

Resurrection Body

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[0 : 00] Now before turning back to that passage that we read together, we are going to pray. So let's bow our heads in prayer. I'll lead us in prayer.

Father God, as we come before you today in prayer, we ask that you would help us to recognise the privilege and the honour of knowing you, knowing you by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the amazing gift of salvation that we've been looking at, the tremendous history and the historical reality of a living, crucified, buried and resurrected, ascended Savior.

We thank you for these firm truths. We ask that we would bed our lives and our thinking on them. And grant us today the ability to listen to your word and to be challenged.

May we find the paradox of being able to worship together, being matched by the uniqueness of a personal relationship with you and almost that sense of being here alone with you as you speak through your word.

May that be our experience. And may the beauty of that be real to us, just as we, around your sacrament when we meet, take that wine and bread individually, yet do so together.

[1 : 30] And we pray that you would give us today a sense of the otherness of God and the reality of spiritual dimension that takes us and reminds us of why we have been created and of the beauty of spiritual worship.

Or as we bow our heads, we pray that we would be able to rejoice with one another and rejoice in our salvation and rejoice even when things are going badly for us as Christians because we have that perspective of victory and of hope and of assurance.

And we pray that we would rejoice in the practical blessings and the everyday blessings and the blessings of new life and new birth and of family together.

We thank you for all of these things. And again, we remember and give thanks for the safe arrival of Ivy and we pray for your blessing and her family. Pray for them particularly when they're away from their home studying here and when their parents and their families are so far away.

May we be surrogate parents and family for them. May we love them and may we welcome and be close to them as we seek to be albeit a poor substitute for their real family.

[2 : 58] But we pray for them today. We also remember the work of the gospel here. And we remember those who feel distant from it or disinterested or disengaged, who may be struggling and battling against trouble and difficulty.

We pray that they would become strong in adversity and that they would lean on us and that when our time comes for battle and when we realize the battle that we're in that we would also lean on others.

We pray that you would remember our worship today here and also later on as we gather here and also for the songs of praise.

We pray that your blessing would be enriched as he leads that service and on a really good number of people who are there, we pray that they would hear the gospel and respond to it in the evening of their days.

We pray for that. We also remember Coroner Stone today. We thank you for the update that we have. We pray for your blessing and Neil as he is away at this time.

[4 : 04] And we ask that you would remember them as a congregation as they seek to reach out with the gospel and grow the kingdom through sharing and through telling others of Jesus.

May your spirit work there, here and wherever your word is preached that it may go forth with power. Continue with us then. We ask in prayer and may by your spirit you guide and protect and lead us and speak to us through your living word.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. I would like for a little while this morning to go back to the passage that we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 from verse 35.

Wonderful chapter or wonderful section of a chapter and if you haven't been with us then and if you have time read the other two sections as well because they all fit in so beautifully together. And I think a chapter like this reminds us and it's quite difficult sometimes because we come here every week, week after week, week after week and for Christians we probably open our Bibles day after day, day after day and it becomes quite routine now.

It becomes quite almost every day our faith and that's right of course as well because it's like eating a meal. We do something regularly and it's very important and it's nourishing for us.

[5 : 29] But I think the danger with that is sometimes we forget the radical nature of the truth that is ours in Christ and a chapter like this I think reminds us again and again how radical the gospel is and how radical the truth of the gospel is and it's much more radical than we allow it to be I think sometimes in our lives and in our thinking.

So what we can sometimes tend to do is we can divorce the truth of the gospel from our lives because it's too radical to inform and transform and change our lives and we can be content sometimes with image, with putting on a good show of what it means to be a Christian or just living the gospel on a surface level.

It can be that we forget or maybe take for granted the deep-seated truths and radical truths of the gospel and almost practically be content with skin-deep solutions to our issues.

Somehow we don't think the gospel addresses the deep-seated and the heart issues of our lives and we content ourselves with kind of worldly skin-deep solutions that don't really touch the very depth of our heart.

