

# **A Glorious Body**

SERMON

By

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**TEXT:** 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

**PROP:** Because our bodies will be resurrected and glorified in heaven for all eternity we must not be discouraged in the work of the Lord.

## **1 Corinthians 15:35-58 (ESV)**

### **The Resurrection Body**

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

<sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

### **Mystery and Victory**

<sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> 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. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable

puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

<sup>55</sup> “O death, where is your victory?  
O death, where is your sting?”

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>58</sup> 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.

Miracles have been a problem to many because they cannot be explained by science. How can a man who was born blind receive sight? How can one who is dead be raised back to life? Liberal theology rejects all such miracles. The Deist Thomas Jefferson removed all the miracles from the Bible and published the Jefferson Bible without them. John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus and asked, “Are You the Coming One or do we look for another?”

**Matthew 11:4–5 (ESV)** — **4** And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: **5** the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

Without these miracles the authority and power of Christ are put in question. The One who was to come was none other than YAHWEH himself so without His miracles we have the wrong Messiah and a God who is no greater than any of the pagan Gods. But Jefferson and the liberals are not alone in their antipathy to miracles. Israel, shortly after God had divided the sea for them, forgot this great miracle and worshipped the golden calf. They turned back from entering the promised land because they did not remember the great power of God through which the enemy before them would be destroyed.

Miracles are works that only God can do. They are works impossible for men. We can heal the sick but we cannot make a dead person live. We can dig tunnels under bodies of water or create bridges over them but we cannot part the Red Sea in a few moments and dry up the exposed sea bed, and provide the necessary light for more than two million people with all their animals and baggage to cross in the space of a few hours at night. The writers of scripture often call us to remember this great miracle of God to encourage us in our battles with our spiritual enemies. **The great miracles of God call us be steadfast and unmovable in our work for the Lord.**

Our text today sets before us a work of God that is far beyond our ability to understand or to even conceive of it. We have seen that the souls of believers go immediately to be with the Lord in heaven.

**2 Corinthians 5:6–8 (ESV)** — **6** So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, **7** for we walk by faith, not by sight. **8** Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

But what happens to the bodies we leave behind? Do they simply rot in the grave eventually to be returned to the dust of the ground? Solomon writes,

**Ecclesiastes 12:1–8 (ESV)** — **1** Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”; **2** before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, **3** in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, **4** and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low— **5** they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets— **6** before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, **7 and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.** **8** Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

Is that all there is to it? Not at all! Paul informs us of a remarkable future for our bodies.

**1 Corinthians 15:42–43 (ESV)** — **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.

As we see, the bodies of God’s elect will be raised from the dead, where they are corrupt and dishonorable, into glory and power! The souls of the saints will be rejoined with their bodies. When Jesus died on the cross his body was placed in a tomb. Three days later the very same body was raised from the dead but now incorruptible and immortal. In the very same manner our earthly bodies will be raised incorruptible and immortal. There is to be a continuation of the relationship

of soul and body that existed on earth and it will never be subject to disease and death. It will remain forever as a glorious body and soul together.

Indeed, all that is earthly, all that is characterized by mass, space and time, will be destroyed by fire in the space of a single day.

**Peter 3:10–13 (ESV) — 10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. **11** Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, **12** waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! **13** But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Our resurrected bodies rejoined with their souls will dwell forever in a new heavens and a new earth in which there is no death and no sin. Remember that our resurrected bodies are different in that they will never die and will never experience the pains and miseries of this present life. All of this which is to come is miraculous. The end of the physical universe will happen suddenly just as it was suddenly created. There is no time consuming process of evolution here. Only the infinitely powerful God can bring such a thing to pass. God does not need time to research and experiment as we do when we engineer and produce the marvels of technology before us today. **The all-powerful God, YAHWEH, can create all that is, in a moment of time, in any state he wishes.** He can create the sun moon and stars with their light already impinging on the earth. He can create the earth with its tectonic plates in a position appropriate to a short time ago. He can create radioactive decay processes with any initial conditions he chooses to give them. And in like manner he will destroy all that he made on that great day of the Lord when Christ comes again to take us to be with him. The bodies of those who have died will be raised and together with those who are alive go to meet him in the air and so be eternally with their Lord and Savior.

**1 Thessalonians 4:15–17 (ESV) — 15** For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For 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. **17** 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.

Now consider the greatness of this miracle. There are about four billion people on the earth today and many more than that have died and their bodies for the most part have become dust or have been dissolved into the elements of the earth. All who have died, both believers and unbelievers, will be raised. Their bodies, though they have long ago been dissolved into the elements of the earth, will be reconstituted as incorruptible bodies. All will be changed and this in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye.

In speaking of his relationship to God the Father Jesus said,

**John 5:24–29 (ESV) — 24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. **25** “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. **26** For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. **27** And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

The Lord speaks here of regeneration or conversion. Believers have already passed from a state of spiritual death to spiritual life. Those who were spiritually dead now have been enabled to hear the voice of Jesus. What a great miracle is this! The dead do not praise the Lord. Those who have been made alive by the grace of God are the only ones who will ever praise Yahweh. This is amazing grace indeed.

