

The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus and Us (1 Corinthians 15)

Preached March 31, 2024, by Pastor Phil Layton (www.gcb.church)

He is risen! The angel said ‘*tell His disciples that **He is risen from the dead...indeed***’ (Mt 28:7 NKJV).

- Let’s turn to 1 Cor 15 and if you don’t have a Bible, take one under a chair as our gift.
- This is the chapter where Paul says Jesus ‘*has indeed been raised from the dead*’ (NIV).
- Of all the important truths in God’s Word, this is a truth Paul says has first importance.
- 1 Cor 15 is the resurrection chapter, and the first part is the past event.

15:3 *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day...*

- That’s the day that changed history but there’s also a day that will change the future.
- Today is Resurrection Sunday but there is a coming Resurrection Day to think about.
- The banners on the wall say the Lord Jesus Has Risen, Now Reigns, Will Return.
- The tomb is empty, the throne is occupied, and our reigning King is returning.
 - o And when He comes, believers will also be risen indeed.

15:20 *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [death].²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive [all in Christ who brings life vs. Adam’s sin bringing death to all in Adam]²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ [His people].*

He is risen first, and all who are His will be risen in the future

2 weeks ago we studied 3 of the annual feasts of Israel they celebrated in Jerusalem.

- The 3rd day after Passover was another that same week called the Feast of Firstfruits.
- It celebrated a first ripe new life of a harvest and signified there would be more to come.
- v. 4 says Jesus was ‘*raised on the third day, in accordance with the scriptures...*’
 - o Part of that was scripture of a feast on the 3rd day.
- Jn 18:26 says the day Jerusalem’s leaders brought Him to Pilate was their Passover.
- The Jews celebrated it evening to evening (sun-down Thursday to sun-down Friday).
- So during the feast of Passover, Jesus died as the Passover Lamb of God.
- And on the 3rd day after, on the feast of Firstfruits, Jesus rose as the firstfruits for us.
 - o He’s the first new life from the dead, with more to come.
- The Lord of the harvest has a full number who belong to Him who will be risen indeed.

Jesus taught His kingdom would be like a harvest gathering His own at the end of the age¹

This is an aspect of the resurrection I think we don’t think about enough, at least I know I don’t.

- Christ is first to have a resurrected body made new, others He raised in their old body.
- Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus and the son of a widow Jesus brought back to life.
- A few others were also temporarily restored to life (by Elijah, Elisha, Eutychus by Paul).
- But they all later died in those old bodies, Jesus got the first resurrected new body.
- Jesus is the firstfruits with a resurrected eternal body that can’t die that He’ll give us.
 - o In Christ, all who die will be one day made alive.

Christ has opened Paradise... Made like Him, like Him we rise, Hallelujah!²

3 questions and answers in our text:

- 1. When will a believer’s body rise?**
- 2. What will our resurrection body be like?**
- 3. How should we respond to the risen Christ?**

The end of v. 23 makes clear the context is believers, those who belong to Christ.

- End of v. 22 ‘...in Christ shall all be made alive.’
- The order is His resurrection first then at His coming again is when He raises all in Him.
- In v. 23, *coming* is the word for 2nd coming in Mt 24: ‘as lightning flashes...so will be the coming...angels with a loud trumpet call...will gather his elect from the four winds...’³
- He’ll come fast as lightning, sounds like 1 Cor 15:52: ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.’

Some think it’s the first of many end time trumpets, sounds to me like the literal last one.

- Christians alive when He comes will be changed, transformed to eternal bodies instantly
- Faster than a rapid eye, in a fraction of a second, we’ll have changed, transformed bodies.
- The dead in Christ will be first, their bodies will come out of graves as literally as Jesus 1 Thess 4:16: *the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.’*

Those words should comfort and encourage and give hope as we grieve

There’s 7 trumpets in the book of Revelation and at the last trumpet in the book, heaven shouts ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever... time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants...and to destroy the destroyers’ Rev 11:15, 18. He will literally take people to kingdom come, and resurrect the dead for judgment and reward.

