university of North Carolina. We need this kind of encouragement. We all know people that seem so locked in a lifestyle of sin that it's hard to believe they could ever change. **Molly's testimony is a reminder that the most unlikely people to be saved are often the wants God saves.**

All of us are unlikely converts. All of us used to be dead in our sins, deceived by the devil and doing the desires of our flesh and mind. We were all at one time children of wrath. We didn't save ourselves. God saved us. Titus 3:5, "He saved us, not because

of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Denny Burk, a writer I enjoy learning from, comments Molly Worthen's conversion this way, "It is so easy to become cynical. Even for Christians, there is a powerful temptation to let the darkness of our time obscure the fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and that he is still doing it (1 Tim. 1:15). We let ourselves believe that some people are hard cases and that there is just no use trying. Guess what? The Lord specializes in hard cases. And truth be known, we are all hard cases. This interview is a glorious reminder that the Lord's arm is not too short to save (Isaiah 59:1). The wind blows where it wishes. You can't see where it comes from or where it is going, but you can see its effects. So it is with the Spirit (John 3:8). We can no more restrain the Spirit than we can grasp the wind with our hands. He will have his way. We can only marvel at the miracle of the new birth and pray that we might be a part of what God is doing in the world."

Friends, one thing we cannot lose if we know the truth of the power of the resurrection is hope. Christ Jesus is our hope. Molly's conversion to Christ should encourage all of us that God is still saving sinners. Everyone God the Father chose to give as a bride for His Son will hear the gospel and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. God is still calling sinners out of this

crazy society to accept the claims of Christ and to confess Him as Lord and to believe in their heart that God raised Him from the dead. God is still mighty to save and the gospel is alive and well still doing its thang or thing, depending on where you're from.

One thing we shouldn't be surprised about is that Molly had to wrestle with the truth of a risen Messiah to be saved. She had to accept the truth claims of Scripture that cut against the way we normally think about things. We believe in things we have never seen. We've never seen Christ. We've never seen someone die and then come back to life never to die again. We believe what we have never seen because of the power of God through the word of God. He acts and we react. We believe and follow our Savior on the narrow road that leads to life because we have been born again.