

Jason Upchurch - 1 Corinthians 15:35-45 - What Will Our Resurrection Bodies Be Like?

We have been talking about the resurrection of Jesus and how that relates to the resurrection of believers for the past month or so. We reach a transition point in the chapter where Paul transitions from talking about the reality of the future resurrection to talking about what our resurrected bodies will be like.

We talking about how when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory, our bodies will be raised from the dead and they will be glorified. What exactly does that mean? Are we just shiny and bright? And why does it matter that we are promised new, glorified bodies?

Here's why that matters: because when Adam ate the fruit in the Garden, the sin that entered the world affected several things. First, it affected the earth - which bears thorns and thistles but will be recreated in glory in the New Heavens and New Earth. It affected our soul - people go to heaven or hell based on faith in Christ.

But it also affected our bodies; our bodies are tainted by sin in a multitude of ways and eventually our bodies die.

Let me just talk about our bodies for a few minutes because I think a biblical theology of our bodies is important and I think it sets the stage for why a resurrected body is such an amazing promise.

I know very few people who don't struggle in some way with their bodies. Let me just make you wise to what's going on in our own congregation. I don't think I'm about to violate any HIPPA laws, and some of you will think I'm talking about you, but it actually pertains to a lot of us. Maybe you know that, maybe you don't.

Some of your bodies are chronically sick and you don't know why. There's no diagnosis, only pain and difficulty. Some of you deal with headaches, migraines, intestinal issues, heart issues, breathing issues, infertility, hormonal issues, eye problems, skin problems, weight problems, sensitivity issues, difficulty with intimacy for a variety of reasons, food allergies, pollen allergies, chronic fatigue, nerve issues, cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, nightmares, unexplained growths, back issues, insomnia. Maybe you have issues with memory or cognitive function. And a whole host of other issues.

And if Jesus were here on earth right now, we'd probably all go to him for some sort of healing. Some sort of fix. And you know what Jesus would probably do if we all went to him with our bodily problems? If you read the gospels it appears that he would probably stay up all night comforting us and praying with each one of us, laying his hands on us and healing us because he has compassion on our broken bodies.

Which means that it's good and right for us to pray even now for physical healing. And we need to be reminded that part of God's grand plan of redemption is to completely heal and restore the very bodies we have right now to enjoy for all eternity in the New Heavens and New Earth.

And not only do we have issues with our bodies objectively. But we also have problems subjectively as well.

How we view our bodies or other peoples' bodies is often tainted by sin as well.

I'm not actually sure I know anyone who is simply satisfied with their body. They wish they were better looking, they wish they were thinner, they wish they were more muscular, they wish they had her hair, or his build, they wish they were taller, or maybe not that tall, they wish they were smarter, or didn't have that mark, or that feature or those wrinkles.

Not only are our bodies objectively broken by the fall, they are subjectively broken by the fall. We covet other peoples' bodies or features. Or we are not content with our own.

And I say this as someone who has struggled and still struggles with these things. I was always the small kid growing up, I'm still small. I had the worst acne in high school. Once I got done with acne and my hair fell out. Once my hair was done falling out I got spots on my faces and graduated to intestinal problems for half a decade.

1 Cor. 10:13: There is no temptation that has overtaken us that is not common to man.

If you struggle with your body, know that basically everyone else does too in one way or another.

Turn to Gen. 1. Here we have the creation of man and woman by God. This fundamental. **Read 26-27**

So much we could say here, but let's just focus on the issue at hand: God created with sovereign care the bodies of Adam and Eve. Their teeth, their hair, hair color, height, shoe size, internal organs. Everything.

And he has done the same for you and me.

Jer. 1:5: Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

Who forms people in the womb? God does. He forms your DNA, he forms your height, your eyes, your curves, muscular structures. Your mental capacities.

You are physically exactly who God wants you to be. Some things can be changed a little, but many things can't. That's okay.

God made you male on purpose or female on purpose. He gave you the anatomy you have for a reason. He made you tall or short or average on purpose for his glory. **Read 2:15-17**

God designed your body to work. To be productive. He also designed your body to enjoy the foods God created. Working and toiling was designed by God before the Fall - it's a good thing something that God requires. Even in the NT Paul says that if any man is not willing to work and provide for his family he should not eat and he should be avoided.