We're content with having this kind of underbelly of truth that is almost like an insurance policy but we content ourselves with minor adjustments to our lives now and again without allowing the radical nature of the gospel affect us and I think the truth of the resurrection for us in the resurrection body helps us, it lifts us up a little bit and it lifts us higher than sometimes we are willing to go with our understanding of the gospel and the importance and the nature of the gospel in our lives.

[7 : 27] One way it does that is because it reminds us, this chapter particularly reminds us, that our lives are short and our lives are short in the light of eternity.

There's that great verse in verse 53 which talks about resurrection bodies that are bodies, the perisher will must clothe itself with imperishable and the mortal with immortality.

Sometimes we just, we bed our lives in the mortal in the everyday and what goes on to talk about the flesh and blood, you know, the stuff we can touch and feel and know and experience as though we're confident with.

But then there's this great reality of eternity, this immortality and the Bible makes clear that these two things coexist, that we live as human beings in our mortality but there is a different kind of reality that we are faced with every day.

Now we can choose not to recognize that and we can live as if there isn't one but the Bible makes clear that there is these two kinds of realities. This is not all that there is, there is more than just this, we are not just flesh and blood and that I think is very difficult for us to understand and to live in the light of.

[8 : 52] But there is a reality for us that as Christians we live in and recognize and know and it's a reality that lords it over science and it lords it over what is measurable and is indeed the genesis of science and it is ultimately a different dimension, a different reality and they belong and the study of flesh and blood and all that goes with it belongs to a different reality to that which is spiritual.

And verses 44 to 49 speak about that here, speak about the natural world and speak about the spiritual world and it applies these truths and these realities in a spiritual way.

It says that the natural, the flesh and blood world in which we live is a flesh and blood world which is genesis, is in Adam, our first parent in Adam, we are flesh and blood and in Adam all of us die.

So the end result of the flesh and blood natural reality of life is that we all die and we are all aware of that particular reality, even the children, even though it's the kind of thing that's not talked about and it's not allowed to be talked about in many circles today.

But these same verses speak about flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of God. You know, it's clear to you brothers, verse 50, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God and cannot inherit the spiritual reality, the spiritual life, the spiritual immortality which is so important and which lives within each of us, this longing for never dying.

[10 : 55] Even our bodies long for that. Even someone who is in their last breath, their heart is beating because they long to be alive and the heart just longs to still live and keep living and fights to the very end.

And so when we think about heaven and the children mentioned heaven today, we recognise and know that to get to heaven and to be part of heaven now and to be part of the kingdom of heaven now, it can't be and has never been just a skin deep solution for us.

It's not something that just is about tweaking at the edges of our lives, nor can it be a vague hope that somehow we'll just live out this world and just when we get to the end of it, we hope it'll all work out and we'll get to heaven, a kind of ostrich-like approach where we don't think, when we don't use our brains, when we don't use our knowledge, when we don't use the reality of what is explained to us in the Bible about, you know, and this chapter particularly, so real and it speaks so really about the historical truths of Jesus and who saw Him and who testified to Him and who saw Him dead and who saw Him buried and who saw Him living, resurrected and then who saw Him ascended.

And we know the Bible speaks of who saw Him ascended and that we use our minds and we use our thinking and we consider this, I want you to consider if you're not a Christian here today and you've been with us over the last three weeks and even if you haven't been with us over the last three weeks and even if you're not here today but you were here last week or the week before, you should be praying for people who were in church these last two weeks, you're not Christians, that they will consider the reasonable arguments of the gospel and they're reasonable and by reasonable I mean that they relate to reason and thought and our mind and our intelligence, that they will use the minds that they have and the reason that they've been given by God to work through the realities of God's word and of God's challenge to them about the gospel and the reality of the gospel.

So we've got this truth that this life is short in the light of eternity, now we're living for this life. We spend so much of all that we are for this life, for making sure this life is good and acceptable and blessed and there's nothing wrong with that but it must be that we do so in the light of living this life in the light of eternity and being founded and found in Jesus Christ, that is what's so important.

