

Let's take our Bibles and turn to 1 Corinthians 15, verse 35, stand as we read God's word together. If you're with us this morning, we're in a series on heaven, life after life. There's more life after this life. It's the greater life, and for some weeks we've been trying to get our heads around it, trying to peek into the future. If there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth, one would assume there's going to be a new body given to us that would suit that environment. And so, last week we started to look at the subject, The New You, the resurrected body. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 35. "But someone will say how are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive, unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain, perhaps wheat or some grain. But God gives it a body as he pleases, and to each seed its own body.

All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of man, another flesh of animals and another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, but the glory of the celestial is one, the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 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. There is a natural body, there is a spiritual body. And so it is written the first man, Adam, became a living being, the last Adam became a life giving spirit.

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust so also are those who are made of dust, and as is the heavenly man so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man." So reads God's word, and you may be seated. I think we've all had this experience where we haven't seen someone for a period of time and perhaps at a reunion or just paths cross unexpectedly we see them and we see them differently. Perhaps sickness or illness has done its ugly work. Perhaps time has taken its toll. And we look at them and under our breath, we say to ourselves, "My, my, he is a shadow of his former self. She is a shadow of her former self." Now I want to turn that on its head, Because in the light of our study on heaven, in the light of our present study on the resurrection body, given the fact that some day, according to the Bible, you and I will go through an extreme makeover by means of resurrection when our weak body will become strong, when we who are mortal will be clothed with immortality.

I want to suggest to you that anytime we look at each other, Sunday morning, small groups or wherever life takes us, when you and I look at each other we need to look and say under our breath, if not out loud, "My, my, you are a shadow of your future self." Because it does not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we'll be like him. Changed, improved, the new you, the new me. Wasn't it C.S. Lewis who said something like this, "There are no mere mortals. We daily rub shoulders with people who ultimately will be either like Christ in grandeur or demons in revulsion." You see right now, in our present physical state, you and I are a shadow of our future selves. Last week, we started to explore that thought. Last week we started to tease out the theology of the new body. One patterned after the Lord Jesus Christ because remember, Christ is the first fruits from among the dead. We started to expound 1 Corinthians 15:35-49. We saw that Paul uses the image of the seed, and he reminds us and promises us that somewhere within our broken and dying bodies is the seed of what we shall be.

We got to that place last week where we actually started to answer the question that we find in verse 35. And with what body do the dead come? What will you and I look like 1000 years from this morning? Well, I want us to continue to look at that. I'll just lay out my thinking. I believe several things about our new body and I'll root those in the Word of God, I trust, this morning. Our new bodies will be physical.

Our new bodies will be personal. Our new bodies will be permanent. Our new bodies will be perfect, powerful and pure. So let me unfold that. Let me just reheat the dinner from last week. New bodies will be physical, real, tangible bodies that will touch, taste and smell. The next life is not a disembodied experience. We will have a new body for a new earth. We're going to be raised physically just like Jesus. We saw didn't we in verses two and three of this very chapter, that the Lord Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Then he was buried, that is his body was buried and he rose again the third day. His body was raised, his resurrection wasn't spiritual, it was physical.

He was raised physically and gloriously. He's the first fruits. His body is the prototype. His resurrection is the measure of our resurrection, and his resurrection was physical. We know that. He was seen by his apostles and by 500 more witnesses. We know that Thomas touched the very nail prints in his hands. We know that Mary grabbed his ankle having first mistaking him as a gardener, then recognizing him as the Lord. He said, "Mary, let me go, I got to go back to my Father." Jesus wasn't a phantom. His resurrection was physical. We are not gnostic in our thinking as Christians. God has a design for our body. The material is not evil. The material is not something to be discarded. You and I should never unnecessarily harm our body or discard the thought of physical life. God has not only intended to redeem our souls, he has intended to redeem our bodies, and at the rapture and the resurrection reunite both in perfect harmony, health and holiness. Because the dead will be raised and the living will be translated, and in this perfect union of body and spirit we'll be with the Lord forever.

