

Series: **“Being the Church in a World Gone Wild”**

CDOBC – beginning on 1/28/18

Today’s Title: **“Your Perfect Body”**

January 13, 2019 - 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Objective: To help people have confidence in God’s ability to resurrect and transform our bodies.

Opening prayer

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

Yesterday afternoon we had a funeral service in Chapel Hall for a family who doesn’t attend here but was referred to us by someone who used to attend but moved away.

Normally we don’t spend much time thinking about resurrection – and what kind of body we will have if there is such a thing as *bodily resurrection* – but funerals bring this to the forefront of our mind.

A son lovingly applies face powder to the face of his mother, who has been dead for over 1 year. Her mummified corpse lies in a coffin, which is kept in the family’s house. They consider her “*sick*”, not dead, even offering her meals at their mealtimes. Only when they can afford an opulent funeral will they consider their loved one dead. According to their beliefs, the more luxurious the funeral the more help it will be to their deceased loved one in the next life. They sacrifice water buffaloes and hire singers & dancers for the occasion. This is not a ritual from ancient history, but one that happens today – in Toraja, a region in the country of Indonesia.

The confusing and concerning reality is part of these rituals involve crosses and pictures of Jesus. They have combined ancient false religious practices with Christianity.

In August, after every rice harvest, the people in this region go to the mountainside cemetery and remove the bodies from the tomb for a day of celebration including pictures and spending time with the corpse of their deceased relative.

“The corpses are removed from their tombs, groomed and dressed in new outfits. They smell mildewy but the odor is not foul. Some wear sunglasses and jeans, others delicately beaded white satin dresses and bejewelled earrings.

A young man places a lit cigarette in the mouth of his dead relative. It’s surreal to watch a cadaver “smoke”, its mottled (blotchy) leathery face riddled with holes.”

(Source: <https://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2017/toraja-death-ritual/>)

What you believe about death...and the body...does make a difference.

This is not just an issue on the other side of the world, but in our own city we have an annual celebration – this year it will be from *October 31 thru November 2* - called **The Day of the Dead**.

For the most part this is a celebration of loved ones who have died.

However, a part of this celebration is a belief that the spirit of the deceased comes back to visit the family.

“The centerpiece of the celebration is an altar, or ofrenda, built in private homes and cemeteries. These aren’t altars for worshipping; rather, they’re

meant to welcome spirits back to the realm of the living. As such, they're loaded with offerings—water to quench thirst after the long journey, food, family photos, and a candle for each dead relative. If one of the spirits is a child, you might find small toys on the altar. Marigolds are the main flowers used to decorate the altar. Scattered from altar to gravesite, marigold petals guide wandering souls back to their place of rest. The smoke from copal incense, made from tree resin, transmits praise and prayers and purifies the area around the altar.” (Source: [https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/destinations/north-america/mexico/top-ten-day-](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/destinations/north-america/mexico/top-ten-day-of-dead-mexico/)

[of-dead-mexico/](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/destinations/north-america/mexico/top-ten-day-of-dead-mexico/))

In the 1st century, the believers in Corinth struggled with Paul's teaching - not so much of the risen Christ - but that all of us will be resurrected. It wasn't the idea of the next life that they struggled with, but the claims of Paul and the other Apostles that our bodies would be raised from the grave. They couldn't figure out how this would work – and why it would even be appealing. For them, all they could think about was a dead, decaying corpse being resurrected...in whatever decomposed state it was in.

What you believe about death...about life beyond the grave...does make a difference.

The testimony of the Bible and the teaching of Jesus agree on this truth: ***There will be a future bodily resurrection for all people.*** Romans 8:23 – the future redemption of our body:

“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

2 Corinthians 5:4 - NLT

“While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it’s not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life.”

John 5:28 NLT

“Don’t be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God’s Son, and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.”

John 6:44 NLT

“For no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them to Me, and at the last day I will raise them up.”

John 11:23-25

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will 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. Whoever believes in Me, though he (they) die, yet shall he (they) live...”