[13 : 34] And so in this passage, in this chapter we have Paul clearly resonating with praise and joy because of who God is and what God has done, you know, thanks be to God towards the end, thanks be to God, verse 57, he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ and that's hugely significant, hugely important.

He realises and he recognises and he knows that death has been swallowed up in victory because of what Jesus has done. Now if you'll turn with me to Isaiah chapter 25 which that quote is taken from, it's a lovely little passage, Isaiah 25 from verses 6 to 8, of this prophecy of the future of heaven and of all that it means, it says, on the mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines on the mountain, on this mountain he will destroy the shroud, isn't that brilliant picture the shroud of death that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations.

He will swallow up death forever, the sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, he will remove the disgrace of his peoples from the earth.

He will swallow up death forever and that's where that phrase, that's where that quote comes from, death has been swallowed up in victory, thanks be to God.

Part of God's great plan right there in the middle of the Old Testament, this great hope that Jesus will be the one who will come and who will welcome us into that great banquet which is still to be fully consummated when we come to know Jesus Christ and all His fullness in the new heavens and the new earth.

[15 : 25] But it's part of God's great plan and that's what we'll be looking at this evening when we look at not just the person of Christ but we're moving on to the work of Christ and part of that will be the fact that Christ, the Bible was preparing for Christ to come when we look at the Passover.

So Christ is this one who is God's answer for which we give thanks to the reality of dealing with this world and the flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven and knowing that there is an answer to that in Jesus Christ he's come to defeat the power of death and the grave.

Christ, verse 45 tells us is a life giving spirit. It's a life giving spirit and he rose again from the dead and that, you know, it's linked to that.

It's not just a theological fact, it's linked to his bodily resurrection is a link to that and Christ is with his resurrected spiritual body, he is the life giving spirit.

From heaven who has come to be a redeemer and that makes him different from Adam who was made from the dust of the earth and his flesh and blood reminds us that because of sin and rebellion from cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven but Jesus Christ is from heaven who has come to us and who is the first fruits of all who trust in him.

[16:56] We will therefore bear his likeness as Christians, our great hope is based on the fact that because he is resurrected and it goes on, we'll go on to speak a little bit about the resurrection body, because he was resurrected so will we and when we are resurrected physically we will reflect the body of Jesus Christ.

We will be like, we will bear his likeness. In other words, we will not be like Adam anymore or earthly father as it were but we will have a heavenly DNA, we will have a divine genetic code and that's where our hope lies in the resurrected Savior who has defeated the power of death thanks be to God, he is our Lord and our Savior and our God.

And so verses 54 and 55 we have that tremendous powerful claim and almost a shout from God's word into the universe, into the world of death and says where death is your victory, where death is your sting, the sting of death is sin, the power of sin is the law but thanks be to God he has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So victory, spiritual victory, victory over death and over the grave belongs to Jesus Christ. There was this incredible battle on the cross where there would only ever be one victor.

It wasn't a battle between evens, it was a battle where Christ would always win but nonetheless it was a great battle and he was victorious over grave so we have that wonderful picture of death being swallowed up, swallowed, taken whole by God and defeated, utterly defeated and vanquished and all who remain in Christ will share in that victory.

[19:08] All who remain out of Christ cannot know immortality and life with him. So if you are not a Christian a significant reality is that death owns you.

Either death owns you or Christ owns you. That's the kind of stark reality of the gospel isn't it? Either death owns us and you know I don't mean to be melodramatic about that, you don't need to be melodramatic about it because it's just fact.

Either death owns us or according to the scripture, according to faith in Jesus Christ who has defeated death Christ owns us and is worth being owned by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hugely significant fact for us to consider today. So what will the resurrection bodies that we have, what will they look like, what will our future hold for us?

Great question isn't it? It's why people go to little ladies with glass balls who can look into the future. Everyone wants to know their future.

[20:17] Everyone wants to know what might happen to them, don't we? Maybe we don't. Maybe it's too scary and maybe that's something we should thank God for.

