



Topic	The Resurrection Body: Our Living Hope
Reference	1 Corinthians 15: 34-49
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INTRODUCTION:

Let me take this opportunity today to wish everyone of the FBC family a blessed Easter ,especially some of you who are even overseas and some new friends who have decided to join us on our Website. Do come back to our services every Sunday and let me remind you we have our discipleship bible study available on our website just click on the Gamma photo on the bottom and every week there will be a new video on the Sermon on the Mount and you can join any of our groups on the zoom meeting for a lively discussion .This is the first Easter in our history that all over the world believers have celebrated physically part because of the Covid-19 crisis. Be that as it may, there is no better time to remind the world of the significance of Easter because so many people are hunkering down in fear. There was a Harvard university health service publication that outlined 15 measures that one can take to manage the anxiety and fear and a constant feeling of being besieged during this Covid crisis. There were interesting useful advice like keeping things in perspective which means don't constantly dwell on the issue of the pandemic, engage in activities that give you a sense of mastery like

- Doing your garden
- Cooking a great meal and taking time over it.
- Do an online project with friends.

You see Covid-19 take away your control and we are most anxious when we lose as sense of control. The other techniques include avoid rumination on regrets and keeping connected with online meetings to share feelings. We employ many techniques to deal with crisis and tragedy.

In the 2017 terrorist attack on Manchester at the Ariana Grande Concert injured dozens and killed 22 people and the response was an outpouring of sympathy and flowers and ..Ariana Grande came back to sing, Somewhere over the rainbow ..a lovely but wish washy song about wishing upon a star and waking up when clouds are far behind . It soothes your feelings but wishing upon a star is hardly a tangible hope we can place our future on is it? Then there are the realists like Steve Jobs,

'No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because death is very likely the single best invention of life. It is life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true. Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life'

Steve was diagnosed with a pancreatic cancer ...a rare curable kind which he ignored ...right clearing out the old to make way for the new? Isn't that what he said? Later on when he wanted medical treatment it was too late...His autobiographer Walter Isaacsoj wrote

'I think he felt: if you ignore something you don't want to exist, you can have magical thinking. It had worked for him in the past. He would regret it.'



THE RESURRECTION BODY IS OUR LIVING HOPE:

Brothers and sisters we cannot just change our minds focus on somewhere over there rainbow. We need in times like these real hopea living hope. The apostle Peter wrote in his first letter in chapter 1: 3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

A living hope is something you can base your life ,focus your thoughts and energies on that will result in life and not death. The world offers us up beat songs , tired out old Greek philosophies that basically tell us if we cannot change the situation we just have to change our perspective on the fear. Of like Steve just closed your mind and believe it will go away. Peter is talking about the crux of Easter a living Hope.

Let’s turn our attention to today’s passage which is a section out of the greatest passage ever written about our living hope which is Paul’s 15th chapter of his letter to the Corinthians. Look at verse 35..

A. How are the dead raised ? (Vv 35 -41)

But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” Paul is answering his detractors who do not believe in the resurrection at least not in the manner which is what our Lord expects of us. They are asking how can one be resurrected? It’s not possible. He answers this by arguing from the pattern from the nature of creation in verses 35-41. Next in verse 42- 44 he answers the question of what kind of resurrection body shall we expect.

The last section in verse 45-49 he answers the obvious question how do we receive this resurrection hope but deciding which of the prototypes of humanity shall commit to firstly Adam who brought sin and death or Jesus who gives life spirit.

Firstly how are the dead raised?

My wife and I were musing over the photos of our long time friends and school mates , young and vibrant in those days but not ...the ladies look alike AH So’s and men look like Ah Pak’s. We have followed our friends for 30 years and seen the ravages of time we cannot imagine a new body with resurrection. This is because we don’t have a paradigm in which to process the data and extrapolate to resurrection we cannot imagine how we can progress from point A to B...

This is how everyone ages there is continuity even though a person ages you can still recognize the person. Even research in to longevity takes us form our current life to longer life ...Good news for you if you are a worm because scientists have been able to extend the Life span of a worm called Caenorhabditis elegans to up to 6 times the normal life span....but there is a price to pay there must be a metabolic hormone to be inhibited and their reproductive systems removed. Good news if you a fruit fly...By activating a gene that kills off unhealthy cells, they have managed to extend the month-long lifespan of the fruit fly by 50 to 60 percent.