This is what Paul taught the believers who formed the church in Corinth in the 1st century. But the Greek / Corinthian cultural beliefs were contrary to the truth of future, bodily resurrection. The Greek culture was a highly intellectual culture – with Plato, Aristotle, Archimedes, Socrates among their intellectual and philosophical heroes, there was an intellectual pride – snobbery at work in the culture – and the Corinthian church was not immune. We’ve already seen this in **chapter 4** as Paul uses sarcasm in addressing their spiritual arrogance and feelings of superiority and independence.

Now, in **15:35**, Paul again deals with this intellectual pride – now in regard to the future, bodily resurrection of all people. **vs. 35** But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”

The questions in **vs. 35** are asked by the skeptics...those who thought resurrection was ridiculous...preposterous... impossible and undesirable. As they are translated in our English bible, they seem innocent enough. But we know the questions weren't mere questions but mocking, insulting statements – in the form of a question. Much like various debates take place in our society today – where one side will mockingly ask a question of the other side. Like an argument between a teenager being disciplined by their parents – grounded for the weekend.

“Well, what am I supposed to do all weekend, just stay home?”

We know this because of Pauls' reply in **vs. 36**: “You foolish person...”

“The implication is not simply that such questions suggest one to have taken leave of their senses, but that one stands as the “fool” in the O.T. sense – as the person who has failed to take God into account.”

(The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, by Gordon D. Fee, p. 780)

Paul asks King Agrippa in Acts 28:4

“Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?”

But, Paul takes the question seriously enough to give a thorough answer, and his answer has 5 explanations that detail the reality of future, bodily resurrection.

1) The transformation of Seeds vs. 36-38

Example: *A seed and what it grows into (acorn?)*

Seeds grow into something different – same life elements

Read vs. 36-38

This is a basic lesson from horticulture!

John 12:23-24

And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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.”

We will be raised with a glorified body which is different from our current body...different from a decomposed body...a greatly improved body...but it will still be us. It will not be someone different...it will be you...but a different, improved, glorified you!

If God designs this wonderful transformation and *glorification* with seeds...can't He do the same with the human body?

2) Different kinds of flesh vs. 39

Different animals have different kinds of flesh.

Read vs. 39

Bears have a different kind of flesh than fish, but when a bear eats a fish, he doesn't turn into a fish. His flesh processes the nutrients in the fish to restore its own flesh. There's a beautiful diversity in nature. The point: God has created different kinds of flesh – just like He created different sizes and appearances of seeds and different kinds of plants the seeds grow into. So, why do you think He can't change a decaying body into a glorious body!

3) **Earthly and Heavenly bodies** vs. 40-41

Read vs. 40-41

Amazing truth about the universe...written in the 1st century – *1600 years before the telescope was invented!* Earthly bodies refer to the different topography on our planet – mountains, beaches, the great plains, rivers, marshes, sand dunes.

The heavenly bodies – the planets and stars – are all unique and different. Jupiter is different than Saturn – and Mars – and every other planet has their own unique composition and appearance. The stars are all different – in age and in appearance. From our perspective they are little white dots or spots in the night sky, but with a telescope we are able to see the amazing diversity and beauty of the stars.

4) **Contrasting realities** vs. 42-44

vs. 42 – “So is it with the resurrection of the dead...”

Everything Paul just said are analogies – examples of our future, bodily resurrection.

Why would you limit God – who created so much amazing and creative diversity and beauty in nature – why would you limit God’s ability to create a resurrected body which has similarity to our current body but will be so vastly different and superior – glorified! Our resurrected bodies will be the same life, yet distinct...improved...enhanced!

“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.”

There is a physical reality – which we are completely familiar with, and there is a spiritual reality – of which Christ is “the firstfruits” (vs. 20) of our life to come.

Philippians 3:20-21

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

“lowly body” – not that our current, physical body is shameful but in comparison to the glorious body we will have at the resurrection, this body is “lowly”.