But Jesus continues,

**28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.**

If we really believe in the true and living God we will certainly believe he has performed and will perform these inconceivably great miracles. The reality of resurrection is central to Christian faith. There is no more important doctrine than this, that when we die we shall go immediately to be with the Lord and that , the glorification of our bodies and their resurrection from the dead will surely bring us great benefits.

**1. The believer benefits greatly from the glorification of his body.**

**1 Corinthians 15:35–41 (ESV) — 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.

The question is raised here concerning the nature of the body that is resurrected. This question was no doubt influenced by a pagan philosophy known as dualism that was popular in Paul’s day. It was argued that invisible entities or spiritual entities were good but physical, fleshly things were inherently evil. Therefore the dualist asks, “If there is a resurrection will not the body resurrected be evil and undesirable?” Remember that even in Jewish circles many known as Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the body.

Paul answers this question at length. Jesus noted,

**John 12:24 (ESV) — 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.

He uses this metaphor to illustrate how his own death will be of great benefit to his people. So also does Paul use the striking difference between what is planted and what grows from it, to illustrate benefits that accrue from the resurrection of the body. What comes from the grave is changed into a celestial body. What comes from the grave is changed from corruption to incorruption, from dishonor to glory, from weakness into power. Like the seed, the body is sown a natural body, dead and dried up. And like the seed which grows into a beautiful plant used for many things of benefit, the body is raised up as a beautiful, incorruptible body. So Paul shows the position of the dualist to be foolish. Consider the glory of the sun, the moon, or the stars. That is what we who are raised shall be like. We who have borne the ugly sinful image of Adam will bear the lovely righteous image of Christ.

Paul is dealing with discouragement of the believers in Corinth and is leading toward a great application of these truths to that problem but there are certain inferences that can be drawn from the fact that there is a glorious future for the bodies of believers. If our bodies are destined to bear the lovely righteous image of Christ in glory how are we to regard our bodies now? We cannot escape the fact

that the bodies of God's elect are united to Christ in this life. This is seen in the fact that our bodies will be resurrected and rejoined with our souls which together will bear the lovely righteous image of Christ. If the body is garbage why resurrect it from the elements into which it has dissolved to be presented before the judgment seat of Christ?

Paul writes in,

**1 Corinthians 6:18–20 (ESV) — 18** Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. **19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**

Physical fitness is not in view here although there is certainly nothing wrong with concern for the strength and health of our bodies. The concern here is the use of our bodies for sinful activities and in particular the defilement of the body itself with sin such as sexual immorality and this of course includes both heterosexual and homosexual sin. It includes ritual mutilation of the body. We are to glorify God in our bodies and in our souls, both of which belong to God.

Now let us turn to the next point of our text, that--

2. The believer benefits greatly in the general resurrection.

**1 Corinthians 15:50–57 (ESV)**

### **Mystery and Victory**

<sup>50</sup> I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> 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.** <sup>53</sup> For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

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It is necessary that our bodies be changed in order to live forever in heaven with God. That is a realm of beauty and righteousness. It is an estate of bliss and life that sin and corruption cannot attain. Those who are alive at the last day will be changed just as those who are dead (sleep) are changed. And we see that it happens in a moment of time. The infinitely powerful God does not need eons of time to bring creation to pass nor does he need eons of time to bring the general resurrection to pass and as we have already considered, the destruction of what he has created will occur in the same short period of time. When we think of the design of intricate and technical machinery we recall the long time it took to research and experiment and design and test. We tend to think of all physical things in this way. Even if a living cell had a designer, as many are coming to believe, they still say there may possibly have been long eons of time in its development. God, however, does not need to design and research and experiment. He commands and it is done as the psalmist says. God gets it right the first time.

So the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. And what happens to death?

#### Isaiah 25:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever;  
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,  
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.

Death loses its sting, its pain, because it is no more. There will be no more universe that is running down. There will be no more earth filled with sinful people. There will be no more sin and law, Though the law itself is holy and right and good, it can become an instrument through which sin can deceive us just as it was to Paul.

**Romans 7:7–12 (ESV) — 7** What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” **8** But sin, **seizing an opportunity through the commandment**, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. **9** I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. **10** The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. **11**



**For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12** So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

All of this stinking cadaver of sin with which we must deal, will be done away with. We will be delivered from the body of death. The miseries and pain of this life will be gone. There will be no use of God's holy law by Satan to confuse and deceive us. All of this brings Paul to give thanks to God! This is the song of his heart. Thanks be to Yahweh who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! He can do no other than praise God with his lips and his life. Or as the psalmist puts it (106) "Praise Yahweh, give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever." Like Paul our lips and lives should always praise God and thank him for his mercies.

How shall we apply the great truths concerning the glorification and resurrection of our bodies to our lives. The apostle writes,

**1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) — 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.

Because the resurrection of our bodies from the dead is certain and because the gracious sovereign God will surely acknowledge and acquit us on the day of judgment and make us perfectly blessed in the fellowship of all the saints forever, we therefore know that our labors here on earth are not in vain in the Lord. We therefore have every reason and strong motivation to stand firm in our faith and commitment to Christ. In the new heavens and the new earth we shall eternally enjoy the fruits of our toil and surely see that our efforts for the Lord were not in vain.