- Rev 19 says at His 2nd coming the hosts of heaven come with Him wearing white robes. **When He shall come with trumpet sound, may I then in Him be found, dressed in His righteousness.**
- Like a new robe, 1 Cor 15:53 says we must put on the imperishable and immortal.

Mortal flesh can’t: ⁵⁰ *I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...*

- A perishable body can’t have that imperishable reality, v. 51 says we must be changed
- v. 52 says at the last trumpet, He’ll raise the dead and change living believers for glory.

So we come back with Him.

The resurrected Lord ascended by Himself but He’ll descend with many resurrected believers

Remember the angels told the apostles He will return exactly like you saw Him go up?⁴

- Just as His literal body left from there and went in a cloud, it will literally return to there.
- Zech 14 says He’ll come and all the saints with Him, He’ll stand on the Mt. of Olives. Zechariah says He’ll conquer nations opposing Him and He’ll be King over all the earth.
- Heavenly lights will fade in light of Him and it says the earth will change under His feet.
- Living waters will flow, Zech 14 sounds like the earth will renew too, not just our bodies.
- Resurrected saints will come with Him to a renewed earth.
 - o I think it continues as a new earth. It’s not just bodies that long for this,
 - o all creation groans to be set free to that glory (Rom 8:21-23).
 - o Do you long for your renewal?

No more aches and pains, no parts body parts not working, hurting, no surgery!

Do you think about your resurrection? A lost loved one? John 11:24: ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said... ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’ He said that at a graveside; do you believe graves will open and bodies will come out? He said in Jn 5:28-29 ‘an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.’

All people will be raised bodily eternally to life in heaven or punishment in hell

Same order in Rev 20, a first resurrection of life, then a resurrection of judgment (v. 12). 20:4: *'They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.'* ⁵ *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.* ⁶ *Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years...* Think of the banners behind me: like the Lord Jesus we'll be risen and will reign with Him after He returns. After that reign John sees Satan let out of a prison to attempt a final rebellion but Jesus destroys him and all enemies, then after that, 21:4 says *'and death shall be no more...'*

Our closing song: *'we are raised with Him, death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered
And we shall reign with Him, for He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!'*⁵

1 Cor 15:23 says the risen Christ comes again to raise all His own. Look at v. 24: *Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.* ²⁵ *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.* ²⁶ *The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

Like Rev 19-21 there's a resurrection and reign for a time till destroying enemies, death. Isa 24 *that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven in heaven, and the kings of the earth on the earth [2nd coming]. They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished* [the 'many days' I take as Rev 20's 1000 years of Satan's hosts in a pit, then final judgment].

Many days or a millenia after the Lord comes is a final resurrection and punishment of sinners. Then Isa 25 says will be the great feast where the Lord will swallow death forever (like Rev 21)

That's the eternal new world for our eternal new bodies

1 Cor 15:24 says the end is after Jesus destroys all rule, authority, and power (Satan).

- Jesus will return and reign till all enemies fall at His feet, even death (v. 25-26).
- We can debate what that reign looks like
 - o but it's clear He'll end Satan, sin and its curse, and saints will be risen to reign

And v. 26 is clear death will never rise its ugly head again, it's crushed with the serpent

What's not clear to all Christians is what we will do and be in our future resurrection?

- Much of the rest of the chapter is Paul's answer to question [#2](#).

What will our resurrected body be like?

15:35: *But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"*

- Some foolishly challenged the idea of resurrection, if you look back in context at v. 12:
- *Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?*
- Some in Corinth were doubting or denying the idea of a future bodily resurrection of all. But He is risen indeed, v. 20 says, as firstfruits of the same kind of body we'll have.
 - o It's a glorified body.

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...*

- In other words, like celestial bodies have glory, so will resurrected bodies fit for heaven.
- Christ's glorified body was ready to go to glory.
 - o And so will our future resurrected body be
 - o v. 43 says *'It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.'*

Only a glorified body can be in glory, clothed with Christ's righteous life, His robes for mine

- The language of sowing is planting in the ground like a seed, but it rises to glorious life.
- Ch 15 has language of sowing several times and seeds can't compare to a plant to come.
- You can't compare apples to oranges or an apple seed to a beautiful full apple tree.

