



Last Sunday afternoon, I received a text message from a mom telling me about something that happened in their house that afternoon. She was telling her husband that she was going to plan on doing a Meijer pick-up order on Monday or Tuesday. Her husband said that sounded good, but their very young child, who was listening to this conversation, began to speak with a very concerned way. He said in a matter-of-fact tone, “No Mom. You can’t do a Meijer order tomorrow. Church said today that we are going to die tomorrow. So you can’t do a Meijer order because we are going to die tomorrow.” I laughed, but also felt so bad for the little one when I heard this. This child heard some of the sermon, but walked away with the wrong conclusion. Thankfully, the parents were able to answer his confusion. While the situation in our home wasn’t as significant as this other one, at our lunch table, some of my children were confused about the idea of “dying” daily, too.

Maybe you’ve listened to the message and there’s a little confusion about that, too. What does it mean to die daily and why is it so important to live that way as a Christian. Well, from a very basic perspective, **to die daily means to actually *live* for the honor, pleasure and praise of Jesus – loving God and loving others. Why then do we call this dying? Because it means we die to ourselves, our feelings, our preferences as the center of our decisions.** In dying to ourselves, we actually experience and anticipate the freedom of resurrection living.

This is actually quite important for us to understand as we enter into this lengthy, confusing paragraph that we’re learning from today. As Paul has been emphasizing the importance of a future physical resurrection from the dead – for all who turn from their sinfulness and turn to Jesus for cleansing and wholeness with God – the readers could then wonder how our current, fallen, broken bodies matter and play into this future resurrection.

At this point in this chapter, people could come to two different (wrong) conclusions. Let me put it this way: from a Greek philosophical perspective, there were people who would say that mortal bodies could not enter into a heavenly realm. Paul actually assumes the truthfulness of that statement in this chapter. As a result, some in Corinth were then saying, “Therefore, we won’t have bodies in the future.” In other words, a future resurrection must get read of this earthly body. So, there will be no “bodies.” To that, Paul contradicts them. Why limit God? God will give us new bodies in the future resurrection.

But then you could hear this and think, “Ok, so we’re going to get new bodies in the future resurrection; so, who cares about this body!” This is how some Christians have spoken about this world (or even our bodies). It’s all going to burn in the end, so who cares, right? Wrong!

In this paragraph Paul not only reveals to the Corinthians that God can do way more than our small minds can perceive by giving us resurrected bodies, but he also shows how our future bodies connect to our current bodies. Hint: they’re connected through daily dying (or as Paul’s illustration is here, by being sown in the ground). I’ll explain more as we move forward, but keep that in mind.

In all of this, Paul is working to emphasize his bigger point in this chapter to be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (see v. 58). With this understanding, let me give you the main idea of this sermon: **Because of Jesus, our mortal, earthly bodies will be raised to immortal, heavenly bodies.** As we move into the text, we’re going to ask three questions of this big idea: how will this happen? Why will this happen? When will this happen? So, let’s start with the “How.”

How? (vv. 36-41)

Look at verse 35 and the beginning of 36 with me: ³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” ³⁶ You foolish person!¹

Paul is bringing up a make-believe situation. It’s like a student is asking a teacher a question. I believe the first question is answered beginning in verse 50, and the second question is answered here. Please stay with me as we work through this. Some of you may not have liked school and so you weren’t interested in listening to teachers, but I hope that if you listen to this, you will benefit here, especially as we move into the next point. So, let’s look at the question at-hand: With what kind of body do they come? Again, remember that Greek thought was that our bodies couldn’t make it to the celestial realm because our bodies are merely earthly. Well, Paul has already stated there will be a future physical resurrection; so, now the potential question of an imaginary student could be, “What kind of body will we have then?” That seems like a reasonable question, but verse 36 starts off with Paul saying, “You foolish person.” The idea seems to be that the question is a snarky one. In essence, people might say, “How is it even possible to have a celestial *body*?” Here again, like in previous situations in Corinth, they’re elevating their idea of what spiritual means, and they’re getting it all wrong. To them, it was impossible to have an immortal body because mortality and a physical body went together like bread and butter. But this is why Paul says “You foolish person.”

Keep in mind what “foolish” means from a biblical perspective. A fool, according to Proverbs, was someone who did not have the fear and relational knowledge of God. They didn’t consider God as the impetus and reason for all of life. So, they found answers to living simply in what they could see and feel and prefer. By Paul using an example situation of a student asking a question, he’s indirectly confronting some of the Corinthian Christians. They have believed on Jesus, but now they’re acting as if they don’t believe in God. Instead of God shaping their thinking, they’re limiting God and assuming there are things he cannot do because it simply doesn’t make sense to their finite minds. This is foolish.