The Alcor Life Extension Foundation, most often referred to as Alcor, is an American nonprofit organization based in Scottsdale, Arizona, United States. Alcor performs cryonics, the freezing of human corpses and brains in liquid nitrogen after legal death, with hopes of resurrecting and restoring them to full health in the event some new technology can be developed in the future. As of August 31, 2019, Alcor had 1,731 members, including 172 who have died and whose corpses have been subject to cryonic processes.[4][5] 96 bodies had only their head preserved.

In more primitive societies like the Toraja people in the Sulawesi Islands of Indonesia, the people extend the life of their loved ones by preserving them and keeping them with them in the house for months and for some people over years and years before putting them in a coffin. Even those who are put in coffins are brought out after several years to be dusted down have their photos taken with new relatives as if they were a living breathing member of the family. These people are actually supposed to be Christian.

So the idea of a resurrection body is very difficult for us to comprehend . We don't have any categories to imagine what resurrection would be like. For years and years popular Christian culture have insisted that when we die our soul goes up to heaven and we will spend eternity in heaven floating in the clouds playing the violins in some heavenly choir. There was a BBC survey in 2010 which showed the majority of Christians and Active Christians those attending weekly church services believed in the afterlife. However when the question was asked if they believed in the bodily resurrection as described in the bible there was a 32% drop in the belief amongst active Christians and 41% drop amongst all professing Christians.

All in there is a solid 25% of all Christians who do not believe in the bodily resurrection as documented in the bible. The same skepticism exists amongst the believers in Paul's time so they pose the two questions.

How is it possible for one be resurrected? What kind of body does the resurrection produce?

To answer these questions Paul gives us three examples in God's creation that will allow us to break through our usual closed way of thinking.

Analogies from Creation vv 34- 41

Firstly, the analogy of the seed which is a particular appropriate analogy because ancient societies were mainly agrarian ones which depended in large part upon farming so they were very familiar with seeds

36 You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 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 uses the analogy of the seed to show that even in nature there are two principles of life continuity and discontinuity. A tiny Chia seed looks almost microscopic in my hands, can you guess what a fully grown Chia plant looks like? The fully grown plant is thousands of times the size and complexity of the tiny seed and look at all the nutrients it packs.

There is discontinuity in the sense of the initial appearance in contrast to the final plant. There would be no way to we would have guessed it's final appearance. Yet there is the continuity because the seed becomes the plant once it is planted in the ground. Every seed has the DNA and the life that eventually become the plant it is the same life not a different life.

In this second analogy Paul invites us to look into our own world into creation...

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.

Each type of life on Earth has a different kind of body which is perfectly adapted to its own environment and is different form all other types of life form, whether it be the graceful jelly fish or the awkward penguins. In the third example Paul invites us to look up into the sky

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.*

Each of these celestial bodies we see through the wonder of the Hubble telescope is thousands of times larger than our own planet and are wondrously , infinitely more glorious than anything which we can ever imagine in our entire life time. The sheer brilliance and complexity of colour and breath-taking beauty the galaxies go beyond any human experience.

Let's summarize

God is the Creator who is responsible for radical transformation. He has decided what each seed should become and each seed undergoes radical transformation to become the plant or tree God designed it to grow into so is it not logical for you to assume He can do the same with your human body too?

God is the Creator who has created the concept of differentiation. He has created various kinds of flesh each perfectly adapted to their own environment within our world. Humans and animals on land , birds that fly and fish that are perfectly adapted to aquatic environment...and the sun and the moon and the brilliance of the stars in the heavens so we should not expect the resurrected body to be some 2nd class recycled version of the body that was buried. The resurrected body will have the glory commensurate with its eternal destiny like the stars in the heavens.

Look at what Daniel writes...

Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever

Paul is saying that in the light of what you see in creation from the humble human body to the brilliant stars in the universe, you must be a fool to doubt that He can raise up our lowly bodies body by resurrection to a body as glorious as the stars?

