

**12/7/25      Your Resurrection Body**  
**1 Corinthians 15:35-49**

Welcome...

We are studying the book of 1 Corinthians. In our text today Paul shifts from defending the necessity of the resurrection to explaining the nature of the resurrection body. Some in the Corinthian church were not only doubting whether the dead could be raised, but also questioning what that resurrection could possibly look like.

Paul takes up their two questions—"How are the dead raised?" and "With what kind of body do they come?"—and answers them by showing that God will transform our present, perishable bodies into glorified, supernatural bodies fit for eternity. Every believer will be physically raised in a body no longer vulnerable to sin, weakness, or death. This glorious promise is meant to embolden us to live faithfully and fearlessly for Christ today.

**Let's read 1 Cor 15:35-49...**

Notice first four words in our text: perishable, dishonor, weakness, natural. This is the reality of our humanity. Death is inevitable and it is also difficult. When I was in the Navy, I was at a Bible study where a gal who shared her story of how she joined the Navy. She was working as a mortician and dealing with preparing the deceased for viewings and funerals. She decided in the midst of the darkness to introduce some levity. She was preparing a body of a dead man named John for a family viewing and was told to have the open casket with the body for a viewing in the chapel at 7 pm. At least that was what she thought she heard, but the family was there in the chapel at 6 pm. She had the body ready at 6:15 pm and was rolling in to the chapel (she thought it was 45 minutes before the family showed up) and she quickly pushed the casket through the double doors while announcing, "Here's Johnny!" There was the entire family in shock. This gal said, "It was then that I decided to enlist in the Navy."

Well, death is inescapable and the question is not simple what happens to our body at the funeral home but is there a resurrection of our bodies? What will our resurrected bodies be like? How can someone buried in the ground rise again?

**That brings us to our main point: 1 Corinthians 15:36-49 answers the questions in verse 35 about your future resurrection body so that you believe in the risen Christ and live boldly for Him now.**

**The Puzzling Questions in verse 35**

**The Practical Illustrations in verse 36-41**

**The Promised Transformation in verses 42-44**

**The Perfect Prototype in verses 45-49**

My prayer is that you believe in the risen Christ and believe that your perishable body will be raised imperishable, your body that is sown in dishonor will be raised in glory, that your weak and frail body will be raised and with supernatural power, and you will one day fully bear the image of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

**I.      The Puzzling Questions**

Notice in verse 35 Paul is dealing with two specific questions: "How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have?" Some people in the church were questioning not just the possibility but the pattern of the resurrection.

Keep in mind, Paul is speaking here to the resurrection of the body, not of the soul. There is a difference.

When believers in Jesus Christ die their soul immediately goes to heaven. By “heaven,” we mean a real place of comfort and blessedness where God dwells. But the bodies of believers remain on earth, awaiting the resurrection.

So, when the Bible speaks of resurrection it is referring a physical resurrection.

On the surface the questions asked in verse 35 seem like innocent ones, but then two words in verse 36 tell us otherwise. Look at verse 36, “You fool!”

Paul’s response in verse 36 indicates that the questions mentioned in verse 35 were not those of someone who wanted to know the truth but were the mocking taunts of someone who thought he already knew. There were still skeptics, mockers and troublemakers, who disputed the credibility of any idea of a resurrection. So Paul launches into his brilliant apologetic for the bodily resurrection of believers. He begins with:

## **II. The Practical Illustrations**

Verse 36b-38...

To answer the question about the resurrection, Paul turns to the outside world just as Jesus did so often. He shows how the visible can help us understand the invisible. The natural world informs us about the spiritual world. He gives three practical illustrations from creation.

The first illustration is from the agricultural world.

Paul goes back to the farmer and his field to illustrate the possibility and the nature of the resurrection. You sow a seed in the earth, and in a real sense it dies, decomposes, dissolves, and disintegrates; but over a period of time, out of the death of that seed comes life. The new life in the plant is different from the seed, but it comes from the seed.

Applying the same figure, Jesus said in John 12:24, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” Before Christ could bear the fruit of salvation for us, He had to die. Far from being an obstacle, death is essential to resurrection.