Ventura, it’s always foolish for us to tell God, or assume that, he can’t do something when in reality the problem is that we cannot perceive a solution. If I can’t figure something out, I shouldn’t limit my view of God. This is *my* problem, not his! May we never play the part of a fool and limit God in our understanding.

Now, while Paul calls the person a fool, he doesn’t walk away and say, “Forget it! I’m done.” Thankfully, he goes on to explain how a future bodily resurrection connects to our daily living today. He shows us *how* we will be given heavenly bodies.

First, he says we’ll be given heavenly bodies **through death (vv. 36-38)**. Let’s read verses 36-38: ³⁶ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow is not the body

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 15:35–36.

that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.²

The example Paul gives here is of a seed turning into a plant. A seed must *die* in order to become a plant. With this illustration, Paul is using a natural analogy to confront them. They were only thinking in natural terms and came to a conclusion that there couldn't be a physical resurrection. Fools! Look a little harder. Look at seeds! They die and live sprouts out of them! And, the seed is essential. The specific seed always leads to the specific type of plant. So it is with our current bodies. If you have trusted in Jesus, this current body is like a dying seed that will sprout someday with a resurrected body.

All of this is done **by God's will (vv. 38-41)**. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. ³

Do not limit God based on your limited perceptions. Verse 38 starts with "God gives it a body as he has chosen. . . ." Each seed is unique for each plant. But then Paul moves his illustration further within the created realm. God can give all sorts of bodies to different beings. Humans and animals are different for their intended purposes. But then, even with animals, we see birds and fish. Why does Paul emphasize them? Because birds have the body fit for the air. Fish have a body for water.

Then we move to heavenly and earthly bodies. There's a different glory seen in each. Even if we gaze into the sky, there are different kinds of lights. The moon reflects light and has a different body than the sun. But even among the stars, there's different types of glory revealed through each.

So here, we see that God gives all different kinds of bodies appropriate for their purpose and these bodies are appropriate for their environment. But even the bodies in one environment, while similar (like stars) are still unique. By God's will, I think Paul is saying that our bodies are like dying seeds being made ready for a future glory in the heavens. And, guess what, we won't all be cookie cutters, looking the same. But like the stars in varying glories, we'll all be unique there – even in similar ways like we're unique here. But God will make our bodies fit for perfection.

Hopefully I haven't lost you up to this point because as we move forward we're getting to some amazing applications for us today. Up to this point, we should at least say, "Ok, Paul, I don't get it, but I understand that God wills to give us resurrected bodies. I also know he can, even if it doesn't make sense to me. But, if we're getting future resurrected bodies, then does this body matter at all?" Let me ask you a question, "Does a seed matter?" Yes. Does it matter what kind of seed you use or can you just use any seed? Oh, the type of seed matters. If you want corn, you want corn seed, right? So, let's get back to the big idea: Because of Jesus, our mortal, earthly bodies will be raised to immortal, heavenly bodies.

Why will our earthly bodies be raised? We see the answer in verses 42-46 as Paul emphasizes this word picture of being sown. These bodies connect to our resurrected bodies. Let's read verses 42-44 first: ⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 15:36–38.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 15:38–41.

⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴

Verse 42 starts with “So,” and Paul is saying that this illustration of being sown and also of having appropriate bodies for environments based in God’s will is to be applied to the resurrection. So, the end of verse 44 says “If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.” That’s actually not a helpful English Translation. The Greek terms behind “physical body” could also be translated as “a soulish body” or “a body kindled by the soul.” And the spiritual body can be understood as “a body kindled by the Spirit.” Essentially, these physical bodies we have now essentially house our souls. They’re the “tent,” as Paul terms it elsewhere. Everybody is born with a body and soul. But not everyone is kindled by the Spirit. In these verses Paul shows us the difference then between this earthly body and the future, resurrected one.

This earthly body is sown in dishonor and weakness. It is a natural body – made for this world. But just like a seed is made to die and turn into a new body; so, our natural bodies are made to die and turn into a new body. This new body is raised in glory and power. It is completely spiritual. Can you imagine that with me, Ventura? As most of you know, I’ve been dealing with chronic pain for almost four years now. I’m still trying to figure out what’s going on and if there’s a solution. Can I imagine a body that will never fail? But even more than that, I’ve been dealing with a mind and emotions that suffer from the affects of sin. This flesh can be tempted and tried. But imagine a day being free from all temptations. There won’t be a whiff of sin. There will be no desire for it. Instead, you’ll be seeking to fully and freely worship and praise God for all eternity! The new bodies are drastically different from this.