Actually we don't know what the future holds in everyday terms anyway. But we can know what our future holds spiritually and that is tremendously important because it's not kind of airy-fairy and it's not just make-believe but it's based on this resurrected and ascended Savior Jesus Christ.

What will our resurrection bodies look like? And it's one of the few passages in the Bible that begins to move into this area and answer, well at least answer some of our questions.

Maybe it raises more questions than it answers but it certainly answers some of our questions about what we will be like. Particularly that section from verse 38, you know God is given as a body as he is determined into each kind of seed he gives its own body.

So I think what we realise, sorry I'm struggling, I had one of these horrible sweets earlier and it's made me feel really sick.

[21:36] It was one of these striped ones, what are they called? Laces, well they weren't quite laces but just full of glucose and garbage like that so I'm really sorry for all the payments for handing it out glibly to the children because I'm feeling awful.

Well I think it was that anyway. So but our resurrection bodies, what will they look like? I hope it's going to be very different from the way I'm feeling just now anyway, that's right.

Well we will be all very different, that's for sure, we will all be very different and that is one of the central teachings of this section.

All flesh is not the same, many of one kind of flesh, animals of another, birds of another, there are heavenly bodies, there are earthly bodies and that's what he's, that's one of the things he's talking about here, he's saying we will be very different, okay?

He uses seed there as an example when you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, it's a great example I could have brought into the packet of seed that you get for flowers, you could have opened it up and I could have had it in my hand and these seed look you know really uninspiring, they look dead, they are dead to all intents and purposes and they will remain dead and they don't change.

[22 : 52] If you keep them in the packet they will never become the beautiful flowers that God has intended, you put them in the ground, if they react with the oxygen and if they react with it, if they are buried as it were, they come out remarkably different, beautiful, you know and you look at that seed and you think how possibly can that glorious plant, that glorious flower, that glorious wheat come from such a small and useless looking seed?

That is a great parallel to dying physically and being put in the grave. If we believe in the lordship and in the power and the creative genius of God in the beginning and even in the formation of seed, it is no problem to consider a God who after we are rotting in the grave or cremated or lost at sea or whatever it might be, will recreate us gloriously by his power, we will be different, that is the reality of what we are told, that we will be different just as even there is living creatures that God has created all from dust but all very different because you have got animals and you have got people and you have got birds and you have got fish and then you have the solar system that he explains and describes here which it too is a splendor that is different from our own and different from one another, the stars and the planets are different in glory and in splendor from one another and very different from us.

So we accept that what the Bible teaches is that our resurrection bodies will be very different, we accept it in everyday life, we accept it all the time and we have a duty and a privilege by faith to accept that this is what God will do without necessarily knowing the divine mechanics of how he will do that for us, we worship him and reverence him as the one who has raised the sun with his resurrected body and will raise each of those who trust in him with a resurrected body that will be very different.

So we know that and we also can know a little bit from this passage about how we will be different because in verse 42 it says so be with the resurrection of the dead, the body that is imperishable is raised imperishable or incorruptible.

So it is different isn't it? Because now at the moment our bodies are subject to atrophy, to decay, you know we are not getting stronger and younger and fitter much though we would love to and I just pretend to be able to play fivicide with these young people but at 51 you can't really do it, you can't do it, even if your brain knows what to do your body you can't do it because we are perishing but that's what it like, you know all the young people will have heard all the not so young people here saying old age doesn't come alone and it doesn't, it doesn't come alone for any of us, there's no such thing as eternal youth.

[25 : 59] So we are corruptible, we are perishable, we have a cell by the, that's people but he says the resurrection body will be different because it's imperishable and we will always be fresh, there will be no atrophy and no deterioration in our life, no need for renewal because we will be renewed in his power and his strength.

