

Good morning Fellowship! It's great to be with you today. If you've been following us the past few weeks, we have been in a series on Heaven, where we've been learning about the peace we have today because of our hope for tomorrow.

Preparing for this sermon there were a number of things on my checklist. It had nothing to with the sermon. It was a similar process that one has when preparing for a 25-year class reunion. I did a face mask twice a week, w I tried to juice. That lasted 2 days – I got hungry and then I got grumpy. My wife said, "enough with this. You need to eat." That was the end of that. I tried my best to keep my hair line from running away. The Young's have a history of five head (that's larger than 4 heads). But apart from sermon prep, I've always desired more robust legs and calves like Noah's.

One of the inevitable consequences of the human experience is our preoccupation with our physical bodies. How long has it been since you looked in a mirror? How long has it been since you were critical of what you saw? You are not alone in this. In fact, some people suffer from a condition called Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). It's a debilitating condition that involves "a preoccupation with perceived defects or flaws in one's physical appearance and associated repetitive behaviors or mental acts in response to these appearance concerns." This disorder can lead to exercise addiction (another actual disorder) and a preoccupation with dieting.

Our primping and preening is an expensive practice. The average person spends close to \$300/month on their body. The revenue of the U.S. cosmetic industry was estimated to amount to about 49.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2019. Americans Spent More than \$16.5 Billion on Cosmetic Plastic Surgery in 2018. Even in leu of a pandemic, Aesthetic Plastic Surgery in 2020 profited over 9 billion U.S. dollars. As Zoom calls increased so did peoples physical displeasures. The point is we spend a lot of time caring for these temporary earth suits.

Now don't misunderstand me, exercise is important. We all want to lead a healthy life. We want to live for as long as we can and look as good as we can. But here is what I want you to know today – even if you're plagued with this disorder, you long for a perfect face, straight teeth, blemish-free skin, wrinkle-free bodies, flat tummies – you don't have to overindulge in these things because scripture's message to us today is that **Everything you've ever wanted in a body awaits you in Heaven.** We will leave these weak, flawed, broken and imperfect bodies behind and receive new heavenly bodies. I want you to know that today.

We're not alone in this *YOLO* world where we're told *You Only Live Once*. We're not the only generations attempting to *Live Our Best Life Now*.

This philosophy emanates from Platonic ideology that crept into the early church through the writings of first century philosophers and theologians. They desired to offer the best of Judaism along with the best in Greek philosophy. The challenge was in

Greek philosophy there is the belief that the body is bad and the spirit is good. So, scriptures like Revelation 21-22 that talk about having bodies, kings, streets, buildings couldn't be taken literally. That would be inconsistent. So, they decided to interpret scripture symbolically. Randy Alcorn calls this *Christoplatonism*. These ideas began to confuse the early church in Corinth about the afterlife. They began considering the idea that there is no physical bodily resurrection. (And) We see this philosophy continue to influence Christian theology today.

One author writes, "Only our redeemed spirits can live in a spiritual realm like heaven. Therefore, the life we know now as spiritual reality will continue in heaven, but we shall not need or desire the things associated with our present physical bodies, simply because we shall not possess physical bodies in heaven." Arthur E. Travis, *Where on Earth is Heaven? P.16* (quoted in Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* p. 476)

But, is this what scripture teaches about our bodies?

This morning I want to tackle the topic, "What will our bodies be like in heaven?"

We'll look at five qualities the Apostle Paul give us about our bodies and we'll see why it matters.

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 15:36. [repeat]

The first quality we learn is that...

Our bodies will be transformed

The church in Corinth grew confused due to the Greek philosophy of dualism which teaches that the spirit is incompatible with the physical (body is bad and spirit is good) so logically there wouldn't be physical bodies in Heaven. In response to this confusion, Paul uses an agricultural metaphor to illustrate that it is possible for the dead to rise as is commonly seen in sowing seed.

1 Cor 15:36b What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. His point was that it's not unreasonable to expect that a human body can die and then enjoy a resurrected life. If it's possible for nature, it's possible for our bodies. Then he goes further to say that God Himself will determine the splendor of our new body

³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. He later reiterates his point in...

2 Cor 5 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in (earthly body) is destroyed, we have a building (heavenly body) from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

God Himself will transform our resurrected bodies. Paul ends this opening segment by saying this transformed body will have a different degree of glory/radiance/brightness/splendor, comparing them with varying degrees of light.

⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

Our bodies will be physically clothed by God Himself and of a different degree of splendor/beauty. Like the metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly we will be transformed. Secondly,

Our bodies will be imperishable

⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;

It's like that peach left on the countertop one day too long, in spite of its preservatives, it decomposes, it molds, it perishes.

The same is true for our bodies. We do everything in our financial and physical power to preserve our bodies. We even go as far as to embalm and put cosmetics on a corpse. In spite of all our preservatives, every day we decay and one day we'll expire. And some of us will be disappointed when we get to Heaven having tried so hard to stay on earth, but it's not until then that we'll realize Everything we've ever wanted in a body awaits us in Heaven.

