

We Will All Be Changed

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[0 : 0 0] is from 1 Corinthians chapter 15. It's on page 1157 in the church Bibles and we're starting at verse 35. So 1 Corinthians 15 starting at verse 35.

But someone will ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come? How foolish what you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow you do not plant the body that will be but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. Not all flesh is the same. People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies. But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another.

And star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable. It is raised imperishable. It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body then there is also a spiritual body. So it is written, the first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first but the natural and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth. The second man is of heaven.

As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth. And as is the heavenly man, so are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man? I declare to you brothers and sisters that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery.

[2 : 2 7] We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed. In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

This is the word of the Lord. Great. Good evening. I see miles from you guys this evening. That makes me a little sad, but the good thing is we're all here tonight, and it's a glorious Glasgow evening. This is as good as it gets if you've visited Glasgow. I hope you've been enjoying the afternoon. Let me pray for us as we begin. So, Father, we pray that we would look forward to that day. We pray that we would listen, and that we'd hear that mystery, that on that day, when Jesus returns, we'll all be transformed in the twinkling of an eye, and we will see God, and we will be God. So, help us to listen well tonight in preparation for that day.

Help us to prepare our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I wonder if you've given any thought to mountains. We heard Robbie reference mountains in the start there, and mountains are spectacular, aren't they? In Glasgow, we've got some great mountains surrounding us, and people love to go up mountains, don't they? And the views at the top are spectacular. Maybe you like to go cycling up a mountain if you're feeling fit. Maybe you're a walker, and you like to amble up a low rise and try to get to the top of the mountain. But the views are brilliant, and being at the top of the mountain is spectacular. But it's also dangerous getting up mountains, climbing up mountains. The higher you go, the more dangerous it gets.

[5 : 17] But some people seem particularly good at climbing mountains because of the bodies they have. So, I've got some slides here. Does anyone know who that is? Anyone put up their hand who can spot that?

No, you should know. Yes, Kat's got one. That is Nimsdai Persia. Let me tell you a bit about Nimsdai Persia. Nimsdai Persia, about two years ago, he did something that no one had done before. He had climbed all 14 peaks over 8,000 meters in six months. Before that, when people had tried to do it, it had taken them decades. But because he had been born a Sherpa, he had done 10 years in the special forces in Britain. He had a unique body that was prepared to climb a mountain. Maybe you recognize this chap. I'm sure there are a couple of guys who will recognize this chap. Who's that?

Anyone? Yes, TJ Podjka. He's won the Tour de France twice. You'll see him in a couple of months if you're watching the TV. And he's known for zooming up mountains. He makes them seem like a flat hill, like you're cycling through the Norfolk Broads or something like that, the way that he goes up them.

They are uniquely suited for climbing mountains. And our passage, as Robbie introduced it, sometimes we think of climbing the mountain, of meeting God as we climb the mountain, who will ascend the mountain of the Lord. And if we are to ascend the mountain of the Lord, we will need to, we'll see God and we'll be with God. And so the question then is, if we are to ascend the mountain, what kind of body will we have? What kind of body will the person have who ascends that mountain?

And if we are ever to be saved and be with Jesus and be with God forever, then we are to ascend the mountain. On Easter Sunday, we remember, as Robbie introduced there, the resurrection of Jesus.

[7 : 21] That Jesus was resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit and given an indestructible life. And that later, he ascended to be with God in heaven. And in our reading tonight, Paul is, he's writing to a people who are eager to be with God and to see the Lord. But in their eagerness, they've got some things wrong. You see, they've placed too much emphasis on the immaterial, on the spiritual. They've claimed too much too soon, and they've denied a physical resurrection.