God has made our specific bodies for labor - labor to his glory. The primary purpose isn't even for marriage or sexual pleasure or kids. That's why being single is a good thing, because marriage is not the end goal. There's no marriage in heaven for all eternity.

But our bodies aren't primarily for us or others, it's primarily for us to accomplish what God has designed in work.

Now, God did also create the marriage covenant to be the one place where our bodies can be on display for someone else and there is no shame. **Read 2:24-25**

Why is this significant? Because marriage creates a bond of trust between a man and a woman. The husband and wife now have the covenant union that solidifies their relationship and this extends into the physical realm.

It's interesting that in most situations if you were just to stand around in public naked that would be weird. Most people understand that that's wrong intrinsically.

But it also feels wrong because our bodies are flawed and our perceptions of our bodies are flawed. But marriage is the one place God has designed that we can stand before our spouse naked and unashamed. We can stand naked and have full acceptance knowing we're flawed, they're flawed, but we're bound together by covenant.

Look at 3:16-19. This is part of the curse God gives to the woman and Adam. Notice the effect of the curse on the body. **Read 16-19**

This is the first time we see pain. There is pain in childbearing. I think that's pain in the whole process. There's tension between man and wife.

Adam is now going to sweat because the land is cursed. And one day he will return to the very land he is called to toil. Every day he plows the land or sows the land, he sees that dirt and he knows he's going to be dirt.

And his body begins to break down, just like our bodies break down. And the Bible is a long history of people breaking down.

Abraham was impotent, Sarah was barren, Timothy had chronic stomach ailments, Solomon recognizes that old people get grey hair and that beauty - while nice - is fleeting. King Saul was the model man in Israel, David was the runt of the litter. Jesus healed leprosy, blindness, chronic bleeding, scoliosis.

Your physical body has ailments because of the effect of sin in the world. Part of the reality of sin is not just our spiritual state but our physical state as well.

2 Cor. 5: the outer man is wasting away.

Some of these things are brought on by things we have done, others are brought on by things others have done, others are just part of the corruption of genetics. But we're dying.

And the glory of the gospel is that Jesus isn't just interesting in saving our souls. That was a big phrase decades ago: we need to be soul winners. Souls go to heaven.

Souls do go to heaven, but you know what go to the New Heavens and New Earth? Resurrected, glorified bodies.

Your body. The one you have right now. Some similarities, some differences, but the body you have God will transform and glorify and be glorified in your body.

So if you're frustrated with your body for one reason or another, know that God has a plan for your body. So let's **turn** back to **1 Cor. 15** and see what God's plan for our bodies is.

Now, let me just say that Paul starts out this section a little punchy. And that's okay. It's to be a little punchy about the resurrection. It's good to be a little punchy about any of the major tenets of the faith. **Read 35-36**

At first glance that seems a little harsh doesn't it? What we need to understand is that sometimes people aren't asking questions out of innocence or simply to learn. Sometimes they're asking questions to trap you.

That's the case here. Paul is imagining someone trying to make him look foolish for believing in the resurrection. "How do they raise? With what kind of body do they come?" is being asked in a sarcastic way.

Remember when Jesus was tested by the Sadducee's on the resurrection? They thought the idea was foolish too so they made up this ridiculous story about a woman who marries 7 brothers. They each keep dying and she keeps marrying the next one. And then they ask the punchline: In the resurrection, who's wife will she be?

They weren't asking out of the sincerity of their heart. They were trying to trap Jesus. And of course he absolutely destroys them: there is no marriage in heaven. And by the way, Moses even believed in resurrection.

Paul isn't calling all the Corinthians foolish. Just the ones who think that somehow they've trapped him.

Side: You don't have to answer insincere questions with sincerity and politeness. It's okay to call people fools, and devils and sons of hell when they're trying to trap you. Those are things Jesus said, the apostles said, God said in the OT. Did you know God called drunken Israelite women who oppressed people "cows" in the OT?

Amos 4:1: Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, 'Bring, that we may drink!'

When people mock God, God mocks back. And it doesn't matter what generation you're in, cow is not flattering. But God called them that. I'm not saying this should be your only evangelistic tool. But it should be in the box somewhere.

