



The Resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders, please use these questions as a guide for discussion. Please don't feel like you have to go through every one!)

Warm-Up

1. When you think about resurrection and life after death, what questions or hopes come to mind?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

2. Paul begins with the question: "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Why do you think this is such an important question?
3. Paul uses the image of a seed becoming a plant (vv. 36–38). What does this image teach us about the relationship between our current bodies and our resurrection bodies?
4. In what ways are you tempted to live as though this life is the main event, rather than seeing it as the "seed" of what is to come?
5. The sermon described this as "continuity with change." What stays the same, and what is changed?
6. In verses 39–41, Paul points to different kinds of bodies in creation. How does this strengthen his argument that God can give us renewed bodies?
7. Looking at verses 42–44, what are the four contrasts Paul makes between our present bodies and our resurrection bodies?
8. What do you think Paul means by a "spiritual body"? Why is it important that this still means a real, physical body?
9. What do we learn from Jesus' resurrection about what ours may be like?
10. How does the hope of a renewed body shape the way we think about ageing, sickness, pain, or disability now?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

11. According to verses 50–53, what happens when Christ returns?
12. Paul says, "Death is swallowed up in victory." What does this tell us about the power of Jesus' resurrection?
13. How does knowing that death has lost its sting change the way Christians grieve and face death?
14. Verse 58 calls us to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. What might this look like in everyday life, work, family, church, and the ordinary routines of the week?
15. The sermon emphasised that nothing done for the Lord is in vain. What is one area of your life right now where you need to remember this truth?

PRAY: *Gracious God, we thank you for the sure and certain hope of eternal life in resurrected glorious bodies all through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Renew us in this hope and may this hope drive us into sharing it with others and to stand firm in it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

TITLE: The Resurrection Body

PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:35-58

LOCATION: St John's Wishart 9AM

BI: We will rise again physically with a renewed spiritual body

STRUCTURE:

- VV35-49 - Raised Imperishable
- VV50-58 - Christ is Victorious

- If anyone still remembers a few Sundays ago, we were celebrating Easter!
- And in the church calendar, Easter isn't just a day, but it's a season but even if you don't follow a church calendar (or even if you do) - the resurrection of Jesus is something that we should be celebrating and remembering every week, if not, every day.
- A few weeks ago, we began a two part look at 1 Corinthians 15. This is one of the most important chapters and detailed chapters that look at the resurrection of Jesus and our resurrection.
- In VV1-34, we saw that Jesus' resurrection and our resurrection are completely linked! Just as Jesus was raised, we too will be raised from the dead.
- And we also saw that if we don't have the hope of the resurrection, if we deny Jesus resurrection or our resurrection for that matter - we are most of all to be pitied.
 - IF Jesus did not rise, then what's the point of following him?
 - AND if WE don't rise, then we may as well eat, drink and be merry
- A christianity without a risen and victorious Jesus, is useless. There's no point in being here!
- But Jesus' resurrection assures us that we too will rise.
- But what will this actually look like?
- What will our resurrected bodies be like?
- Well - that's what the second half of Chapter 15 is addressing.

- In the US there was a fictional political comedy starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus (who played Elaine Bennis in Seinfeld) called Veep
- She plays the vice-president of the united states who then tries to make a pitch to go for the presidency.
- And her campaign slogan was this: "Continuity with Change"
- Seems like a bit of a hollow statement doesn't it! What does it even mean!
- Funnily enough - In 2016, Malcolm Turnbull when he ousted Tony Abbott as Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal party described his new era as one of "Continuity and Change"
- But here in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul describes the resurrected body as having "Continuity with Change"
- Yes, we will have our bodies - but they will be transformed, renewed, and made so much better than they are now.

- **Raised Imperishable**
- V35 "But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain."
- Paul again uses the rhetorical device of bringing in another voice.
- And this person asks about how this could all possibly happen!
 - Remember - in the greco-Roman world, the concept of resurrection was a foreign one! As far as they were concerned, once you were dead, you were dead! No hope of resurrection or anything further, you just became worm food in the ground!
- They didn't even think about what God could do - and so that's why Paul considers this type of person a fool. They are a fool in the sense that they don't consider what God could do for them. They only thought in worldly terms.

