

# The End of Death

## Controversial Questions from Corinth, part 4 (11)

### 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

<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.

<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.

*Heavenly Father, this is a long passage. We probably only heard a jumble of words. We ask that your Holy Spirit would teach us. We not only pray that your Holy Spirit would make us attentive and alert this cloudy, Sunday morning, but also awaken our spirits to hunger for the truth – the life giving, sometimes challenging nature of the things you say in your Word, which You have given to us. Father, whether we’re Christians or not, whether we’ve read our Bibles every single day this week and cherished every moment or not, whether we dread listening to*

*sermons or not, we pray that You would make this time profitable because that is what You say Your word is. We pray this for Your glory and Your sake. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*

## The Applicability of the Resurrection

I never took accounting in college, but there is a concept that I've heard from my accounting friends: FIFO (First In First Out). I have no idea how the real concept is used, but at least in my house, we use the FIFO concept when it comes to washing our dishes. We have a large set of bowls, but we only use a couple at a time. It's easy to just take the first few from the top of the stack, use them, wash them, and then return them back to the top of the stack. That would not be FIFO, but rather LIFO (Last In First Out). My wife, for our cleanliness and health, tells our family that we need to put back the utensils and bowls away at the bottom so all the dishware get cycled through – that way, when we have guests over and bring out all the silverware and dishware, they don't all die of dust. If you go to the Liao household, you will hear us talk about that concept to each other; that's a concept that someone somewhere came up with that we now use all over the place.

Wouldn't it be nice if Christianity operated like that? **Wouldn't it be great if some of the important doctrines of this great religion actually had a lot of applicability to all aspects of life?** We're going to be talking about a topic that we've been touching on these past couple weeks. I believe that this topic is woefully, sadly under-considered and under-understood – the doctrine of the Resurrection. It is a great topic at Easter. It is kind of cool when we talk about it in terms of zombies like in the sermon last week. However, how often do you and I actually draw hope, draw courage, battle temptation, discouragement, and depression, or praise God because of the Resurrection?

It is one of those things like the Trinity; the doctrine of the Trinity is doctrine that no self-respecting Christian would ever question because we all know that without the Trinity or the Resurrection, the whole religion of Christianity falls apart. You have to have God and Jesus as the savior. No one would ever question the power or the worth of the Resurrection. However, when it really comes down to the present time, for example this week, **do you and I think much about the applicability and overwhelmingly powerful hope that comes from this doctrine – the idea that the dead will rise?**

If you're not a Christian or you've never thought about this before, you're in luck as we look at one of the final chapters of 1 Corinthians where Paul has been dealing with the Corinthian church and their controversial questions about worship, men and women, head coverings, spiritual gifts, etc. Now we're continuing to study the concept of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians.

## Our Understanding of the Resurrection

When we talk about the Resurrection, I think we could really benefit from understanding Paul's notion of the Resurrection. Now, although we know that Jesus rose from the dead, the Resurrection can be a misty topic that we don't fully understand.

One of my favorite, charming stories is this: there is a son and his father on a beach. The boy is playing on the sand and runs back to his father saying, "Daddy, Daddy come with me!" The father walks over to his son and his son shows him a dead seagull lying on the ground. The boy

says, “Daddy, what happened to the bird?” The father thinks about, “Do I really want to talk about death here? How do I deal with this? My boy is so young.” He finally says, “The bird died and went to heaven.” The son looked thoughtfully at the dead bird on the ground and replied, “Then why did God throw it back on the ground?” He has a normal notion – the bird went to heaven and then came back.

That’s really what we think about. Resurrection is coming back from the dead, but what does that mean? If I go to the hospital and see a relative or friend as he or she passes, does that mean that that is what he or she is going to look like when he or she comes back to life? Or does that mean that after my beloved has passed away and the mortician makes the body look presentable and almost life-like, that image is what my beloved is going to look like when he or she comes back to life? Have you ever wondered what age people will be when they come back to life? If you’ve been a Christian for a long time and you’ve never asked these questions, then maybe we haven’t really considered, with our imagination and hopes, what it means when people come back from the dead.

This is the thing we’re going to see from the passage today.

## Four Points from the Passage

1. How should we conceive of the Resurrection?
2. How should we perceive the Resurrection? (What does it actually look like?)
3. How is the Resurrection achieved? (How does it actually happen?)
4. How should we receive the Resurrection? (What difference does it make?)