Our new bodies will be physical. Now, that's where we left off but before I go on to the next thought, I got maybe one or two questions. Number one, what age will our bodies be? Now, we can't be sure. Let's not try and argue with any definiteness here about this issue. Don't spend a lot of time writing a book about it. Don't fall out with your friends over this issue. You know? As Sinclair Ferguson says, where the Bible leaves off teaching, we need to leave off learning. And there isn't a clear text that tells us what age we'll be or at what stage of physical development will our bodies be raised. So let's be careful, okay? As my father once warned me, wonderful things in the Bible we see, some of them put there by you and by me. So let's not read into the text. It's hard to know what the ideal age is. There are advantages to different stages in life. I came across an article recently that argued that there were some advantages to being over 50.

Okay, kidnapers are not interested in you. In a hostage situation you'll be first to be released. No one expects you to run into a burning building. You're no longer viewed as hypochondriac. The things you buy won't wear out. You can live without sex but not your glasses. You sing along to elevator music. Your eyes won't get any worse, and your investment in the health insurance business is finally paying off. There's all kinds of advantages to being over 50. But what might we argue? Here's what I'd say from inference, and it's reasonable. Not a hill to die on, but I think this is reasonable. And debate in church history has kind of argued this, Thomas Aquinas argued this. Perhaps the ideal age is somewhere in the mid 30s. A couple of arguments to that end, I would assume and I think you would agree with me, that Adam and Eve were created mature adults. They didn't go through the early development stage that those who were born after them did.

They were created at some kind of state of maturity. They were brought together and immediately commanded to go forth and multiply, have children. But the greater argument would be this, not only that Adam and Eve was created at some kind of state of maturity right from the get go, from the ringing of the bell. But if Jesus is the first fruits of a harvest to come, we know that Jesus was raised in his mid 30s. He died in his mid 30s and was raised in his mid 30s, and so that could be the best argument by inference. That's just a deduction. It's worth thinking about. Makes some sense. In fact, in my research I

was interested to learn that one of America's contemporary magazines some few years ago did a survey on this very thing and they asked 2000 adults between the age of 18 and 69 across the United States, "What is the optimum age?" And you know what they come up with? 31.

31, so we would have to go with this. If heaven is a state of maturity and perfection, if the resurrected body is resurrected one would assume to a state of optimum health and ability, could be that our physical body could be raised somewhere in that range. You know? Another question by the way, this is often raised pastorally, how is the physical body raised, given decay, given the destruction of the body perhaps through cremation, or some catastrophic event? You know, a mid-air collision, a terrorist attack like 9/11, and a body is dismembered and blown to smithereens, someone who perishes in a fire, someone lost at sea. Think about some of our brave servicemen who perished at sea. What do we do with that? That's something that troubles loved ones. How will God gather that together? And in fact, I would remind you, interesting that if you read church history. I went back to an event in Leon, France, about the second century, some Christian martyrs were burned deliberately by pagans because they knew that Christians believe in the physical resurrection, and their hatred extended to this degree that they didn't just take Christians' lives, they decided to burn their body so that made their resurrection doubly hard.

Interesting. Does that present a problem to God? I got a question, does anything present a problem to God? No. And I would remind you, if God took us from the dust, made us out of nothing, I don't think that that kind of issue is going to be a problem for God. Nothing's impossible with God. Plus, it's interesting, even when it regards the resurrection of the wicked at the great white throne in Revelation 20:11-15, one of the phrases there is quite interesting. It talks about heaven and earth fleeing the presence of God. And you know what it said about the wicked dead? And the sea gave up her dead. Interesting. So here's my answer, in the words of John Calvin, the great Protestant theologian, "Since God has all the elements at his disposal, no difficulty can prevent him from commanding the earth, the fire and the water to give up what they seem to have destroyed."

Okay, number two, our new bodies will be personal, physical, personal. What do I mean by that is that we will not be unlike ourself. We will not be unlike ourself. Whatever that new version of us is, there will be some continuity in terms of features, even our ethnicity, in the life to come. There will be elements of our present body that will show up in our physical body. We will not all look alike. Be careful with the phrase "And we shall be like Him". So does that mean that whatever Jesus looked like we'll all kind of be clones of that, and they'll be some kind of uniformed look in heaven? No, that's not what that text means. That means will be like him in character, holiness and righteousness. Look, here's what's interesting, when Paul begins to argue about how are the dead raised, what is their body like when it comes forth, verse 35, he does then go on to take the image of the seed, verse 36, and he talks about how the seed has to be sewn into the ground. It dies, and then it bursts forth in a new form more glorious. He says in verse 38 something interesting, "God gives it a body as he pleases; to each seed its own body."