The problem with the many people who doubt is that they are starting out with the wrong premise....if your starting point in the journey is wrong you will wind up in the wrong place. The starting point in Paul's detractors is that there is no God. That is why Paul starts off his sentence with you Fool! The Psalmist already says in Psalm 14:1

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.

They insist that because there is no God then the world must work according to a fixed immutable set of rules or natural laws like gravity. There are no miracles because they are abnormal and non-reproducible, so they cannot be proved by science's methods and are not governed by these natural laws.

Suppose in day 1, I put a thousand ringgit in the drawer of my desk, add two thousand the next day and another thousand the day thereafter, the laws of arithmetic allow me to predict that the next time I come to my drawer, I shall find four thousand ringgit. But suppose when I next open the drawer, I find only one thousand ringgit, what shall I conclude? Or I find ten thousand ringgit?

Shall I conclude that the laws of physics have been broken? Certainly not! I might more reasonably conclude that some thief has broken the laws or some very generous person intervened and either stolen three thousand ringgit out of my drawer or added six thousand ringgit.

The fool would insist that the laws of arithmetic make it impossible to believe in the existence of such a thief or the possibility of his intervention. On the contrary, it is the normal workings of those laws that have exposed the existence and activity of the thief."

The second question Paul answers is...What will the resurrection body be like?
Paul goes back to the seed analogy to answer the question in verse 42-44

B. What will our resurrection bodies be like? (42-44)

42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is **sown** is perishable; what is **raised** is imperishable. 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. The word sown and raised are repeated 4 times in pairs so Paul is going to use the seed analogy to explain what the resurrection body will look like...it will be completely different.

Paul is comparing and contrasting only two kinds of human bodies—those that live in this world and those that will live in the next. Like the seed there is continuity and discontinuity. The word ‘sown ‘ is there to illustrate continuity , it will still be us and not a clone of us. So we all start out with our current bodies, perishable, lowly, pathetically weak, and animated by the soul. But the resurrected version of our selves will imperishable, bullet proof, wondrously, glorious, powerful and animated by the Spirit of God. Like one of those bunnies in the Duracell battery ad which goes on forever. Which means when we take a look at ourselves we are a mere shadow of what is to come a caterpillar before a butterfly a tadpole before a radical transformation.

One of the most important clues as to our resurrected state is the resurrected Jesus
(Phil 3;) 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

There is both continuity and discontinuity. Look at post resurrection Jesus is recognizable and yet not recognisable to his followers. In Luke 24 ..Discontinuity ...Two of them walked with him for miles on the Emmaus road and while He explained the Scriptures to them and they didn’t even realise it was Jesus till later on

Luke 24: 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him

(Luke 24:) 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

Continuity ...he ate fish with Peter like a normal person he loved fish Luke 24:41-43 Ikan Panggang

Discontinuity ...he appeared suddenly in the room where the disciples were behind locked doors

John20:26 Continuity because He bore the wounds on his hands and his side where a Thomas stuck his fingers into

Luke 24: 38 And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. First, a new body is a necessity for experiencing the world to come. Escape into an eternally disembodied state is not an option. 50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Moses in Exodus 33 could not even see the face of God and live. God showed him the trailing edge of His glory. In the new heavens and new earth there will be no sun we will live by the brilliance and glory of God Himself we will experience Him in His unshielded glory and we can only do that in a resurrected body

Where we were once ugly, dishonourable or weak...we will be full of beautyglory and power.

We will run and not grow weary as Isaiah writes in Isaiah 40

We see in Revelations 21 there shall be no pain, no more sadness, no more regret and no more death

I reckon we can eat and not grow fat, drink and not get drunk, stay slim without any exercise and for the sisters they shall grow ever more beautiful each day. Then look at verse 44

*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*

We can the wrong impression that Paul is talking about a real car of metal vs a spiritual or ghost car. Paul is not talking about the material but what animates the new body. It's like comparing a petrol powered car and an electric powered car. A Nissan GTX vs a Tesla electric car. The Greek work psyche is translated as natural means soul... Paul is trying to contrast a body animated by our soul with that animated by the Holy Spirit

C. How we can be sure of our resurrection bodies (vv 44-49)

Let's read on

45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a lifegiving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As 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. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Paul is taking his argument by analogy further by stating that there is in God's created world a pattern of correspondence. Just as there is a seed there is it's corresponding plant. Just as there are terrestrial bodies like animals of a certain beauty and glory there is also the corresponding celestial bodies up on the skies ..the sun, moon and stars.