I was getting my haircut on Thursday – not only the hair on my head, but the hair in my ears, my eyebrows – and my nose! I was in the shower a few weeks ago and I turned my head too quickly and felt a twinge in my neck...was sore for the next 2 or 3 days! All I was doing was taking a shower! You know you're getting old when...!

Paul is explaining the contrast between this body and our resurrected body, and he uses the term “sown” which connects with the agricultural idea of the seeds in vs. 36-38. vs. 42: this body will die – perish, our resurrected body will be eternal.

vs. 43: this body will “dishonor” you – it will fail you and get sick – your vigor will fade, and your strength will fail, and you will eventually die. The majority of people today are cremated when they die, but those that aren't cremated, it's amazing what they do to the body when they embalm the body – to try and make it honorable for the funeral!

But it will be “...raised in glory...power”! Your resurrected body will **not** have the frailties and difficulties of this body.

vs. 44: We now have a natural – earthly body – but our resurrected body will be a spiritual body. Not a spirit...but a spiritual body (*pneumatikos soma*).

It will still be a body, but it will be suited to the spiritual realm. What does that mean? Not sure I can tell you, but I can point you to Jesus' resurrected body – and He was able to move through walls, yet people could touch Him and He could eat – although He probably didn't need to eat.

How's that for an upgrade! You don't need to eat, but you can still enjoy food!

Going to the gym doesn't get you this "glorious body" – this is not the result of a new diet plan / exercise plan or New Year Resolution. Those who have faith in Christ will be transformed by Him.

vs. 42-44 – "raised" (4x)– verb – present indicative – middle / passive – which means this is done to you / for you by Christ!

1 Peter 1:3-4

"He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading..."

That will be our glorious body!

5) Our prototypes: Adam and Jesus vs. 45-49

Read vs. 45-49

Paul touched on this back in vs. 21-22, and he expands on those thoughts here. We are like Adam – natural – made from dust – from the earth – "man of dust".

But those who have faith in Christ have another prototype – a better prototype – the resurrected Jesus!
vs. 22 - “In Adam all die” – but “in Christ shall all be made alive.”
vs. 45 - “...Adam became a life-giving being” – he was made alive by the breath of God (Gen. 2:7). This is our physical life – mortal life. “...the last Adam (Christ) became a life-giving spirit.” – the source of our spiritual life is found not in the first Adam, not in our physical life, but in the resurrected life of Christ.

vs. 49 – “we have borne” – looks back to our physical birth – the reality of our physical body.

“we shall also bear” – same Greek word – but this is future tense – we will be transformed – changed – we will be resurrected not unto our current, physical, earthy body – but to a glorious resurrected, spiritual body – like the body Christ was raised with!

1 John 3:2

“Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”

Our body will not be like Adam’s body before the Fall. His pre-fall body was without sin...but it was still *earthy* – physical – flesh.

But our resurrected body will be perfect!

It will be better than Adam’s body – because it will be “heavenly” – glorified – spiritual.

Apply it...

Will you be resurrected to judgment...or heaven?

Every person – believer and unbeliever – will experience a future, bodily resurrection.

As Jesus said:

“Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.” – John 5:28

Once you die, your destiny is set.

Will you put your faith in Christ?

Will you admit your sins and believe in Jesus as your Savior?

Look at death with the resurrection in mind.

1 Thess. 4:13

“...that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.”

John 14:1

“Let not your hearts be troubled.”

As followers of Christ, we have hope – we have the promises of God of what the next life is like.

We have a glorious future with Christ – and with a resurrected, glorified body.

This should inform our understanding and view of death.

Death is nothing to be feared for the Christian.

In Christ, we have victory over death!

Look forward to your resurrected body!

Expect your body to fail.

Don't ask '*Why is my health failing?*'

Ask: '*Lord, help me have joy as I endure the failings of this body!*'

The pains and discomforts of this body – they are inevitable...***but they are temporary!***

2 Corinthians 5:4 - NLT

“While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh... we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life.”

Close in prayer