Bear that little thought in mind. Then he goes on to talk about if you look across the world, that's a fact. Look at the diversity of bodies God has created. Celestial bodies, terrestrial bodies, there's one kind of flesh, man. Another kind of flesh, animal. And there's a verse that takes the doctrine of evolution on right there. Man and animal are not the same. One flesh is animal, one flesh is man, birds, fish, so there's a diversity. There's nothing that looks alike in this present creation. And if it's true of the old creation, isn't it going to be true of the new creation? There's a diversity of bodies in the natural world and when it comes to the human body there's all kinds of colors and sizes and looks and ethnicities. And

I would argue that continues in the life to come. That doesn't stop. The body that will be sown will be the body raised. Barley seed produces barley, wheat seed produces wheat. The body that you and I have will be sown into the ground in burial, and raised, the same body but more glorious and certainly improved. Which would mean, and this is my point, we retain our identity and we retain our personality and features, perfected. Okay?

I'll add a layer of thought to that back to the argument that Jesus' resurrection is the prototype. He's the first fruits. Did his disciples recognize him when he was raised? It says here earlier in the chapter the apostles saw him and 500 others beside. And it is true if you read John 20 or John 21, the ladies recognized him in the garden, the disciples who met him in the room recognized him. Thomas put his very fingers in the nail prints in his hands. When Jesus meets his disciples later by the Sea of Galilee, Peter sees him at a distance, and the text says Peter says to the other disciples, "It is the Lord." They had no trouble recognizing him. Because you see there is a continuity between the present body, although fallen susceptible to sickness, limited, that's going to be improved into a more glorious state, but you and I will carry on our individuality that will be recognizable. I like the way one writer put it, think of it this way, you probably have a computer and you use certain software for word processing or developing spreadsheets. When an upgrade becomes available. you don't get rid of the whole program. You get a better version of the same program only with new and better features, and that's the kind of analogy.

Okay, we've got a present body and although death will rob it of life and at some point it will be sown in a state of decay and dishonor, the resurrection is an upgrade on the body. It's not a discarding of it, which by the way, would remind us of something very beautiful and very important, and I know my daughter Beth has a heart for this and so do many of you within our church. We started it a few years ago ministering to those with physical or mental challenges, those in the disability community. I would remind them that I think this text and the thought of the present body being raised and upgraded, I would remind this by implication. Although challenged, perhaps even deformed, even disabled, our present body will be made perfect. It will be similar but superior, and that would mean that our bodies today are not a physiological mistake on God's part. It's not something he's going to discard, it's something he's going to perfect. And that's a glorious thought.

Then, when we see our loved one's physically challenged we've got to realize that that's the effects of man's sin and fallenness. It's not a mistake on God's part. And God has a glorious plan for our loved ones as they trust Jesus Christ to fix all of that, and therefore that's why the Christian community is at the vanguard of reminding people, you know what, the child in the womb has got value and those who have got disabilities have got value. Listen to the words of Michael Rogers, whose book I found helpful in this series, *What Happens After Death*, he says this, "The fact that a resurrection body will be recognizably the same tells us that no one today can be regarded as God's physiological mistake. Our present bodies are not inherently evil, nor should they ever be judged as ruined beyond redemption. No matter what defects we are born with, or how badly we might have been abused or degraded by our flesh or our sins, the psalmist would remind us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

God is our designer and maker. He is not going to scrap us and start all over like a Rembrandt painting, which at some point in existence was painted over by an amateur's cheap portrait. We are all masterpieces worthy of restoration because God's original work, his fingerprints and his brush strokes are evident upon us, Christian, despite your physical shortcomings now, God will preserve your personality. Not because you are so great, but because you are the outworking of his handiwork." Beautiful. Now we are going to be raised as a continuation, an upgrade of our present selves to reflect God's glorious handiwork. In fact, let me just take that thought and take it a little bit further. I think our

distinct personalities will continue. I think our memories will continue of this present life, maybe a couple of thoughts would be like Luke 16:25. It's in the reverse. This is a man who is in Hades. This is a man separated from God. That's the story of the rich man and Lazarus. And you remember how the rich man wakens up in hell, he's in torment. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus to touch his tongue with some water, and what does Abraham say? Don't you remember in your lifetime, you had good things?