### 1. How should we conceive of the Resurrection?

Paul uses an analogy of a seed. Just think about a seed that you have seen recently – maybe a watermelon seed that you spit out, maybe it was a pumpkin seed you roasted, maybe it was a plant seed that you put in the ground because you enjoy gardening. Think of that seed. Now imagine that you put that seed in the ground and months later, it grows and develops but it doesn’t look anything like the seed at all. That is what Paul is saying here in the passage. Let’s take a look beginning at verse 35:

*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.*

What is he talking about? Here is what he is saying: you wonder, “How do I even think about Resurrected people?” and children and people always ask, “Well, what does the Resurrection look like? Will we still have our scars on our bodies? What will resurrected people look like?” Paul is trying to say that before you ask what it looks like, you need to conceptually understand what Resurrection is like in general.

How should we conceive of the Resurrection? **The Resurrection gives you a gloriously, radically different version of the same you – the exact same person.** The analogy he uses to explain this involves a seed. During those ancient times, people had a problem with understanding Resurrection, but one very different from the problem we have today; however, Paul's response answers both objections.

In our modern times, I think if you were to ask about people's problem with the concept of the Resurrection, you'd find that it's a mechanical thing. Most modern people reject the concept of the Resurrection because they cannot fathom how it can happen. Later, Paul is going to give another analogy to explain that.

However, that is not the problem that the ancient readers of this text had. People from that time had an even bigger obstacle. The bigger problem is this: they simply did not believe the physical thing was good or useful thing. There was a very common Greek notion back then that it was incompatible that God's glorious notion and version of life included this physical body.

You might think that modern people have a huge obstacle in believing in the Resurrection, but actually, that is purely mechanical. Maybe one day someone will show us how to take a body that has been dead and reanimate the dead body to come back to life. However, even if you could reanimate the dead body, the ancient Greeks would still say, "Nuh uh. Bad. You do not have physical bodies in a great life. The physical world is pain, suffering, disgusting, weak, worldly."

## From Seed to Flower

Paul gives us this analogy to help us understand. He says that we need to think about the Resurrection like the growth of a seed. You need to take that little seed and bury the seed in the ground (in that sense it is like it dies). If you were to look at the seed, you and I might not have any idea what kind of plant will bloom. That is what Resurrection is like.

The Resurrection is like a seed. You put that seed in the ground, you bury it like a body that has died, and are surprised to see the plant or flower that grows from it.

We did this in our garden a few years ago. We compost our food, meaning we take our food matter and put it in a bin where nature decomposes the food for us to use as soil in our garden. One year, there was this really strange plant that grew. My wife often will go into the garden to pick a few things before dinner and one day she found a long green shoot that kept growing from the ground. We thought it might have been a green onion. We checked in on it about a week later and we found that it had grown a cool-looking, white flower. We looked at it and thought, "That's a flower of an onion! Do onions have flowers? This is really cool!" The point is: you wouldn't know by looking at that little seed or stalk poking out of the ground that that is the flower it is going to produce.

A few years ago, my mother-in-law sent my kids a summer seed packet. She gave them a variety of different seeds but then said, "... but these seeds are a surprised. If you plant them, you can guess what kind of plant they are when they grow out of the ground! You can't tell by just looking at the size, shape, color, and texture of the seeds!" That is what Resurrection is.

The point is this: if we, through nature, look at a seed going into the ground and cannot imagine the diverse and amazing creativity God has in the life the seed gives, then **why would we be**

## **surprised when a human's deceased body goes into the ground and comes out something glorious and radical.**

Have you ever seen a picture of yourself as a newborn? You were probably wrinkly and ugly. I know they say that newborn babies are beautiful? They are not. I've seen three of them. They are not beautiful. They get bigger and stronger and begin growing strange things from their bodies. They grow older and begin smelling differently. Just imagine any of the newborns you've seen in the past couple years and think of how big they've grown. In a few years, they'll be walking and talking. Just imagine several photos showing the progression of a person through their life stages: newborn, toddler, child, teenager, middle-aged person, senior citizen, etc. Those pictures are all of the same person, yet they look so different.