They've claimed that they are already with the Lord on his mountain spiritually. And so it doesn't matter what they do with their bodies while still being in earthly bodies. They disregard the physical aspects. They claim to be super spiritual. And so in our reading, Paul is explaining how it is, what we need if we are ever to be able to ascend the mountain of the Lord and see the Lord. And he begins by asking two hypothetical questions there that some who may deny a physical resurrection might have asked sarcastically. So if you just look down at page 30, at verse 35 in our reading, you'll see those questions there. But someone will ask, how are the dead raised? How are the dead raised? How's that going to happen? And with what kind of body will they come? What kind of body are you thinking they might have? And so Paul begins by answering them. And roughly what he'll do is, in our reading, he answers the second question. That is, with what kind of body will they come? He answers that first in verses 36 to 50. And then he looks at the first question, second in verse 51 to 53.

So the question there, with what kind of body will they come? What kind of, what will your heavenly body be like when you go to be with Jesus? And if you've got a sheet there, you'll find our first point there, verse 36 to 50. Hopefully you've got a sheet with the points on. And that point is, your body will be imperishable and spirit-empowered like Jesus is. So don't be distracted by your body now. And the picture that he gives is of someone planting a seed. And seeds don't often reflect the plants they go into. But seeds, if they're ever to blossom, if they're ever to bloom, if they're ever to grow into something productive and amazing, they must be planted. They must die and go into the earth.

And the seed represents a mortal, earthly, physical body. Our flesh and blood, no, these must die. But the plant represents a imperishable, spirit-empowered, but also physical body that will last forever, that will grow out of that seed. And so in the section, he contrasts two bodies. He contrasts earthly bodies and he contrasts our future resurrection heavenly bodies. And so the earthly body is perishable. It fades, it dies, it grows old, it disintegrates, it falls apart. Our heavenly body is imperishable. It's immortal. It lasts forever. Our earthly bodies exist in dishonor. Sometimes we struggle with them. They aren't great. Sometimes they're not as we want them. But our resurrection bodies will be raised in glory. They will be absolutely glorious and brilliant. Our earthly bodies are our existing weakness. We get diseases. We die. Our resurrection bodies will be raised in power.

Our earthly bodies are an image of that first earthly Adam that we heard about, that we read about in Genesis 2. Whereas our resurrection bodies will be in the image of that heavenly Adam, Jesus.

[11 : 39] Our earthly bodies will be natural. They'll be made of this earth. But our resurrection bodies, they will be spiritual. And by spiritual there, he doesn't mean immaterial. He means they will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. The thing that makes them distinctive is that they have God's Holy Spirit in them. And that empowers them and gives those bodies their imperishable, immortal, indestructible qualities. And the background to this long section, verse 36 to 50, is Genesis 2, where we read how God the Father creates the first Adam by breathing on him. And he creates him out of dust from the earth.

And it's dust that you can blow away. But here, God the Son creates our heavenly body as the second Adam by giving us the Holy Spirit in verse 45. So just as written, the first Adam became a living being.

And he's quoting from Genesis 2, 7 there. The last Adam will be a life-giving spirit. And it's the Holy Spirit that gives the heavenly bodies its superior qualities. And the point is here that our heavenly post-death bodies will be physical. They won't be immaterial. We won't be like angels on a cloud. They will be utterly physical, like playing a harpsichord or something.

They'll be imperishable. They'll be immortal. But they will be spirit-empowered. They'll have God's spirit within them. And so the application is, if that's the body that's coming, don't get distracted by this body now. Don't get distracted by this body now. And we all are embodied people. We have bodies. And we've got various struggles with our bodies. Our bodies, in many ways, reflect our culture. We can't help but be who we are because of our body. We can't help but exist in our culture because of our body. Sometimes we've got complicated relationships with how we feel about our body. We like to feel differently. We'd like to be like this or like that.

But we have to live in them, irrespective of those things. And the challenge here is we shouldn't allow our struggles with our bodies now to distract us from true worship of God and from that future body that's going to come. So we might feel let down or betrayed by our bodies. Don't let that distract us.

[14 : 27] Don't let us, those hardships that we may have gone through in our bodies distract us from that future time. We might feel sad about our bodies. We might wish they were different. Don't let that distract us from that future body that is to come. Don't let that sadness over our bodies now rule over the joy of the gospel that is in us, of that future joy that is to come when our heavenly bodies come.