But the point is, don't you remember, because he could remember. Memories continue into the next life. Now for us, we shall know as we are known. 1 Corinthians 13:12. And I would say based on Revelation 6:9-11, where you have the martyred saints of the tribulation, perhaps a picture also of all the martyred saints of church history. They cry out to God for their blood to be avenged. They seem to be aware that they ended their life in martyrdom for the cause of Jesus Christ. But if we tie Revelation 6:9-11, to Revelation 21, verse four, where there is no dying and no crying and no sorrow, it seems to be that we as Christians will be able to recall our past lives but without sorrow. See, right now if something hurts us or bothers us, it can rob us of a night's sleep, it can cling to us, and we end up with some anxiety and tension. We can't shake it. And the recall brings heartache, and the recall brings anxiety and we fight that battle.

I think in the life to come, we will recall without sorrow, we will be able to recall perhaps even tough times but without the sorrow attached to them. Our relationships will continue. Now, we've made an argument that one on one marriage ends and it's replaced by that one marriage between Christ and the church. But I do believe the relationships we enjoy as a family or as friends or as a husband and wife will continue in the sense that we know there's something special there. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, that's the promise of the rapture. That's the question, hey, our loved ones have died. What happens to those who fall asleep in Jesus, where Jesus comes back do they miss out? And Paul says, "No, do you realize that they're spirits are with Christ, and when he comes back he brings their spirits with them. The dead are first raised, body and soul together, and if you're alive in body and soul you're translated together with the Lord. Together with the Lord. The implication is hey, you who are sorrowing, missing your loved one, there will be a reunion. Death might hide but it cannot divide.

Our love for each other will continue. That's just keeping in the sphere of Christian fellowship. We have a... no pun intended... a beautiful kindred spirit here at Kindred Community Church. And you know what, when we're meeting up with each other again in the life to come, 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 19, Paul said of the Thessalonians, "You will be my crown of rejoicing at the coming of the Lord Jesus." Paul anticipates when he enters the new life and when he meets up with Christians who he had a hand in transforming, enjoyed some wonderful times, joy is going to meet them there. The memory of it, the continuance of it. Here's a thought, I hope our secular society that's gone crazy on this issue, hears me this morning, our gender will continue. You realize that gender is fixed? It's immutable. What you are, as a male or a female, listen, you'll be forever. There's no transference of gender. You die a woman you're going to be raised a woman. If you die a man you're going to be raised a man. Jesus died as a man and he was raised as a man and that's why you read in Acts 1, "This same Jesus who you've seen, and now he's being taken up, will return."

It's the same. This idea today that gender is fluid is without science. There's not a scientific study that proves that. It's nonsense. It's a ruse. It's a rebellion. It's without science. It's without sense. And it contradicts scripture. What a thought. On the gender issue, God made them male and female and whatever he made you, you will be for all of eternity. Because God reflects his glory in our femaleness and in our maleness and that will continue in the life to come. Is race transferable? Is species transferable? Can you be something other than a human being? I mean listen to the nonsense our

society is involving itself in, and it's being forced on the majority by a very vocal and aggressive minority. We need to speak up. But that's not my point today. But you could get me started on it.