Conceptually, how should we see it? This is what Paul is getting at: **the post-resurrection body is still you, but it is going to be such a different version of you that you cannot even fathom or imagine it.** That is why Paul tells us to think about things that God has done that we do see in creation. Think of the different kinds of animals. Think about the different kinds of celestial bodies. We see this here beginning in verse 39:

<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.

If they are all so different, why is it so difficult to think that when you and I are buried in the ground like a seed, looking dry and withered, that life could emerge as a result? Because **God is a glorious Creator.** Anyone you know that has died, God can resurrect. One of the images that I don't think we hear enough at funerals is this: this body goes into the ground decayed, sick, old and withered, but later will come out of the ground and be glorious.

That sounds pretty cool, but what does that actually look like? I'm going to tell you what Paul says.

## **2. How should we perceive the Resurrection? (What does it actually look like?)**

If that is how we should conceive of the Resurrection, how should we perceive it? Paul doesn't answer your question about how old you'll be or anything like that. Here is what we are going to see: Paul is going to draw three contrasts between the pre-resurrection body to the post-resurrection body. Again, you cannot talk about the resurrection without talking about death. **You cannot experience the hope and triumph of the idea of the Resurrection without feeling the pain and loss of death.** Maybe some of us have recently experienced a death and I don't mean to be insensitive, but this is the text.

We're going to talk about the differences between the bodies. Be prepared to hear about how great the resurrected body is going to be, but friends, let's get ready to hear how challenging and difficult it is in these Earthly bodies.

Let's pick it up in verse 42:

<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.

That's the difference. What is sown is perishable – meaning the earthly body, the pre-resurrection body. What is raised is imperishable – meaning the post-resurrection body. Here Paul talks about the three differences between the bodies.

### The Pre-Resurrection Body versus the Post-Resurrection Body

First of all, the difference between a pre-resurrection body and a post-resurrection body is decay. **The earthly body is perishable. It decays.** The opposite of that is that the post-resurrection body does not decay. The terminology, as I understand it, does not imply the state of decay. It's not like, "Look at that body – it's in the state of decay" and "Look at that other body – it's in a state of non-decay". It is actually a process. This is the difference between the earthly body and our spiritual bodies. Every single one of our earthly bodies is in the state of running down. Some of us might not be at the obvious run down point; scientists say that 18 is the physical peak and then you get older, slower, weaker, and saggier. All of us are in the state of decay, but **the glorious resurrection body is opposite of decaying – meaning that we will thrive and increase in vitality every day.** For all eternity, the new resurrected body people will have in Christ will become more vibrant every single day for all eternity.

Secondly, **the worldly body of today is the body that is full of shame and dishonor.** That is what we see in this verse.

<sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.

That doesn't just mean that the body just doesn't look as good, vibrant, or strong. In the ancient Jewish mind, touching a dead body was considered unclean. By that very notion, all dead bodies are disgraceful. When we go to funerals, we will sometimes touch or lay our hands on the dead body in the casket, but in ancient Jewish society, a good, proper Jewish person in those days would not have touched the body because it was considered unclean and dishonorable; there were even rules against touching the dead.

Thirdly, **the earthly pre-resurrection body is a body of weakness.** It is sown in weakness and raised in power.

### Our Fear of Decay

The easy way to think of these differences of decay, shame, and weakness is to go to the hospital or nursing home and think about these things. One of the challenges of bringing young people who have never been to a nursing home before, like our campers from Project Destiny, is that say some profoundly uncomfortable things. They will walk through and say things like,

“Everyone is so sick and old.” You can also go to the hospital and see all the different tubes and machines attached to the patients. You and I don’t need to visit hospitals or nursing homes to feel this way. Decay, dishonor, and weakness.

In fact, I believe we feel these things even as we’re young. Perhaps maybe that is why when we reach our teenage years, we begin to be uncomfortable with our bodies. People think, “People who care a lot about how they look are so vain. All they care about is not having a funky tan line or not looking overweight.” It is easy to think people are just superficial or vain. Have you ever thought that perhaps our struggle with physical appearance is not due to vanity?

Have you very considered that **perhaps deep down you and I feel this intense insecurity that every new spot or sag or lack of ability signals that we are closer to death – the fact that we are going to die.** Teenagers are not all uniformly vain; in fact, I believe they understand that their bodies are not going to last forever and that makes them nervous. Sure, we think that it might be about beauty, attractiveness, and sex, and that might as well be the case, but do you know what makes everyone, no matter how old we are, insecure about how we look? It could be the nagging sense that the bodies we occupy are not going to last forever and we are scared and uncomfortable with that fact.