Likewise, before we can participate in the fruit of His resurrection, or bear fruit in His service, we too must die to self. Jesus goes on to say in John 12:25, “He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.”

When Jesus speaks of hating your life he is speaking of a radical shift in priority from self-centered, worldly living to a life surrendered to Christ, where you “lose” your old way to find true, eternal life in Him, akin to a seed dying to grow.

It's not self-hatred, but it is having Jesus as the first love of your heart and a reordering of your deepest desires to value God's eternal kingdom over temporary earthly pursuits, a call to self-denial and following Jesus' path, even if it means giving up worldly comfort or ambition.

What happens spiritually will also happen physically. Those who belong to Christ will die and be buried, but they will rise again when Christ returns.

Hold a small acorn in your hand. If you didn’t already know how trees work, you’d never guess that inside that tiny brown seed is a towering oak. Burial doesn’t destroy the seed—it unleashes its purpose. So it is with our bodies.

Next Paul goes from the world of agriculture to the world of the animals. Look at verse 39...

The flesh of a human being is different from the flesh of a bird, and it is smooth unlike the scales of a fish. Similarly implied, there are no two birds exactly alike, no two fish alike, and no two humans alike. The human body has a nature of one kind, while animals, birds, and fish have their own particular kind of flesh.

The conclusion is this: If God is able to make different kinds of bodies for men, animals, birds, and fish, why can He not make a different kind of body for us at the resurrection?

Paul then moves from the agricultural world and the world of animals to the astronomical world.

Look at verses 40-41...

We know from the study of astronomy that some of what tend to be called stars are actually planets, similar to the earth. True stars are in themselves suns. The stars generate their own light, but the moons and planets only reflect light produced by the stars. Each celestial body has its own glory.

The point is, you can tell the difference between the sun, the moon, and the faraway stars. You know when you are looking at the sun. You know when you are looking at the moon.

Every star is different, just as every plant is different, every animal is different, and every human being is different. God has infinite creative capacity, including the capacity to make infinite variety. Why would anyone think it too hard for Him to re-create and resurrect human bodies, no matter what the form might be?

People today, including some Christians, become perplexed and bothered about how God could restore the bodies of those who have been lost at sea, blown up in an explosion, or cremated?

Thomas Shreiner writes, “A sovereign, miracle working God will have no problem resurrecting a decomposed body or a cremated body on the great day of resurrection for God’s people. The resurrected body will be a spiritual body adapted to the spirit world, but it will not be ghost-like. It will be a real body with the individual identity and personality of each person. It will be an imperishable body, one of great supernatural power with enlarged mental capacities. It will be a body like Christ’s resurrected body, fully equipped to exist in the eternal state.”

Paul first addresses the puzzling questions with practical illustrations. Next he explains:

### **III. The Promised Transformation**

Verses 42-44...

There is going to be both a continuity and a discontinuity between our earthly bodies and our eternal bodies. We will maintain our identities and be the same people, but our bodies will be wonderfully different.

Paul describes this contrast with four pairings of compare and contrast: we have perishable versus imperishable; dishonor versus glory; weakness versus power; and natural versus spiritual.

Let’s take them one at a time. The first contrast of “perishable versus imperishable” pertains to durability or permanence.

Verse 42...

Perishable means able to die. The word also implies a certain process of decay, of degeneration.

Think about perishable goods that we forget in our refrigerator. The decay comes from a bacterial growth that produces nasty odors. Perhaps you've noticed them from time to time in your refrigerator, and you have to root through and find what in the world is causing that. There is the milk that has gone sour because it is way past the expiration date.

We are all living in dying bodies. We all suffer from a terminal disease called life-on-a-fallen-planet. There is an expiration date on every human body that will go into effect unless Christ returns first.

But the resurrection body of the believer will be raised an imperishable body. 2 Peter 1:3-4 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you"

Our new bodies will know no sickness, decay, deterioration, or death. Notice verse 54, "When this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

Your resurrection body will be imperishable. It cannot die and it cannot decay. It will be pulsating with life for all eternity. Revelation 21:4 says there'll be, "No more death, mourning, crying or pain...for the old order of things has passed away and everything will be made new!"