And yet, those new bodies are connected to this because Paul uses the term “sown” multiple times in these verses. Mark that word in your Bibles. Some think that to be “sown” in weakness and dishonor is Paul talking about the day you’re buried in the ground – like a seed. But a body with a soul isn’t buried. When you die and are put in the grave, your soul is present with the Lord. In addition, when you’re dead, you’re not weak. You’re dead! And dying isn’t necessarily a dishonor.

Ok, so what’s the point? Paul has already spoken of dying daily, and I believe he’s connecting that daily dying to the analogy of being sown. In other words, he’s saying that all of us who trust in Christ are actually *being sown* right now. Our current bodies are being put to death daily by the power of Jesus and the working of the Holy Spirit in us. Therefore, we’re dying daily, and as we’re dying to selfish, pride-filled impulses, God is actually forming us and working his life in and through us until the future day when the sprout of the new body comes from us! So, the future body is different, but the future resurrected body is connected to this one as we die daily.

Why will our mortal, earthly bodies be raised? Because **our mortal bodies are being sown** right now! Paul then moves on to give an illustration in verses 45-46: ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁵

Since God has willed for these bodies to be seeds, then the logic must follow that there has to be a sprout coming from that seed. Now, in giving this illustration, Paul goes to the two representatives of humanity. Adam became a living being – and all people come from Adam. But then the Last Adam, who

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 15:42–44.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 15:45–46.

is Jesus, became a life-giving Spirit. Here we were as bodies with souls, but because of our sinfulness, we are seeds that would simply die in the ground and then be judged for our sins – experiencing death in a place called Hell, for all eternity away from God. Oh, please hear me, if you do not know and trust Jesus, then you are turning from Life. You are embracing death. But Paul says here that Jesus is the life-giving Spirit. He gives life to us. Adam came first and there's death. Jesus came second, and there's life! Have you experienced his life? Jesus, the incorruptible one took on corruptibility. Jesus, the one to whom belongs all honor and worship, took on dishonor in this world – despised and rejected by men. Jesus, who before coming in the flesh, had no weakness. He is God! Yet, he took on weakness. He took on a natural body. And, he did all of this so that we, who are corruptible might put on incorruptibility. We, who were dishonorable would put on honor. We who are weak, would be able to put on power. We who have bodies of this world might put on bodies of the new world!

Do you see the glorious grace of Jesus? But listen carefully, all of this is to speak to us today. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord because we know that our dying daily isn't in vain. Our labor for the Lord isn't in vain. We're being sown. Whether you're dying to your pride-filled desires for more attention or fame from others or you're dying to your reputation and what people think of you or you're dying to sleep in order to serve your children. If done in dependence on the Lord and for his glory, it all matters. And, if you're experiencing like life-circumstances feel like death. You're discouraged because various things are coming at you and you don't feel like you can handle it – remember that you're being sown. It feels like death because it is a dying of sorts. Pray that God's grace works through you with hope and strength. You know he's sowing you for future resurrection and what a glorious day that will be! And that leads us to the final question.

When will this happen (vv. 47-49)? Look at verses 47-49: ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. ⁶

Adam, the man of dust, was first – and we are all of dust. But Jesus is from Heaven. And all those who are connected to Jesus through turning to him in faith, will not be of dust. They will be of Heaven – bearing not Adam's image, but Jesus' image. When will this be? I believe when Jesus returns. Paul says the second man is *from Heaven*. Jesus came down to this earth, lived the human life, and then ascended to Heaven. But he's coming *from Heaven* again. And when he comes from Heaven, we will be like him. This is what the apostle John says in 1 John 3: ²**Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.** ³**And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.** ⁷ Everyone who has this hope purifies themselves today even as Jesus is pure because they will be like him.

This is Paul's point here, too! Our daily dying is our being sown. **Because of Jesus, our mortal, earthly bodies will be raised to immortal, heavenly bodies. Therefore, let's live like it today! May we love God and love others, esteeming others as more significant than ourselves. This "dying" signifies to the world that we believe there is a future resurrection to come. We are being sown for glory.**

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 15:47–49.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 3:2–3.

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