If you’re like me, you can say Amen to that every year that goes by. I am not nearly as flexible. I am not nearly as limber. I was never fast, but now I’m really not nearly as not-fast. Everything is going. That is why I want to have kids at a young age – so I can beat them longer at things. Everything that you and I fear regarding our earthly bodies – it’s going to decay and break down; it’s kind of shameful in its unsightly state like in a hospital bed; it is weak.

One of the biggest challenges regarding bringing young people to hospital visitations is that they feel so uncomfortable being around people who are looking like they’re dying. Friends, **the sooner we understand that we are all dying, the sooner we can appreciate the glorious promise of Resurrection.** Everything you have seen that scares you about hospitals and nursing homes makes you uncomfortable. The idea here is: everything that you and I are worried about concerning the earthly body is the opposite case for the Resurrection body. This body will never ever break down; it will thrive. This body is not dishonorable or ignoble; it is glorious. This body is powerful, and I’m not just talking about strength or vigor; it is empowered by the living Spirit of God. C.S. Lewis says, “If any of us were to see any Christian in the future in eternity in the glorious body that he or she has, we would bow down and worship that body because it is so beautiful.” That is how glorious the body is.

You might be thinking, “That’s pretty cool. I get the idea that Resurrection is like a seed going into the ground and a plant is going to emerge that is going to blow our minds with its variety and vitality. I get that it might look very different because it lacks the decay, dishonor, and weakness and that it is going to be full of power and glory. Now, how does this happen?” Remember that Paul was writing to people who didn’t have a mechanical hindrance against the Resurrection, but rather a conceptual one, he elaborates on how conceptually it is achieved.

### 3. How is the Resurrection achieved? (How does it actually happen?)

We see this as Paul introduces this idea of being connected to Adam and to Christ. Let's take a look here, picking up now in verse 44:

<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.

What does this mean? How is it achieved? It is basically this: **it is achieved through union with Christ. It is achieved by identifying with Jesus Christ.** Paul makes this connection here. He raises a topic that many people question: humans are born in sin and we are born incapable of being with God. You might think, "That's so unfair! So you're saying that because Adam and Eve fell from grace in the Garden of Eden and therefore we are all doomed to be born in sin? That's so unfair!" You might think that because someone else did something and you have to suffer the consequences that it is unfair. I could tell you that if you or I or any other human being was in the Garden of Eden, we would have done the exact same thing, but that might not be a satisfying explanation.

#### The Consequence of the Fall and Grace of the Cross

I'm not going to tell you that it isn't unfair. Of course it is unfair. That is why people who are pregnant cannot smoke. That is why people who are pregnant obviously need to watch what they eat or drink. If the pregnant women take in bad things into their body, future generations that come from their bodies are adversely affected. Is it fair or not fair? No one tells a baby, "Don't worry. Your mom can eat and drink and consume whatever she wants. Of course it's not fair but it is going to adversely affect you." Who said anything about fairness? **It is about consequences.**

Regarding Adam and Eve, when they sinned, they passed on that sin and so, as a consequence, all people are born imperfect. In the same way, when you become united with Christ and you put your faith in Him, then you are united in His death and resurrection. By the way, friends, getting Christ's death and resurrection in your account – that's not fair. It is anything but fair. Why should Jesus die for my sins? That's pretty messed up. Why should I get Jesus' reward for His perfect life of obedience and love to the Father? That's pretty unfair. **That's why it's grace.**

That is how the Resurrection happens. **In Christ, the dead are raised.** That is how the Resurrection is achieved. That is why you need to have a resurrected savior – not just a really great moral teacher who died, not just a really inspiring philosopher that taught great teachings. **We need a God who died as a man who died on the Cross to pay for our mistakes, sins, and really rose again from the dead to give us life.** Every single person in this room has the opportunity to have hope in a new resurrected body. That is how it is achieved.

Now we've considered how it is conceived, how it is perceived, and how it is achieved. Now, we're going to move onto what it means for us. What does it actually mean today? How do we apply this?