Here's the last thought, our ethnicity continues, Because I think I take that from Revelation 5:9-10. We get a window into the life to come and there's the worshiping congregation. And what do we read there? We read that there's all kinds of people there. And as John looks at them, he's able to identify, hey, they're from every tribe, tongue and nation. I saw black people, white people, I saw yellow people, brown people, no polka dots, but I did see all kinds of people, ethnicities, nations. The Europeans were there and the Africans were there and the Asians were there. You can hear the Irish all over the place, loud as ever. I mean, it's all there. That's a beautiful thought. There's a form of nationalism that's not good. But today this idea that nations aren't good, God made nations, he made peoples, he made ethnicities. And properly ordered they are a reflection of his glory. They'll be all kinds of nations and ethnicities in heaven. Just a thought for you to think through. And maybe on a lighter note, somebody sent me this a while ago to this very point. Someone compared heaven to hell. And they said in hell the cooks are English, the policemen are German, the mechanics are French, and the lovers are Swiss, and the bankers are Italian. But in heaven the cooks are French, the policemen are English, the mechanics are German, the lovers are Italian, and the bankers are Swiss.

I don't think that's going to be anything like heaven, but the point is this, but heaven will reflect the conglomerate of the nations made in God's image now glorified, wonderful and rich. I've got a question before I leave this, but we've kind of answered it. It's a question you'll ask me all the time. Pastor, will we know each other in heaven? Well duh, I just made the argument. Our resurrection body will be personal and our resurrection body will be physical. It will be raised physically, and an element of our physicality and our features... I don't know about size or height... but you know, people are going to recognize us. Maybe we'll be in our mid 30s. But of course we'll know each other. As Jay Oswald Sanders, the great Bible commentator said, "Life in heaven will bring enrichment, not impoverishment." We're not going backwards. It's not like what we're able to do now we won't be able to do then. The issue will be what we can't do now we'll be able to do then. Or as the great Spurgeon once remarked, "We knew one another on Earth, will we be bigger fools in heaven?" Or the great Baptist preacher W.A. Criswell of First Baptist Church of Dallas, he was once asked, "Will we know each other when we get to heaven?" I love his reply. "We really won't know each other until we get to heaven."

It's good. All right, physical, personal, permanent, permanent. Look at verse 42. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption." Okay? Our present body isn't permanent. It's susceptible to depression, deterioration, death, ultimately decay after death. But the promise is, the body that is sown in corruption will be raised incorruptible. Okay? Verse 42, or if you skip down to verse 52-53, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying oh death is swallowed up in victory, oh death where is your sting?" Now that lies ahead. We often quote that right now at a memorial service but it's a text out of context. You really can't say that until the rapture, because right now death has a sting. Doesn't it take our loved ones? Doesn't it humiliate our loved ones? Doesn't it cause them to suffer? Death has its sting, death has its victory. But that will all change when Jesus comes, and that body sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption.

Come on, you know it, you've got a perishable body. You may be working hard against the advance of age, but that's a losing battle. I'm not calling you to be irresponsible, just realistic. Maybe you need to hear the words of Dr. Bernie Siegel who said, "I've done research and I hate to tell you, everybody dies." Lovers, joggers, vegetarians and non smokers. I'm telling you this so that some of you who jog at five in

the morning and eat vegetables will occasionally sleep in and have an ice cream cone. It's true. Whatever you do, however hard you work, you were born with an expiration date attached to you. Time's running out, age is catching up. Everything's heading south. You'll eventually suffer from one of the five B's: baldness, bifocals, bridges, bulges, bunions. I'd actually add befuddlement. You'll just start to lose it. There was a senior citizen who was visited by a pastor and he was talking to her and eventually, as one would expect he got around to the whole thought of heaven, and he said, "You know, at your age I'd recommend you continue to think about hereafter." She says, "Pastor I think about it all the time when I go into the kitchen, the dining room, the living room, I keep asking myself, what am I here after?"

And that's where we're all headed. Okay? Corruption, corruption. Soon as we're born, we're dying. But here's the promise: some day we'll put on incorruption. We'll be given a body that won't perish, endless energy. Lasting looks, impregnable immunity. True thinking, it's all ours. And that's why D.L. Moody said to his congregation one day in Chicago, the great evangelist, the Billy Graham before the Billy Graham, "Someday you will read that D.L. Moody is dead. And when you read that in the Chicago newspapers, I want you to remember these words. D.L. Moody at that moment will be more alive than he's ever been before." Physical, personal, permanent, perfect. Look at verse 43, "Sown in dishonor, raised in glory." We're not going to spend a lot of time on this. We're going to be raised in a glorious state. Look at Philippians 3:20-21, where it says that, "This lowly body or this body of humiliation, will be transformed into a glorious body like unto Christ." But you know what? Before it's all said and done, you and I will be buried in a state of dishonor, some more than others.