- But Paul wants them to see in V35-41 that God is the one who gives different bodies. He is the creator and the one who can give better bodies to us.
- And firstly, Paul uses an image from agriculture.
 - *Now if you know me at all - you should know by now that if you need any gardening tips, do not come and ask me!*
- But when you plant seeds into the ground - you expect it to be transformed into something better!
- The seed in a sense isn't the main game - the seed in a sense disappears and 'dies' to give way to the main event - the plant!
- And so - Paul is saying here that:
- Our bodies right now aren't the main event, but will die and will be transformed into something so much greater!
- Paul is saying that the main event of life isn't the right here and right now - but REAL LIFE is to come.
 - The best is yet to come! You can't live your best life now, because the best life will come when the resurrection happens!
- And our bodies now are like seeds. A faint prologue of what is to come and what might be.
- The sort of body that we will have won't be exactly like this one that we have now - but these current bodies will be transformed into something greater!
- And this is God's doing.
- In VV39-41 - Paul outlines from creation that different parts of creation have different types of bodies.
- And that there is a difference between earthly bodies, and heavenly bodies - all given by God.
- So If God can give different types of bodies and flesh to different parts of creation, then he should be able to raise us with a new and transformed and better body!

- V42: "So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is 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"
- Using the metaphor of the seed - Paul applies what he's just been laying out:
- Our earthly bodies, once our lungs have stopped breathing, hearts stopped pumping, brain signals stopped working, and our flesh starts decaying - is going to be raised and changed!
- What's sown perishable, will be raised imperishable!
 - That is - immortal! Our new bodies won't die!
 - There'll be no more joint pain, no more medical appointments, no more cataract surgeries!
 - No more decay!
- What's sown in dishonour, or in humility, or in meekness - will be raised in glory
 - Our bodies will be amazing! So much better and greater!
- What is weak, will be raised in power.
- What is natural or earthly - will be raised as spiritual
 - Our bodies will be changed into a spiritual body.
 - Now - Paul isn't saying that we will be spirits! Or just souls floating in space...no, notice how Paul still describes us as having a body!
 - But a body that's been perfected and is able to live out God's will perfectly.
 - I think this is a fulfilment and culmination of the promises of God to Israel in Ezekiel 36 when God promises a new heart, a new spirit and putting His Spirit in us - taking away the heart of stone and giving us a heart of flesh!
 - Yes that work began when Jesus came 2000 years ago - but it will be completed when Jesus returns again and we have a new, imperishable and glorious spiritual body.
- What does this look like in practice? Well - in Vv45-49, Paul tells us that we will be like Jesus when he rose again.
- Paul has already described Jesus as the firstfruit or the demonstration of what is to come back in V20
- So our bodies will be like his resurrected body.

- And what we know about Jesus body after he was resurrected was that it was different...
 - Some people didn't recognise him at first glance;
 - He was able to enter locked rooms (although he could have probably done that before!)
 - It was glorious - In Paul's encounter with him in Damascus, Paul was blinded by a great light!
- But it was the same!
 - It is a body that people can see and touch - he wasn't a ghost or a spirit!
 - He ate and drank with his friends - he wasn't a ghost or a spirit!
- His body (which he still has today seated at God's right hand in heaven!) has continuity with change - just as our bodies will be!

- Now - you might have some more questions about what this would be like...I do too!
- Some common ones are:
 - *What age will we be? Will we all be in our peak in our early 30's before cell death kicks in!*
 - *Will we recognise other people who we know and love?*
 - *Will we have boundless energy and no need for sleep?*
 - *Or most importantly for me - Will I be able to eat gluten again!?*
- Sadly - We can't answer those with 100% confidence
- But even these types of questions are probably far too small as well! Because our transformed heavenly bodies will be so much more glorious and greater - that maybe these categories simply won't exist!
 - Remember - these earthly bodies are just a naked seed...the difference between what we have now and what we will have is night and day - just like the seed and the flower.