So there is that, so in the dishonour is raised in glorious, is raised in glorious sorry, so there's that great reality that so much of what we are just now and what we do with our bodies and what happens with our bodies is dishonourable, there's so much abuse and misuse of our bodies, so much that is physically degrading about the world and the society and the individual lives that we live in the way that God has intended us to live and in the way he would look for us to live so that even now we can live in a God honouring and glorifying way but then we will by our nature as we follow Christ and live with him in glory in a Christ honouring way we will live as we were created to and intended to live with this perfect harmony with our Saviour and God in a new heavens and a new earth, a physical, physically renewed and transformed universe.

We are sown in weakness raised in power, now we all feel that and maybe some of us feel it more than others, a great sense of weakness and physically there's much we can't do, there's much we would love to do but we can't do it, we fight against weakness all the time.

But one of the great things about our resurrection body is its power, it will be hugely powerful, we will be instilled with the divine power that we simply can't estimate or understand.

That's maybe very different from our idea of heaven, I think very often we have a kind of soft and spurious and rather plain and weak idea of heaven that we're kind of floating about and not doing

very much and not really able to do very much apart from sing with a harp.

[28 : 25] But it's a place where it will be powerful, physically powerful and strong and able to do amazing things, whatever that involves and I guess it's all summed up in the fact that we are raised an earthly body but we have an earthly body, we will be raised a spiritual body, sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.

That is now we have a body that's kind of fitted and suited and adapted for this world, this flesh and blood world in which we live.

And we not accept when God says that we will have a body that's adapted and fitted for glory for a different existence, for a different kind of world. And that's just some of the hints that we're given here.

I don't know what it means really, I don't know what it looks like, it's just principles and parallels between what we are now and what we will be then. There's just going to be a universe to explore and understand more yet.

But that's what the physical reality of the resurrection of Jesus points to, that he had the spiritual body that was nonetheless a body that was real, that was ascended to heaven, that is somewhere today in heaven and that it's a reality that transformed the New Testament church, transformed the disciples who didn't believe and who thought everything was gone and yet who met this risen Savior and it transformed their lives as it did with all those who saw him.

[30 : 00] He's the first fruits we are told of all who believe in him. That is what the gospel says. And Paul says, look if you don't believe that, just walk away just now. It's not just secondary, it's not just part time, it's not just if you fancy it every so often.

Walk away, he says, because you're going to be more pitted than anybody else. And that is part of the significance and the responsibility that we have for ourselves. So very briefly in conclusion then what should our response be?

So we have truth and the Bible gives us truth but this is not a lecture and when we open the Bible and when we teach the Bible it should never be a lecture, it should never just be the imparting of truth.

It should be the imparting of truth as truth is given to us in Scripture which is always with the view to response, to worship, to adoration, to service, to transformation, to crying out for the living God in our lives.

On any given Sunday you should come to hear God's word with a willingness to respond. Any given weekday when I'm preparing sermons I should be doing so in the light of the response that his living word demands of me.

[31 : 11] Every time you open your Bible, every time you hear the voice of conscience from that meets with the truth of Scripture challenging you, it should be something that is a challenge to our lives to respond to and not just to intellectually compartmentalize somewhere that doesn't affect our lives and can be buried for some future reference or otherwise.

So it was a challenge. So Paul says here to this fledgling young church he says there for my dear brothers, my dear family he says stand firm, let nothing move you.

In the light of that that's what he says. What would you have said, what would your response be that you wanted to give to this truth? Well to us as Christians God says because of this truth then stand firm.

Why does he say stand firm? Because there's always the temptation not to stand firm, to walk away. Surely is that not the implication? If he tells us to stand firm it's because there's obviously the temptation is not to stand firm is the challenges that we're moved by lots of other things.

Other things that take away from this truth and that move us from this fundamental truth. There's lots of things that seek to weaken your foundation that shake you spiritually so that your foundation becomes weaker if you don't make sure that it's fixed in the concrete truth of God's word and scripture so he says dig deep, don't just be kind of faffing about as Christians he says dig deep with your faith and hold strong and realise what you have and what you're looking forward to because when the storms hit the storms will hit.

[32 : 51] If you have no storms in your life today you will maybe and will definitely at some point have storms that will hit. What are you going to do? Are you going to walk away from Jesus and say well He doesn't love me anymore?