Our body will eventually humiliate us. I know that's hard to believe as a young person full of vigor this morning, and you know what, you want to charge the hill, you want to take the world, but someday your body will humiliate you. Something will invade it. Something that will give out. And we'll all die in a sense in a state of dishonor, some more than others. Some of us have sadly and tragically watched our loved ones perish. We've wiped up behind them when they have no control of bodily functions. It's terrible. It's horrible. Has somebody got an answer? Yes, the gospel of Jesus Christ, because here we're promised that that body that will humiliate us, leave us in a state of indignity, will someday be raised to a state of splendor. In fact, this word glory carries the idea of brightness. I'm not sure what to do with that.

It might infer that there may be some kind of glow that radiates from the glorified body. I don't want us to be thinking heaven will be made up of a bunch of people who are walking about and they're looking like thousand watt bulbs. That's that's not what I think is mentioned, but given this, if God is a God of glory, and he dwells in an unapproachable light, and when Moses spent time with him, his face shone, maybe our body to some degree will reflect the splendor of God's glory. Beautiful thought, actually. Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, shone like the sun, and he tells us at the end of that episode, that that's what it's going to be like on the final day. And it's interesting in the very same gospel, Matthew 13:43, that it says the righteous will shine as the sun. It's interesting Revelation 21, if you're taking notes in verse 23, it says about heaven that there is no night there. There's no sun there, for God is the light.

Heaven will be a luminous place. And to some degree, I'm going to go no further than that, our bodies will reflect something of that illumination. Here's the other thought, new bodies will be powerful. Powerful. Go to verse 43, "Sown in dishonor, raised in glory." And I noticed this, back to our thought, "Sown in weakness, raised in power." Hmm, there's a layering going on here. He's building one thought on top of another and there's some continuity, but there's some discontinuity because if we're going to be incorruptible, if our bodies are going to be permanent, well, they're going to be powerful. It kind of

goes together. But I don't think it's a distinction without a distinction, and so the power that raised Jesus from the dead, that glorious power that is at work in us, will someday raise our mortal bodies from the death and supercharge them with the power of God.

We're going to be raised, given a glorious body like unto Christ, and the means by which it's going to be done according to Philippians 3:21 is the power that subdues all things. That power is going to be released in us. Our resurrection body on resurrection day will be the result to some degree, metaphorically speaking, of a lightning bolt of God's power striking our corpse infusing it with immortality, life, vitality and power and that body will stand up. Like that's what the word resurrection means, by the way, to stand up. What a picture. Someday the dead are going to stand up, raised, glorified, and a life marked by fragility will give way to a life marked by superhuman powers and abilities that transcend time and space. Remember, we saw how Jesus kind of was able to transfer himself from one place to the next place speedily, and distance and space and walls were no problem. Maybe if I was just to apply that and get to our last thought.

George Whitfield, the great English come American evangelist, means of The Great Awakening, he once humorously said, "We get tired in the work but never of the work." D.L. Moody, to quote him again, great evangelist, tireless in his gospel endeavors. He went to bed one night, he kind of rolled his rather large bulk into bed and he went to sleep almost immediately with these words on his lips, "Lord, I'm tired. Amen." I think we can all identify with that. Come on. We want to pray more. Amen? We want to pray more, but we still fall asleep on our knees. It's still hard to stay concentrated for more than 15/20 minutes praying. We want to serve the Lord more, but we still need our Sabbath. We still need our day off. We want to study harder, but you know what, study can be a wearisome experience. We want to abound in the work of the Lord. In fact, we're told to do that, verse 58, but you remember this: don't deny Your humanity. Don't deny your fallen humanity as you abound in the work of the Lord you're going to come up against boundaries called physical limitations, mental exhaustion.