- Death sows dishonor but bodies buried in the ground will come up in incomparable glory. Rom 8 says dishonorable *‘sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the **glory that is to be revealed to us**...from its bondage to corruption [to] obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God...redemption of our bodies’* (v. 18, 20, 23).

Those are phrases leading up to ‘God works all things together for good’ then v. 29 says we’re *‘predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers [another way to stay firstfruits or first of many more like His glory].³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also **glorified.**’*

That’s the golden chain of sovereign election grace from predestination to glorification.

- No one is lost, all He calls to life make it to glory where He makes them look like Christ.
- He conforms us to the image of His Son and His glorified body is a first of many.

Phil 3:21 says He’ll *‘transform our lowly body to be **like his glorious body**, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.’*

Look at **1 Cor 15:43**: *‘It is sown in dishonor; it is **raised in glory**. It is sown in weakness; it is **raised in power**. So no more weakness, raised glorified bodies will have power beyond limitations we have now.⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. [idea there is supernatural qualities, like the risen Lord] [v. 49] Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.’*

Now turn to Lk 24 and we go from Adam to the last Adam, or ‘from dust to glory’ (Sproul)

- We’ll bear the image of Christ’s glorious body, it’s heavenly but not a spirit as a ghost.
- It seems His body’s spiritual qualities let Him pass through walls or locked doors?

Lk 24:36: *As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.³⁸ And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them [real food, true flesh].*

So when scripture says God makes our resurrected body like Christ’s, that what it’s like.

- We’ll be able to taste and take in food and others can touch and see it’s really me myself.
- At first they didn’t recognize Jesus on a road or on the sea of Galilee (‘try the other side’)
- One thought He was the gardener till He said ‘Mary’ as only He can and she hugged Him
- So as we meet other resurrected loved ones, we’ll recognize their voice and embrace.
- In the resurrection there’s no marriage, but our relationships will be deeper without sin.
- We’ll be the bride of Christ and His love will satisfy and surpass any intimacy of this life.
- Christ offers a wedding supper that no earthly feast or celebration or joy can compare to.
 - o And no more sin or its effects in our bodies or church body.

The risen Lord has scars of His death but that may be unique to remind us of His love

Jesus as God is and does what I may not be able to (ascend, walk through walls).

- And it seems His risen glorified body on earth didn’t shine as it will in the kingdom.
- His transfiguration is a glimpse of His kingdom glory (Rev 21 says He’s its only light).
- He’ll shine like the sun in its glory and like Moses and Elijah we’ll be able to talk to Him.
- As Moses glowed after seeing some glory, we’ll see more with glorified unveiled faces.
 - o Dan 12 says resurrected believers will *‘shine like the brightness of the sky above...’*
 - o Jesus said the righteous will shine in the kingdom⁶

So go back to 1 Cor 13 but imagine no more darkness or distant vision or dim knowledge

1 Cor 13 is the love chapter, including Christ in heaven, a world of love. 13:12 *now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

- I won't fully know before the resurrection, I only have a poor reflection in a glass.
- Only glorified bodies can see Him face to face in glory, and we will

15:54 *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality [the resurrected body], then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.*

- Sin and its power over lawbreakers will be gone,
- death's sting replaced by a celebration of victory!

‘Lives again our glorious King ... “Where, O death, is now thy sting?”
Once He died our souls to save ... Where's thy victory, O grave? Hallelujah!’⁷

How should we respond to the risen Christ? This is the 3rd and final part for application.