And you can say it can't be true because well He isn't showing a fatherly lover concern. He said I don't believe him because all I want is blessings.

What is it going to be when the storms come you will hold firm and you will stand strong because you know that this truth can't be taken from you even though the storm of death is just about round the corner because death for you is defeated and the sting has been removed and we have eternal life to look forward to stand for.

I'm not saying that that is a cheap truth. I'm not saying that we don't struggle and battle with real difficulties. I'm not saying that you do that on your own. I'm saying we support and encourage and help one another and take our doubts and our fears and our questions and our battles to this risen, resurrected, living, loving Savior.

Soak yourself in this truth. Don't graduate beyond it. Soak yourself in this truth and know it and know this great hope that you have, this great future that you have in Christ that even though you are outwardly and even though I'm outwardly fading away inwardly, I'm being renewed day by day and I'm a teenager inside spiritually in terms of God's provision and God's grace and God's newness.

[34 : 26] So stand firm and be a wholehearted servant. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labour and the Lord is not in vain. That's the perspective.

What you will get up tomorrow to do by God's grace and God's will and thank Him if you get up tomorrow. You have another day of this flesh and blood existence which is good and pleasant in Christ.

Live as a Christian. So whatever your labour is tomorrow, whether it's in the home, it's with your family, it's a parent, it's an individual in the workplace, it's a student, your work, your lives, it's a retired person, it's a neighbour, it's a friend, it's a father, it's a son, it's a child, whatever it is you're doing, it's worthy as it is done in the name of Jesus.

As you're doing it for Him as a Christian for His glory, you know it's not just sort of full-time Christian work that's being spoken about here.

We're all doing full-time Christian work. Whatever sphere of life we're working in and it's in His name using His gift so that you're getting up and you're saying thank you today Lord for the gift of life, thank you for the gifts that you've given me to work or to be who I am, I live today for your glory.

[35 : 45] And I know that when I do that, my labour however dull, however boring it may seem to everyone else, however un-exciting and unambitious it might appear is not in vain.

It's not in vain in the Lord. Everything is in vain when we are living for Him and that's a great thing, isn't it? And it's a great corollary to the opposite which is where we're knocking our pans and living for ourselves.

What's the point of that? What's the point of living just for ourselves when flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven and where there is no ultimate value in our lives without Christ at the helm?

So the question if you're not a Christian today is well have you stood firm at all in the first place? Have you bedded your life and the foundation of your life in Jesus Christ whom to know is life eternal?

And then for all of us are we working for the Lord in what we're doing even as Christians? Have we just kind of forgot lost sight of that and we're just living for ambition and for a pay rise and for making a name for ourselves maybe?

[37 : 09] Or have we forgotten that all that we are and all that we do is for the Lord and therefore that tempers how we act, how we live, how we think, how we speak and we live for His glory now and reflect what will be the glory of our lives forever with Him.

I mean let's pray. Father God we thank you that you are Lord and we pray that we would reflect that Lordship of God in our lives and that this truth would be truth that always elicits from us a response. May the passivity of, the seeming passivity of our worship service, where one is speaking and everyone else is listening, may that not reflect the spiritual activity that where the curtains to be drawn back and where the veil to be removed would see a huge amount of activity spiritually. We hope, where we listen and where we take and act and move on your word and vow and pray and hear and respond and may that be the case for each of us.

May it be the case as the veil is lifted back that we would be people who are responding to your truth. We are worshiping in spirit and in truth and who are seeking to stand firm and to always give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord knowing that our labour is not in vain in Him.

[38 : 42] We know very often we are tired and weary but may we not be weary of you or tired of you. We are tired in Christ and weary in Christ but may we not find our questions and our fears and our doubts aimed at you.

May we focus on this supreme sacrificial love and victory that has been won on our behalf. The victory has been won, may we hide behind the great victor the Lord Jesus Christ and find in Him all that we need for this life and indeed for eternity.

For Jesus' sake, Amen.