When people are insulting core Christian doctrine - and especially people who claim to be Christians - it's okay to mock them.

But pastorally, Paul actually goes on to answer the question. What will our bodies be like? We don't know 100% what they'll be like. But we do know some things.

1) There are similarities and differences from our own body. **Read 37-38**

So what you're going to see here is that what God has revealed to us about our glorified bodies is simply by way of analogy. Here, the analogy is a seed.

When you plant a corn seed, what pops up is not one massive seed of corn. What pops up is a corn plant - it's related to the corn seed, but it's also different.

One thing to note about that is that the plant that comes out of the ground is usually more complex than the seed, and it is more glorious.

When you plant a flower seed, it's usually rather uninspiring. It's just a small brown ball seedling. Not very impressive. But what grows up out of that is much more complex and beautiful and stunning than what went into the ground. I think that's probably part of the analogy he gives us here as well.

Our fleshly bodies here are rather unimpressive in the grand scheme of things. What will eventually go into the dirt will come out of the dirt will be as more impressive as a flower that comes out of the ground.

The other thing to note here is that just as God sovereignly gave you the body you have right now; on purpose and for his glory. In the same way he will give you your glorified body exactly how he wants it, on purpose and for his glory. **Read 38**

So there's a connection between our earthly body now and our glorified body later. I think we're going to recognize each other.

When Jesus went up on the Mount of Transfiguration Elijah and Moses also appeared with him. And the disciples recognized them. We don't know how they recognized them, but they did. Somehow they were identifiable.

When Samuel was summoned from the dead, Saul recognized him. That's a weird event.

But I think the same will be true in heaven. There will be enough that's the same about us that we will recognize ourselves and others will too. But there will be differences also.

Now, this next section is really hard to understand at first. And I'll be honest, it's not entirely clear why he gives us these examples. He gives us 3 sets of analogies describing differences.

But I don't think we're supposed to overthink the analogies here. Paul's point is just that there's will be differences between our body now and our resurrection bodies. **Read 39-42**

I read through 42 so that hopefully you saw that what he's getting at is simply an analogy of our resurrection bodies.

Now, just to be honest, what I think Paul is getting at here is that the amount of glory some people will have in heaven is different than others.

But his examples seem to be that in the created order things have different amounts of glory: creatures on earth have different glory; humans and angels have different glory; and even the sun moon and stars do.

Now, we see in other places in Scripture where believers are rewarded for their efforts here on earth. Paul doesn't say this explicitly here, but I think it's safe to make the connection that in heaven, part of the reward is different glories. **Turn to Phil 2:5-11.**

Now, before I read this, just remember that this section is about the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus. His obedient humiliation of dying on a cross leads to his unparalleled exaltation. And just remember, that Paul says we are to have that mindset. **Read 5-11**

Because of Jesus's humility, he is super exalted above all. Super glorified. And we're to have the same mindset. Not to try to out glory Jesus - that will never happen. But our suffering for the glory of God, also seems to result in our own glory in heaven.

And just as Jesus was super humbled and therefore super glorified, it seems to follow that our willingness to be humbled will also result in proportional glory.

Rev. 22: Jesus is coming with our recompense - our reward.

2 Cor. 5: We will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive what is due us, whether good or evil.

So you take these verses throughout the Bible about the rewards believers can expect for faithful service to the Lord and then Paul mentions that there's a difference in glory between things here on earth, and it seems like maybe we can connect some dots back in **1 Cor. 15.**

So within God' creation now there are differences in the bodies God has created. Creatures have differences now: humans, animals, birds, fish: we're all alive, but we have differences in our glory as it were. Humans are at the top, and fish are just disgusting.

In **Vs. 40**, Paul seems to be making a contrast between heavenly beings and earthly beings. **Read**

This is probably a contrast between angelic beings - spiritual beings - and humans. Angels have a glory that is hard for us to even comprehend. If you remember twice in the book of Revelation the Apostle John fell down to worship an angel because of the brightness of his glory. I mean, this is an apostle - someone who had seen Jesus, and seen Jesus in glorified form at least twice.

But when he was confronted with the glory of an angel was so overwhelmed that he fell down to worship. So angels and spiritual beings have a different level of glory than we do.