Praise God for this victory! v. 57 says *thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

A couple chapters later says ‘*thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ*’ (2 Cor 2:14 NAS)

Isa 26:19 says ‘*Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy!*’

- We sing for joy today on this Resurrection Sunday as a practice for Resurrection Day.
- Blessed/happy is the one who shares in the first resurrection, and shares in Christ's reign!
- v. 57 gives thanks to God specifically because He gives us the victory through Jesus.
- Praise Him and take Him at His Word that He gives what you need to live victoriously.
- Don't live a defeated life, sin and its power has already been defeated when Jesus rose.
- He rose and He broke the bonds of sin and shame, Praise Him! We shall overcome

1 Jn 5:4 says *everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

‘As [Jesus] stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me, For I am His, and He is mine’⁸

2nd application: never stop serving your King. ⁵⁸ *Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

- Never move on from the Lord's work, let nothing move you from serving His church.
 - Don't be quickly offended, be fast to forgive, and steadfast to give yourself to help others
- ‘Always work enthusiastically for the Lord...nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless’ (NLT)

As you labor to exhaustion, never retire and retreat from the Lord's work, always abound

‘How can we be satisfied with the trivial, insignificant, short-lived things of the world? How can we “take it easy” when so many around us are dead spiritually and so many fellow believers are in need of edification, encouragement, and help of every sort? When can a Christian say, “I've served my time, I've done my part; let others do the work now”? ...Leisure and relaxation are two great modern idols, to which many Christians seem quite willing to bow down. In proper proportion recreation and diversions can help restore our energy and increase our effectiveness. But they also can easily become ends in themselves, demanding more and more of our attention, concern, time, and energy. More than one believer has relaxed and hobbled himself completely out of the work of the Lord. Some of God's most faithful and fruitful saints have lived to old age and been active and productive in His service to the end...Until the Lord returns there are souls to reach and ministries of every sort to be accomplished... money, time, energy, talents, gifts, bodies, minds, and spirits...work believers do in this life has eternal benefits that the Lord Himself guarantees. “Behold, I am coming quickly...My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done” (Rev. 22:12)...[it's] not in vain in the Lord’⁹

But if you're not living for the Lord, if you're not in Him, all you do will be in vain.

- 1 Cor 15 starts declaring the gospel, and v. 2 says we're only saved if we hold fast to it.
- But the end of the v. 2 says it's possible to believe in vain (empty intellectual agreement).

Grace can be in vain, if you don't hold fast or it doesn't produce the works of a changed life.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain.

- Paul wrote later to this Corinthian church, '*we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain...Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation*' (2 Cor 6:1-2).

To be saved you must confess Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead

Come to Him, run to Him, trust Him, love Him

Look at 1 Cor 16:22: *If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!* [Maranatha].

- Come Lord Jesus, He will, but if you don't love the Lord Jesus, He comes to judge.
- A curse is on any who don't love, anathema, damnation, if you don't love Jesus as Lord.
- If you have no loving relationship with Him, you're His enemy to be put under His feet.
- He comes again to put an end to all who will not come under His rule, this chapter says.
- He'll come in wrath and raise eternal bodies to suffer eternally if they rejected His love.

But His love is offered to you if your knee will bow and your tongue confess Jesus is Lord.

- Repent of your sin and receive His grace, and you can receive new life that is eternal
- For the spiritually sleeping and spiritually dead here, awake and Christ will shine on you
- God says we're dead in our sins but He makes alive with Christ by grace through faith
- Today can be your resurrection Sunday, if you trust His death and resurrection for you
- If you need help doing that, a brother or sister upfront would love to pray with you after

For all you people of the risen King here, let's speak of Him and sing of Him until He comes. He is risen ... and if He's your risen King and Savior, when He comes we'll be risen indeed!

¹ Matthew 13:30, 39-43 (compare Revelation 14:14-16 in what reads like the Second Coming). It seems to me Revelation 6 and 11 and 14 and 16 and 19 all culminate in that coming, but it's not till chapter 20 that the resurrection and kingdom after is described.

² Charles Wesley, "Christ the Lord is Risen Today."

³ Matthew 24:27, 31.

⁴ Acts 1:9-12.

⁵ Getty Music, "Resurrection Hymn / See What a Morning."

⁶ Matthew 13:43.

⁷ Wesley, "Christ the Lord is Risen Today."

⁸ Getty Music, "In Christ Alone."

⁹ John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians*, p. 46.