#### 4. How should we receive the Resurrection? (What difference does it make?)

This is really interesting because Paul gives us one quote at the end that gives us practical application. Before he gets there, he gets into this exalting scene reveling in the Resurrection. Let's take a look at the passage beginning from verse 50:

<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.

He's about to get to the point here. He's basically saying this: you couldn't inherit the post-resurrection body with your bodies, but it is glorious. He is so pumped up at this point. He speaks of great imagery and says this, “We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed.”

#### Transformation through the Resurrection

Sleep, throughout this book and throughout much of the New Testament, means death. Paul is saying that there will come a time when Jesus returns. This passage does not directly address all the different views on the second coming of Christ. What this passage is saying is that when the time comes, a trumpet, which in those times signaled an entry and in the book of Revelation signaled the end of human history, sounds, we will all be changed in the blink of an eye. **If you're already dead, you're going to sleep and be risen from the dead. If you're not dead, if you're alive when Jesus returns, then we all be changed we will get these eternal bodies instantly.**

Some of you might be thinking, “Oh man, why can't Jesus return before I die. Why can't he return five minutes before I die? That would be awesome.” We're not going to get into that point today, but what Paul is emphasizing is that there is going to be change. At that moment, that is when human history is going to be folded up and then unfolded. Paul first talks about there is going to be a resurrection and all this is going to happen, and then gives his application:

<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.

I bet you there is a challenge, a stretch, a temptation, or something in your life that is besetting you. Maybe you're not a Christian and something is haunting you. Maybe you're a Christian and you're battling temptation or dealing with a struggle. Maybe you're a Christian and you're asking God, "God, what do you want me to do? I'm ready to be challenged. I'm ready to do something great in your name." This is what I want to ask you: **have you drawn strength for your situation from the fact that you are going to be resurrected if you are in Christ? Have you ever benefited from that idea?** I don't just mean at the passing of a beloved friend or family member. We often think about the resurrection when a Christian passes away; we think, "This is so hard and so sad, but he or she is in a better place and one day we will see him or her again" and that makes us feel better. In fact, everyone likes to say that, whether they're Christian or not, whether they believe in God or not. It's amazing how much everyone wants this sure hope of seeing each other again.

However, Paul says that **the fact of the Resurrection should make you immovable as a follower of Christ.** The Resurrection is supposed to make you a better parent. You're going to be a more ethical, hardworking employee at work because of the Resurrection. You will be better at listening and counseling people because of the Resurrection. You will deal with public policy better because of the doctrine of the Resurrection. You will be a better small group leader, Sunday school teacher, elder, deacon, discipler, mentor, and missionary because of the Resurrection.

Friends, you and I don't use this thing enough. **The hope comes from the fact that no matter how weak or insufficient we feel, however shameful or mistaken we've been, God will give us radically new glorious versions of the same us.** You are, in God's mind, worth keeping; that is why He is redeeming you. He loves you so much that He is going to transform you into something that is so glorious and so beautiful that we won't be able to recognize the new you. When you die, a seed is planted. One day, I don't know how long because the Bible does not tell is, you will arise and be beautiful and glorious. That is what happened to Jesus.

There is all this talk about the earthly body being so tainted with the Fall of humanity, but what do you think happened when Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit sovereignly decide that Jesus would come to Earth. He was imperishable, but he took on the form of perishable. He was the vibrant, thriving life in Heaven that took on the decaying body of a human mortal. He never sinned, but Jesus was strong and took on weakness. He was glorious, but contained all that glory in the human body. Jesus went through life, so that He could die for you and me. **We were born and we don't want to die, but Jesus was born for the purpose of dying for you and me.** He is raised again. That is why we sing. That is why we speak. That is why we can have hope.

What is it today that you sense God wanting to do in your life? Maybe you feel like you need better time management. Maybe you feel like you need more patience. Why don't you pray this, "God, help me appropriate the hope and courage that comes from the fact that no matter what life throws at me, I will come back to life if I trust in you." Take that to work. Take that to school. Take that home to perhaps your troubled family or troubled relationships. **Be immovable and steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that, in the Lord, your work is never in vain because there really is a Resurrection.**

Don't just use this when someone is close to death, although that is a time where it is very appropriate to use this. Use this today. Use it right now.

Let's pray together.

Sermon preached August 18 2014.