But that's all going to change when we are raised with power. And in heaven we will have bodies that will allow us to do what everyone will want to do to God's glory for however long we want to do it. Boundless energy, seamless strength. It is a power that will eradicate tiredness, moods, laziness. Wonderful. Here's the last thought, very interesting. Our new bodies will be pure. Pure. Look at verse 44, It is sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." And Paul goes on to kind of develop that thought, hey, there was the first Adam who was created with a natural body and everybody that followed that Adam were born with a natural body, after the dust and after Adam. And we also add into that mix an Adam fell, so we inherited a fallen nature from Adam, the natural body marked by sin. But he said there's a second Adam, the Lord from heaven. And you know what, following the natural body, there's a spiritual body and it's not patterned after the first Adam, it's patterned after the second Adam. And the second Adam was sinless. The second Adam overcame the fall, he broke the power of death, he rose from the dead, and his body is the prototype.

So, that helps us now to come and ask, "Well, what does it mean spiritual body?" Because we're in danger at this point of going, oh, Pastor, you said it was physical, but it's not. It's spiritual. It's not a tangible body. Whatever form it is, it's not physical. No, that's not what the text is saying. It is not saying that we are floating spirits in the life to come. I think what it's saying is this. Our new body, unlike this body we inherited from the first Adam, which is natural and fallen and marred by a fleshly nature that makes us do what we don't want to do. No, no, we're going to inherit a body from the second Adam that's a spiritual body, that is a body dominated by the spirit. The best way to understand that, the resurrected body will be a body dominated by the spirit. A body fit for heaven, a body that fits the

culture of a place wherein dwells righteousness. See, if we went to heaven in our natural body, the one we inherited from the first Adam, we would be a disruptive force in heaven. We wouldn't be a fit.

But we're going to be given a spiritual body, one dominated by the spirit, and we're going to fit the climate of heaven, the culture of heaven and the company of heaven. Maybe this is me, probably me, I know you guys are all going to heaven on a spiritual cloud nine and you've got no challenges in your spiritual life, but I'll speak for myself. My whole Christian walk is contested ground. Even as a pastor, nothing comes easy. I got to fight for my sanctification. Because you see, according to Galatians 5:16-17, "Although I am the bearer of the fruit of the spirit, the flesh wars against the spirit." Same thing 1 Peter 2, verse 11, "Everything right now regarding my walk with God is contested." I got to pray until I pray. I got to work my heart up to loving lost people. I just don't get up in the morning and fall in love with a lost world. I got to work towards that. I got to bring myself to the gospel. I have a heart that truly wants to worship God, But John Calvin told me and he's right, "My heart is a factory of idols."

And there's desires and affections in my heart that get in the way of being wholly devoted to God. June and I were in Italy recently, and Fred Whitman took us to the beautiful town of Assisi. It's got a castle, it's up on the side of a hill and Italy's beautiful. We'd love to have spent a little bit more time there. This is where Francis of Assisi was, a Roman Catholic saint. You know what, I was reading about him recently and when he was speaking about his body, he called his body Brother Ass. Now, I wonder why? I can't find out fully how he articulated that, but I think the image, you get the image of an ass, a donkey. Donkeys are stubborn, uncooperative, lazy. And here's a man who aspires to follow God, love God, but you know what, his body's like an ass. It's getting in the way. He's got to discipline it. He's got to bring every thought into captivity. He's got to deny bodily appetites so that he can pursue Christ more fully. You get the point.

And that's the point, that natural body inherited from Adam, that's shot through with a sin nature and fleshiness that's fallen, that's gone. And there's going to come a day when holiness is natural for you and me. Where praying is a cinch, and praise our first joy, and the vision of God occupies everything about us. That's coming. And so I agree with John. No wonder he says at the end of the book of the Revelation, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." I'm ready for that. Are you not? Because it's already begun, right? It's already begun. 2 Corinthians 5:17, "The old has passed away and all is becoming new." And I see that. I'm not what I once was, but I'm not what I want to be. But someday I will be all that I desire for his glory. When the old will have fully gone and the new will have fully come, Revelation 21. We'll get there in a few weeks.