Marshall Shelley had a child live for two minutes. Toby entered the world at 8:20 p.m. on Nov. 22, 1991, and departed this world at 8:22. "My wife Susan and I never got to see him take his first steps. We barely got to see him take his first breath. I don't know if he would have enjoyed softball or software, dinosaurs or dragonflies. We never got to wrestle, race, or read...What would have made him laugh? Made him scared? Made him angry? Toby was born with a rare and severe genetic disorder. Three months after he was born and died, Marshall and Susan Shelley's two-year-old daughter, Mandy, died. In the wake of these two devastating losses, the Shelley's wrestled with God. Why God? Why did you do that? What was that all about? "Why?" Marshall asks, "did God create a child to live for two minutes?" He answers his own question,

"He didn't. (And) He didn't create Mandy to live two years. He did not create me to live 40 years (or whatever number he may choose to extend my days in this world). God created Toby for eternity. He created each of us for eternity, where we may be surprised to find our true calling which always seemed just out of reach here on earth." We were not created for earth alone. We were created for eternity. And all our deepest senses confirm it.

Our bodies will be imperishable.

Our bodies will be glorious

v.43a it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory;

Unfortunately, our earthly body will die in dishonor, disgrace, disability in the sense that our bodies disappoint us due to the domination of sin. It reminds of the quandary and frustration Paul shared in Romans 7:15, **15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do.** Have you ever felt betrayed by your body? Even those who knew the law did not fulfill the law, even though they want to do so. Right now, our flesh/bodies are dominated by sin and it will be this way until we die. Don't fret, our bodies will be raised glorious, raised in splendor, honor that comes from being tethered to heaven where there is no sin (we'll talk about this more in a moment). It reminds me of the toddler candy challenge on social media recently where kids were challenged to obey their parents in order to get the treat. Check this out.

Video: Kid challenge

She just made it. But notice how she wrestled with her flesh in order to obey her mom. In Heaven we won't have to wrestle with the sin in our bodies. We will be raised in Glory/Honor. I love this passive verb 'raised' reminding us this is God's doing, it's by His hand that we'll be raised. [pause] So, our bodies will be transformed, (raised) imperishable, (raised) glorious... Fourthly,

Our bodies will be powerful

v.43b it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

We have limitations, we lack strength, we are susceptible to illness and disease that comes from Adam's fall in Genesis 3. As much as we try to prevent it, we're all just one accident away, one diagnosis away from this painful reminder. But our Heavenly bodies will be powerful. We'll be like what is said in Revelation 21:4, **'He (God's presence) will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'** Our bodies, while they'll remain finite will function at levels only superheroes dream of.

Joni Eareckson Tada became a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the shoulders down at age 17 when she misjudged the shallowness of the water. She's 71 today. She said this about suffering.

"Most people wish they could erase suffering out of the dictionary. Today's culture of comfort and instant gratification has no patience for suffering - most people want to drug it, escape it, divorce it; do anything but live with it." – Joni Eareckson Tada

Be encouraged Everything you've ever wanted in a body awaits you in Heaven. Our bodies will be powerful! And lastly...

Our bodies will be spiritual

v.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 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

Verse 44 has led some to assume that the resurrection body will not have a physical component at all, that it's only a spirit, like a ghost. But this is inaccurate because Paul uses the word *σωμα*, material body to describe it as being spiritual. He's essentially saying when we were born here on earth, we were born of the first Adam, the man of the dust (who will return to dust - nature). We bear the image of this earthly realm where sin and death permeate our bodies, and our bodies loyalty is to this world. But as Christians, we will be raised/clothed in spiritual bodies of the second Adam, Jesus Christ who is of the heavenly realm where sin and death have lost it's power and victory.

Verse 54 says, "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Sin is the stinger, the instrument that brings death. While the power of sin is the law, meaning it is the law that designates an action to be sin (LCC). But thanks be to God, who through the blood of Jesus Christ, He has redeemed us and forgiven us our sins. One day we will be sown a natural body and raise a spiritual one. Our resurrected bodies will be totally under the influence of the Spirit of God, with no influence of the flesh, or fallen nature, on it at all. Praise the Lord!

In other words, in the words of the Apostle John in 1 Jn 3:2b "But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Church we will one day be like Christ, the second Adam who right now is raised transformed, immortal, glorious, powerful and spiritual, completely aligned with the Spirit of God.

I love the words of Joni Eareckson Tada as she anticipates Heaven. She says, "Can you hear the sighing in the wind? Can you feel the heavy silence in the mountains? Can you sense the restless longing in the sea? Can you see it in the woeful eyes of an animal? Something's coming... something better."

You may have come here on this 4th of July, looking to celebrate Independence Day, the day the original colonies declared their freedom from British rule. And yet you are not free. You've tried everything to satisfy the desperate hunger in your soul. You've tried diets and workouts and surgeries and strategies and still you are not free. The God who can one day change your body into the image of His likeness can change your life right now. Jesus came to earth, died, was buried and raised to life that you would be declared righteous before God. All you have to do is believe in Him today. [pause]

When you go home, as a reminder, place a sticky note on your mirror that says "the best is yet to come".

Let's pray!