And we can even look up in our own sky and see differences in glory. The sun obviously has no rival from our perspective. The moon a distant second and then stars look like little pin pricks of light. They vary in glory.

Well, there's some variation in glory with our resurrection bodies as well because Paul says that variation in glory that we see in creation is how it is with our resurrection bodies. **Read 42**

So our bodies will have differences in glory. Paul gives us 4 contrasts from our current bodies and our resurrection bodies.

Perishable - > Imperishable
Dishonor -> Honor
Weakness -> Power
Natural -> Spiritual **Read 42**

So the first contrast is that we are now perishable, and one day we will be imperishable.

What is perishable. It's the idea that we break down and die. One way to define this word is the break down of organic matter. You remember like 10 years ago when composting was all the rage? In some circles it still kind of is. But the idea of composting is breaking down organic matter all the way back down to dirt.

In fact, did you know that WA was the first state to make body composting legal? Where instead of proper burial, you can just have your loved one composted? It's crazy. They take the body "Your loved one is now ready to return home in the form of life giving soil. We are able to package any amount for pickup at our facility and ship smaller amounts via USPS" (www.returnhome.com; accessed June 5, 2022).

Why is that a bad idea? Because bodies, even after death, deserve to be honored as having been made in the image of God. That's why graves in the OT were considered unclean. Not that they're bad, but that bodies should be honored.

But perishable means we die. We get old, we get wrinkles, we get back aches, we can barely move and then we die.

Our glorified bodies won't do that. There's no breakdown process. Our skin doesn't get thin, our bones won't get frail. We won't get cataracts or thinning hair. Our bodies will self perpetuate forever, just like Adam and Eve's bodies would have self perpetuated forever.

Dishonor -> Honor **Read 43**

This seems to be a contrast of the physical states of our body. It seems as though our bodies will have a shininess to them.

When our glorified bodies are talked about, often they are described in a shiny kind of fashion.

Dan. 12:3 says that we will be raised and we will shine like the brightness of the sky above, like the stars forever and ever.

Matthew 13:43: The righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

So when we talk about glorified bodies, we do mean better bodies. But we also mean literally that our bodies will have a glory about them.

You remember when Moses went up on the mountain to meet with the Lord and he came down and his face was shining? And everyone was scared and he actually had to wear a veil because they were so freaked out? That was glory. Glory because he was in the presence of the Lord.

He had been affected by the glory of the Lord and was radiating that back. But it seems like in our glorified bodies we will shine out glory.

In fact, the NIV says we are sown in dishonor and raised in glory. I think that's probably more helpful. We are raised up in a shininess.

Why shiny? Because we are holy. See, we've been declared to be righteous now by grace through faith. The holiness and glory we have is not intrinsic to us. It's imputed to us. But one day we will have intrinsic glory because sin will be done away with forever.

Weakness -> Power **Read 43**

Part of the curse that we read about earlier is that we are weak. We get tired, we break arms and legs and hips. Our muscles break down. Body parts break down.

Proverbs says the glory of young men is their strength, but the glory of old men is their grey hair. As you get old you're just not as strong as you once were.

This is one of the cruelest aspects of growing old is that you just can't do what you once could. You can't keep up, you can't get up, you can't keep going. Stamina goes down.

In our resurrected bodies, we are raised in power. We will have the ability to do all the things we wanted to do. And specifically we will spend all eternity laboring for the glory of God in the presence of God filled with the joy of God.

Natural -> spiritual **Read 44-45**

This is an unusual phrase because at first it almost seems to mean that the body we have won't be a body at all. Adam's body was natural but ours will be spiritual.

That's not the case. Right now our bodies are natural in the sense that they are fashion and formed to deal with this earth. Just like Adam's was.

But these bodies won't work in the New Heavens and New Earth, they're not designed for life there. It's be like trying to fly to the moon and live on the moon without a space suit. We'd die because we're not made for the moon.

In the same way, these bodies aren't made for the NHNE. But God will raise us from the dead in bodies that can endure and enjoy the glory of the NHNE.

Listen, the body you have right now is just a temporary thing. God knows that and we know that.

And God in his grace will one day raise you to a new and glorified body. One of his own choosing that never breaks down and ever lives to work and enjoy the Lord Jesus in glory forever.

Pray