And our earthly bodies, they are a great gift from God. They're given to us to worship Him. And they're all very different. And that's something to rejoice in. And through them, for a moment, we experience and enjoy everything that God gives us in this world now. And Scotland's great for doing that. But also, as we live in them now, they have been ruined by sin. And in our bodies now, we see our brokenness and our need of God's rescue. In our struggles with them, in our unhappiness with them. They point to our need for a better body and God's rescue. And so we shouldn't let those sadnesses, those sins, distract us from the fact that these bodies are temporary, but in the future, we'll get an amazing, spirit-empowered, dazzlingly glorious body that will be utterly imperishable.

And so, as we wait in our eternal bodies, we should not get distracted by the unhappiness with these temporary bodies now. Because, and this is our second point now, verse 51 to 53, soon we'll all be changed in an instant. And so be reassured, a change is coming.

And in this section, Paul goes on to answer his first question that he raised there in verse 35. 35, how are the dead raised? And the answer that he gives comes in verse 51 and 52.

Listen, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we'll all be changed in a flash. How are the dead raised? In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet was sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we'll all be changed. It'll be in an instant, you'll be changed. And the thing that Paul wants us to take away is not the when. He doesn't tell you when this is going to happen, but he tells you that it is going to happen. It's absolutely certain.

[17 : 01] It will happen. It will be sudden, in the twinkling of an eye, a flash. You won't be able to prepare for it. You won't be able to cram for this event. It will come on you, and it will be unavoidable.

Trumpets are not a subtle instrument. They sound, and you know they're blowing. I think Martin used the trumpet in the morning service a couple of weeks ago. I was thinking about that, but because we'd already done that, don't want to do that again. But they are unavoidable. You can't avoid a trumpet when it blasts. It affects everyone. And for some of us, the certainness and sadness of this day that is coming are not things that we've given much thought to. We're not too bothered that there is a day coming when things will change suddenly, and all of a sudden. We're young.

Our bodies are young. We're almost indestructible in the things we're doing. Being a Christian is fun. We come to church, and it's brilliant. All our mates are here, and we go and do brilliant things on the weekends and over the holidays. But soon, very soon, your bodies will age, and they'll be affected by disease and accidents and heartaches or mental difficulties, and the Christian life won't look appealing. And the certainty and suddenness of this change, of a resurrection, will seem a long way off.

And as you wait, you'll wonder, am I a fool for following Christ? Should I not just enjoy my body while I can before I lose it utterly? But Paul tells us here that it is absolutely certain, this change is going to happen as certain as Jesus, who rose on Easter day 2,000 years ago. No one expected it then, and no one will expect it when he comes back and returns. So a day will come when suddenly, unavoidably, we will be raised, and in an instant, we will be changed. And the reason that we will all be changed into glorious new heavenly bodies, and the reason that that day is sure and certain, is that on that day, and we're looking at our third point here, verses 54 to 57, death and sin will be defeated. Verses 54 to 57, death and sin will be defeated.

And the application, so don't be misled, don't hang on to sin, don't cherish sin now. Those death and sin will be defeated. And the key verse here is really verse 50, I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

[19 : 50] And the reason that our bodies now will never get us into heaven, will never inherit the kingdom of God, will never be able to ascend the mountain of the Lord, is that they are tainted by sin. And nothing that has been tainted by sin will ever be in God's everlasting kingdom. Flesh and blood are perishable, they die. They've been touched by sin. And the reason that earthly things are perishable, is that they have been touched by sin and death. You can't help it in this world. It's everywhere, wherever you go. So when I was at Bible college, this was probably my most, how I spent my time there, you can probably tell, but I used to pick apples. And I didn't know this, but if you get an apple, and you put it in a newspaper, you could store it for months. It will last there, because the air can't get into it. But as soon as you unwrap it, take the newspaper off, and the air can touch it, that apple starts to disintegrate and rot and fade away. And so as we live in this world, we're like an exposed apple. Sin is all around it, and we're exposed to it. And as we touch it, we soon start to rot and fade and fade away. And the world is, it's everywhere. It's unavoidable.