Our resurrection bodies will live forever. They are immortal and there'll be no aging process in heaven, no diminishment of our capabilities over time. The time is infinite, and as we sing in the song Amazing Grace: when we've been there 10,000 years bright shining as the sun, your eyes will still see the brightness and glory of the New Jerusalem like the day that you first began. You'll be in eternal health, forever healthy in the resurrection body.

The second compare and contrast is in 43a...our mortal body is "sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory."

This second contrast has to do with value and potential. Genesis teaches us that we are made in the image of our Creator, and we were made to manifest our Creator in all that we do. However, through sin, that which was created to honor God became characterized instead by dishonor. Romans 3:10 says "There is none righteous, not even one." Romans 3:23 says "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Even the most faithful believer dies with his body in a state of dishonor, a state of imperfection and incompleteness.

But that imperfect and dishonored body one day will be raised in glory. Throughout eternity our new immortal bodies will also be honorable bodies, perfected for pleasing, praising, and enjoying the Creator who made us and the Redeemer who restored us.

Think of a piece of coal and a diamond. A diamond is the most precious jewel on earth, made up of carbon, the same stuff of which coal is made. A diamond and a piece of coal are made up of the same element, but they are so different. Someone said, "Coal is carbon in humiliation, but a diamond is carbon in glory." Someday, the coal-like body you have will be transformed into the bodily equivalent of a beautiful diamond formed by the grace of God.

The first contrast of perishable versus imperishable pertains to durability or permanence.  
This second contrast of dishonor and glory has to do with value and potential  
The third contrast of weakness and power has to do with ability. Look at verse 43c...

Today, we have a “natural body,” that is, a body suited to an earthly environment. We received this body from our first parent, Adam: he was made of dust, and so are we (Genesis 2:7). Our present bodies are characterized by weakness. We are weak not only in physical strength and endurance but also in resistance to disease and harm. Despite the marvelous natural protective mechanisms of the human body, no one is immune from breaking a bone, catching various infections, and eventually from dying.

Our human bodies are perishable, dishonorable, weak, and natural. If you want proof, just consider what is called the five Bs of middle age: Baldness, Bifocals, Bridges, Bulges, and Bunions.

Our bodies wear out, slow down, decay, sag, groan, and even begin to smell bad. At best, we can only slow down the aging process; we cannot delay it forever.

But not so our new bodies, which will be raised in power. We are not told what that power will entail, but it will be immeasurable compared to what we now possess. We will no longer have to say that “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). Anything our heavenly spirits determine to do our heavenly bodies will be able to accomplish.

But there is a fourth compare and contrast in verse 44...

The fourth area of contrasts has to do with the sphere, or realm, of existence.

Believers will not become “spirits” or ghosts. Instead, “spiritual body” in verse 44 refers to a body that suits a new, spiritual life. Each believer will no longer have a natural body, like Adam, designed to live on this earth; instead, each will have a spiritual body, like Christ had after His resurrection.

Our earthly body is strictly natural, made for this world. That is the only realm in which it can live and function. Even with the imperfections and limitations caused by the Fall into sin, our present bodies are wonderfully made for life on earth, marvelously suited for earthly living. But that is the only realm and the only living for which they are suited.

The new body of the believer, however, will be raised a spiritual body. Our spirits now reside in earthly bodies, but one day they will reside in spiritual bodies perfectly suited for heavenly living.

Paul’s point is that the resurrection body is not a spruced-up version of the physical body. The two bodies are totally different:

The physical body is perishable; the resurrection body is imperishable. The physical body is sown in dishonor; the resurrection body is raised in glory. The physical body is sown in weakness; the resurrection body is raised in power. The physical body is natural made for this world; the spiritual body is suited for heavenly living.

Jesus promised in John 6:39-40 “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

The final way in which Paul answers the questions “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” is by now showing the perfect prototype of our resurrection.

