

SERMON FOCUS: I must bear the image of the man of heaven.

SERMON FUNCTION: The hearer will understand some of the characteristics of the resurrection body.

BACKGROUND: As you may recall, the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Church at Corinth about 5 years after he had planted it. His purpose was to correct some division and some false teaching that was a problem. Today, we are toward the end of his letter, when the subject has turned to resurrection from the dead.

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Corinthians 15:35-39

INTRODUCTION:

I would venture to say that most of us here *believe* in resurrection, even if we don't understand it. Paul takes this portion of his letter to address a couple of questions that people are likely to have about the resurrection of our bodies. Since resurrection is in our future, it is worth taking a look at this.

MESSAGE:

1. OUR RESURRECTION BODIES ARE INDIVIDUAL

- a. (38) *But God gives it a body as he wants, and to each of the seeds its own body.*
- b. (41) *In fact, one star differs from another star in splendor.*
- c. Paul uses two points of comparison here to describe how we will be in the resurrection.
 - i. A seed grows not into another seed, but another whole plant. Each plant, while they may bear similarities, is also unique.
 - ii. Stars are all magnificent to look at. But they are not exactly the same. Each one is somewhat distinct from the others.
- d. I don't believe that it's possible to know exactly what form our resurrected bodies will take, but we do have some clues. I do believe that our resurrection bodies will be recognizable.

2. OUR RESURRECTION BODIES ARE RECOGNIZABLE

- a. *So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his disciples the news. Just then Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They came up, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there." -- Matthew 28:8-10 (CSB)*
- b. *A week later his disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don't be faithless, but*

believe.” Thomas responded to him, “My Lord and my God!” -- John 20:26-28 (CSB)

- c. Mary didn’t immediately recognize Jesus, thinking he was the gardener, but when He said, “Mary” she knew him. The Emmaus disciples did not immediately recognize Jesus, but did when He blessed bread and broke it. This seems to indicate that Jesus was different enough in His physical appearance to throw them off, but also that there was something definitely recognizable about Him.
- d. Since Jesus is referred to as the *firstborn from the dead* (Col 1:18), it seems that our resurrection will be similar to His in that we will be recognizable to our loved ones.
- e. So we see that our resurrection bodies are individual and recognizable, but we must also recognize that they are material.

3. OUR RESURRECTION BODIES ARE MATERIAL

- a. We do not become angels. Angels are a separate created being that are not human. We as humans are distinct among God’s creatures.
- b. We do not become ghosts. *As they were saying these things, he himself stood in their midst. He said to them, “Peace to you!” But they were startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost. “Why are you troubled?” he asked them. “And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.” Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet. But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” So they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. -- Luke 24:36-43 (CSB)*
 - i. His body is physical
 - ii. His body is real
 - iii. His body had characteristics of his earthly body\
 - iv. His body functioned: He ate.
- c. Like Jesus, we will be resurrected with real, physical bodies. But unlike our current bodies, our resurrection bodies are incorruptible.

4. OUR RESURRECTION BODIES ARE INCORRUPTIBLE

- a. (42-44) *So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.*
- b. Everything about our current bodies which cause them to be weak, sick, and dying is gone because corruption is finally removed from us. This is the case because our resurrection bodies bear the full image of Christ.

5. OUR RESURRECTION BODIES BEAR THE FULL IMAGE OF CHRIST

- a. (49) *And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.*

- b. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. -- Titus 2:11-13 (CSB)
 - c. We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit. -- 2 Corinthians 3:18 (CSB)
 - d. What we are working to practice in our lives now will finally be complete in the resurrection. We will no longer have to worry about sin because we will finally be completely free from it. We can also call others to be free from sin.
6. THE GOSPEL IN SIMPLE FORM (adapted from Dr. James Merritt).
- a. Bad News: We are all sinners separated from God.
 - b. Worst News: There is nothing we can do about our sin problem.
 - c. Good News: Christ did for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
 - d. Best News: Salvation and eternal life are a free gift, but you must receive it.

FOUR QUESTIONS:

1. What do you hear God saying to you?
2. What keeps you from doing that?
3. If you were to do that, what might be a good first step?
4. Who are you going to tell?

INVITATION HYMN # 290 I Am Thine, O Lord