And just note that death gets its power from sin. So look at the start of verse 57. The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. The thing that makes death so deadly is sin, is our turning away from God, our disobedience to God. You see, hornets are, they buzz, and in summer they come out. And the thing that makes a hornet so scary is its stinger.

But if you take the stinger out, and the hornet buzzes about, you're not bothered about it, because it doesn't have a stinger. But the stinger is the thing that makes a hornet dangerous.

And so likewise, the thing that makes death deadly is sin, is disobedience to God. But just note, on that day, on that day, when the trumpet sounds, then, when the imperishable has been clothed with the imperishable, verse 54, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true.

Death has been swallowed up by victory. On that day, where, oh death, is your victory? Where, oh death, is your sting? And the tarnish of sin in the world will be utterly wiped out.

[22 : 37] And so as we live in the world now, it's warped by sin, it is ruined by sin. Our bodies are ruined by sin. But on that day, the victory of the cross, of Jesus who never sinned, and was without sin, and yet died for our sin, and conquered sin, and conquered death, and the ultimate sign of that victory, that he was raised to life again, on that day, that victory will spill over into the rest of creation.

And all the remaining residue of sin and death that ruins our world, and ruins our bodies, and ruins our lives, will be utterly obliterated. And the reason that Jesus was able to do this was because, not because he was a man who had God's spirit resting on him, but because he was the spirit-empowered man.

He was God in human flesh. He was the son of God. And so, who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may climb God's holy mountain? The one who has the right body.

And if we try to go up in these mortal, sinful bodies, that come from a world of sin, they'll be utterly destroyed in God's presence, in God's holiness.

And so, if we are ever to receive the right body, that can ascend the mountain, and can know God, and be with God, and get to those hearts, then we must receive it by faith in the Lord Jesus.

[24 : 06] And so, this is where Paul lands in verse 58. So, just look down at verse 58. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you.

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. The message of 1 Corinthians 15 is that if we are to see God, then we need to go up in imperishable bodies, spirit-empowered bodies.

We need to go up in bodies that receive their qualities from the Holy Spirit living within us, God's Spirit given to us by faith in Jesus. Bodies that will come on us in an instant, in a moment, unannounced.

Bodies that have been cleansed utterly from sin by Jesus' death on the cross. Bodies that will only ever receive through faith in Jesus.

That when we believe in Jesus, the life-giving Spirit, He gives us His Holy Spirit. And so, we have a guarantee that we'll get those imperishable, for everlasting bodies.

[25 : 14] Bodies that can be with the Lord Jesus and know Him forever. And so, He says to us, Stand firm. That's the only way you'll ever see the Lord.

That's the only way you'll ever get the right body. Don't be distracted by struggles in this life. Struggles with your bodies now. Listen to the message that God has proclaimed.

Listen to it. Always give yourselves firmly to the work of the Lord. Live the life of faith. Fight sin in our lives now.

There won't be any sin in heaven. Don't think you can take it with you. Don't think it will be there. Fight it now. It won't be tolerated there. It will be utterly obliterated in the presence of God.

Persist in loving others well, day by day. All the while knowing that none of these things that we do in living a life dedicated to Jesus, believing in Him, looking for His return, hoping in His death and resurrection, loving His family that He's given us, His Spirit-empowered family, living within other believers, will be utterly in vain.

[26 : 28] But one day, we will be with Jesus in heaven forever. and we'll have eternal, immortal, glorious bodies and will be utterly mesmerizing and utterly unbelievable and utterly glorious and worth so much more than any of the struggles or things that we might have to sacrifice in this life.

So let me pray for us as we close. So loving Heavenly Father, we come to You now as weak people living in a broken world and we pray that we would see You.

Please help us to be faithful to Jesus, to look to Him as the source of our salvation. Please help us to look to Him and the power of His resurrection that declared that He conquered sin and death once and for all.

Please may His Spirit live within us as we trust and believe Him day by day. In Jesus' name. Amen. Great. I'm going to invite Andrew and the band up and we'll sing together now.