#### IV. The Perfect Prototype

Verses 45-49...

The Mormon church teaches that we were once spirit beings who then came to earth and became men, but verse 46 flatly contradicts that...

Paul has already mentioned the first Adam and the last Adam back in verses 21-22: "For since by a man [Adam] came death, by a man [Christ] also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

So, the first Adam is the head of the human race. By our physical birth, we are his sons and daughters. We all have natural or earthy bodies like Adam. And because of Adam's sinful rebellion against God, each one of us is born spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins.

But the good news is that God sent the last Adam, his son Jesus Christ. He came from heaven, not from the earth. He came to give us eternal life, to make us people who are suited for eternity.

Remember the beautiful story in John's 11 of the friendship Jesus had with Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. Lazarus died before Jesus could arrive at their home, and Martha and Mary were grieving. "Jesus said to her [Martha], 'Your brother shall rise again.' Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:23-26.)

That is the question for you: Do we believe Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Have you believed in this life-giving Jesus Christ? And as a result, are you a heavenly being instead of an earthly being? Having been born again as 2 Corinthians 5:17 says...

Are you a child of the King of heaven because you've sought His forgiveness for your sin and surrendered your life to him? If you have, can you claim the promise at the end of verse 49, "We will also bear the image of the heavenly."

Adam was tied to earth; Christ was tied to heaven

One day, believers will truly bear the image of God. In fact, the simplest way to explain the resurrection body of the saint is to remember it is going to be much like the resurrected body of the Savior. John concurred with this when he writes in 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."

We are not only going to see what Jesus is like, but we are going to be what Jesus is like.

We all share Adam's nature—weakness, sin, death.

But believers will share Christ's nature—life, righteousness, immortality.

Verse 49...

The prototype of that heavenly image is our Savior, Jesus Christ. One day every Christian will be physically raised in a supernatural body impervious to sin and death forever.

C. S. Lewis expressed it this way, “We have become “bent” (sinful) versions of what God intended. Your deceitfulness, laziness, lust, deafness, disability, and disease are not the eternal you. They are temporary perversions that will be eliminated. They’re the cancer that the Great Physician will surgically remove. His redemptive work is such that never again will they return.”

We learned in our sermon series through Revelation that after the tribulation, after the Lord’s second coming, after the millennial kingdom, after the final rebellion, after the final judgment of Satan, and after the great white throne judgment, there is the creation of a new heaven and new earth.

Revelation chapters 21-22 describe the new earth will be the eternal dwelling place of believers in Jesus Christ.

The new earth will be free from sin, evil, sickness, suffering, and death. When you’re on the New Earth, for the first time you’ll be in your imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual body that God has transformed you to be.

Think about the glorious truths of your resurrection body:

If you are a believer struggling with chronic pain—you will rise in power.

If you are a Christian discouraged by aging—you will rise in glory.

If you are grieving the loss of a believing loved one—their body is a seed; God will raise it in splendor.

The grave is not the end. The funeral is not the final word. Because Christ lives, you will also live eternally.

A woman was diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. As she was getting her things in order, she contacted her pastor and asked him to come to her house to discuss some of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at her funeral service, what Scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in. She requested to be buried with her favorite Bible. As the pastor prepared to leave, the woman suddenly remembered something else. “There’s one more thing,” she said excitedly. “What’s that?” said the pastor. “This is important,” the woman said. “I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.”

The pastor stood looking at the woman, not knowing quite what to say. The woman explained. “In all my years of attending church socials and potluck dinners, when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, ‘Keep your fork. The best is yet to come.’ It was my favorite part of the meal because I knew something better was coming like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. So, when people see me in that casket with a fork in my hand and they ask, ‘What’s with the fork?’ I want you to tell them, ‘The best is yet to come!’”

This elderly woman got it right! If you are in Christ, the best is yet to come, for when we die we have truly begun to live.

So friends, live today in light of your future glory. The hope of the resurrection and receiving your resurrection body is not only for the last day—it strengthens us every day until we see our Lord.

Let’s pray...