- **Christ is Victorious**
- But how will all of this happen?
- All through God's amazing power and Christ's victory:
- V50 "I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality."
- When that trumpet sounds, when Christ returns - then we'll be changed. Our bodies will rise - not just resuscitated to die again, not walking corpses - no, radically and gloriously transformed.
- The death and decay that started at the fall, will be finally stopped forever.
- \ death will be defeated.

- V54 "When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

- Just yesterday, across our nation at all sorts of ANZAC day services or memorials, tens of thousands of people would have sung these words in the Hymn - Abide with Me
 - "I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless,
 - ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
 - Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
 - I triumph still, if thou abide with me."
- But this isn't some kind of sentimental wishy washy nice saying as people probably thought...this isn't a case of "oh they're not really dead as long as we keep their memory alive"
- No - this is the real life for all those who trust in Jesus!
 - Death's power is broken because of the resurrection of Jesus...
 - The grave is merely a gateway to eternity because of the resurrection of Jesus!

- We can even look death in the face with a certain amount of joy and expectation of the new life with new transformed, glorious, spiritual, immortal bodies!
- And yes, we may mourn the loss of loved ones - but hope in the fact that those who trust in Jesus are safe with him for eternity!
- This is our reality!
- All through Jesus:
- V56 "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Christ is victorious over sin...victorious over death...through his death on the cross and mighty resurrection - and we get the spoils of that great victory.
- He's our champion, our forerunner, our first fruit, our only hope in life and death - Christ alone.

- But until then, what are we called to do? Do we just twiddle our fingers, kill time, watch the clock and just wait for this all to happen?
- Most certainly not:

- V58 "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."
- Since Jesus is victorious, since Jesus is risen and we will rise with him victorious over death in new glorious resurrected bodies - stand firm in him and work for him.

- Firstly - stand firm and let nothing move you.
 - Don't swerve, don't get distracted, don't be put off, don't wander away - stay firm in Jesus.
 - Don't let career opportunities move you
 - Don't let your relationship status move you
 - Don't let your sex drive move you
 - Don't let your health move you
 - Don't let work colleagues move you
 - Don't let your children move you
 - Let nothing move you from your commitment to the risen Lord Jesus!
 - Stand firm in him!!
 - He is our only hope in life and death so let nothing distract or hinder your relationship with him!
- Second - give yourself to the work of the Lord
 - Give your life, your heart, your money, your talents, your time, completely into his hands.
 - If you're in the workplace - work for the the Lord
 - If you're at the local club or men's shed - work for the Lord
 - If you're at a school parent's meeting - do it for the Lord
 - If you're at home behind closed doors - work for the Lord
 - And when you're here as we gather as God's church - do it for the Lord!
 - Serve for the Lord, give for the Lord, sing for the Lord, turn up early and take it seriously for the Lord!
 - Give yourself completely over to him - and your labour is not in vain.
- Here is the wonderful news:
 - If this life is all that there is and we are destined for death and decay - everything that we do will be in vain. It'll be pointless! Meaningless!
 - BUT - If we are destined for resurrected life, with new glorious bodies all through Jesus - then nothing that we will do for Jesus will be in vain.

- There are a lot of things that we do that feels endlessly mundane and sometimes useless
 - Washing up, doing life-admin, checking emails, doing laundry, changing nappies - all of these types of things could be considered mundane and just downright boring!
 - BUT if they are done for the Lord - they aren't a waste of time and aren't in vain!!

- Sometimes you might have a friend or colleague or family member who you've been praying for constantly to come to know Jesus and you've had conversations, and you've invited them and it just seems like you're coming up against an immovable force! Remember - your labor is not in vain.
- Some of the jobs around here at St John's may seem mundane and repetitive and sometimes just hard work - like doing the washing up, or mowing the lawns at another working bee, or helping with some of the admin, or cleaning the toilets, or cutting up craft for the children, or cooking a meal for youth group, or setting up for communion - but remember - it's not in vain!
- Why? Because it's all in service of the Risen Lord who has defeated death and will return to transform us and bring us into his eternal Kingdom.
 - Stand firm in him, work for him - and remember that nothing done for the Lord is wasted.