Let me quote Joni here and begin to wrap up. We had Joni here recently, Beth and the ministry here stays in touch with Joni and friends. They're a resource to us. You know her story. She was here. What a vicious woman, a woman that's basically sat in a wheelchair 8/10ths of her life. Can you imagine the thought of a new body? But I want to read something for her that might shock you. That is not her first anticipation in the life to come. She says she's looking forward to something even better than that. Listen to her words. "I can't wait to be clothed in righteousness without a trace of sin. True, it would be wonderful to stand, stretch and reach to the sky, but it would be more wonderful to offer praise that is pure. I won't be crippled by distractions, disabled by insincerity. I won't be handicapped by ho-hum halfheartedness. My heart will join with yours and bubble over with effervescent adoration. We will finally be able to fellowship fully with the Father and the Son. For me, this is the best part of heaven."

Now you wouldn't have expected that from her would you? I'd go, "Hey, Joni, you're not looking forward to run the hundred meters in less than 10 seconds? Climb a mountain, wade a stream on the New

Earth?" Well, that's all going to be great, she can't wait for that. But she's like me and like you, were tired of the fight. We're tired of being less than God desires us to be, falling short of His glory again and again and again. And every part of our Christian walk a contest and a fight and someday the fight is over, and we'll be given a spiritual body dominated by the spirit. Amen. Who will deliver us from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ. Let me finish with this. I think it kind of summarizes it. I've read something of Scottish Presbyterians where my wife hails from, Robert Murray McCheyne, Andrew Bonar, and it's a great story that comes out of the life of Andrew Bonar. One of the early premillennialists, by the way, in the Scottish Presbyterian movement, and along with McCheyne a great lover of the nation of Israel.

He wrote a book on Leviticus, and he sent it to Spurgeon, and Spurgeon loved it and sent it back with this request, "Hey, send me an autograph and a photograph." They had married each other from a distance. So Bonar complies with what Spurgeon asks, and then he writes this in the flyleaf of his book. "Dear Spurgeon, Here is the book with my autograph and photograph. If you had been willing to wait a short season, you could have seen me in a better likeness, for I shall be like him when I see him as he is." It's beautiful. Bonar's kind of saying to Spurgeon, "You know what, if you look at me now in that photograph that is a shadow of my future self. You know what, Jesus is going to restore his masterpiece."

Listen folks, there's a new you and me in the future. Improved, inside and out. Gone will be the aches and the pains of this frail body. Gone will be the down drag of our sin nature. Gone will be the differential between what we want to be and what we truly are. Because of the risen and reigning Christ we will possess a body marked by optimum health, harmony and holiness. And what we want to be, we shall be. For we shall see him like he is. If you're here this morning or listening and you're not saved you have a whole different future, my friend, and a whole different experience. And none of its good, and none of its happy, and none of its joyful. Some will be raised to everlasting life, but the Bible says in Daniel 12:2 some will be raised to everlasting contempt. Some will have a beauty attached to them like the grandeur of Jesus and some will be marked by the revulsion of a demon. My friend, Jesus said in John 11:25-26, "I'm the resurrection and the life. Though a man die, yet shall he live." Put your trust in Jesus Christ. He has overcome the grave. He has covered our sins through his death. He wants to bring purpose and hope and direction to your life.

Trust him today, so that when you die you'll be more alive than you've ever been before. Father, we thank you for our time in the word. I pray that we would cultivate that mindset that we are but shadows of our future selves. That would help us to temper our expectations. Maybe temper our grumbling a little bit about our aches and pains. Realize sadly it's part of the world we live in marked by sin, because of one man's sin death entered the world. We live in a state of fallenness. Bodies are born mangled, brains that don't function fully, hearts that are weak. Lord, help us to understand the spiritual and theological framework of all of that and then inject into that the hope of the gospel as we've been hearing from Paul, that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead and he's the prototype. And our sins can be forgiven and our body can be raised, and we can enter into a life ahead of this life, which was the life we lost because of Adam's disobedience. A life gained for us in the suffering of Jesus Christ.

Oh, Lord, we love you, we marvel at your kindness. We thank you when it comes to death, we sorrow not as those who have no hope. We lay our loved ones in the grave. We sow them into the ground knowing that something more glorious will burst forth. We thank you we'll know each other. We try to imagine the new earth with the nations and the different races of people reflecting Your glory and living

in harmony. We don't need the UN to attempt that, Jesus will bring it about. Help us to live in the good of it in the glory of it, for we ask and pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.