So there are patterns in nature. For example where there is a male there must be a female, Black and white, North Pole there is a South Pole. Where there is Light there is also Darkness. The Chinese believe where there is a Ying there must be a Yang. He then brings his argument close to home and says just as there is the body animated by the soul there is the body animated by God's spirit.

In Verse 45-49 he applies this pattern of correspondence to us and Jesus where the Opposite presupposes its counterpart. Where there was the first Adam or man there must be a last Adam (an upgraded 2.0 if you like). Where the first man was a being with life in him , the last Adam has the intrinsic property of being able to give life to others. Where the first man originated from the dust the earth the last man Jesus originated from heaven. All mankind will take the shape of the first Adam sown with a body made from dust that goes back to dust, then Christians will take the shape of Christ in their heavenly existence, who is from heaven and has a spiritual body. The last Adam, then, sets the pattern for all who will be resurrected and given a spiritual body for their new celestial habitat.

This argument from observable patterns in the created order is used even today. Here we have two world leaders who were slow to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, in fact Boris Johnson wanted it to just spread naturally and have the English naturally acquire herd immunity. Then Imperial College of London came out with mathematical modelling of what would happen if he did that and predicted thousands of deaths if he went ahead and the British Prime Minister immediately backtracked and locked down his country. Now on what basis did the scientists of Imperial college construct these graphs? They did this by looking at the numbers of people who were infected in Wuhan China and this pattern of infection gave them clues on the pattern of behaviour of this new Corona virus.

49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

This is a future event. There we have it the resurrection body is possible because the same Creator God of the seed and the galaxies has shown that it is perfectly feasible. We shall like the seed have a new eternal body at our resurrection animated by the Spirit of God. This is the living hope of Easter. This is the future we need to understand and take hold off.

D. The Challenge of Easter: Living tomorrow's life today

In 1879, the famous American inventor Thomas Edison invited people especially investors from all over the nation to come to Menlo Park to visit his laboratory. He would show them a vision of tomorrow. He did this by demonstrating his invention of the incandescent light bulb. The product of testing 6000 different elements and finally discovering that it was the lowly carbon filament which could take the immense heat of the electrical current and give out light and yet not incinerate at the same time. His bulb could last hour and hours. Through this one filament ...he could see the future. It could take the immense current of 2700 degrees Centigrade and still burn for 1000 hours. With this one filament he could see tomorrow where whole cities are light up, the whole world lit up. With this one filament he could see a brave new world on the horizon.

In 1880 Edison took his own money and invested it in his vision of the future the Edison Light Company which later became General Electric one the largest companies in the world. This is what Easter is all about, to see what tomorrow will be like in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only one who has broken the stranglehold of death over all our lives. The only one who emerged from the grave with an imperishable, glorious, powerful body able to last and shine as brightly as the sun for all eternity. In Jesus this morning we see our own future. If we see the future we cannot go into the past. You don't see Thomas Edison start up a candle factory after he saw tomorrow you see him invest his life in the carbon filament, the one that could take up to 2700 degrees Centigrade for 1000 hours.

Brothers and sisters, this Easter we need to grasp and lay hold of the future of Jesus, how do we do this? Let's look at Paul again writing from prison...in Philippians 3:10

that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Paul is saying that tomorrow is here to day. It is possible to experience the resurrection life because he says " that I might know him and the power of His resurrection" He wants to experience the power of the resurrection now not tomorrow. He is asking for the power of the Spirit the same spirit that animates the future resurrection body this same spirit resides in all of us right this minute.

How do we do this? Paul mentions two means

1. Knowing Jesus, becoming like Him when that happens we experience the resurrection power to leave behind the old way of life, the old ambitions and old sin that shackles us by considering what was precious

to us in the past as rubbish and what was rubbish to us in the past as precious. The power to freed us from materialism and consumerism. The power to go without things that many people feel they must have in this life. The power to overcome fear.

2. By pouring out our lives in the service of others ...Paul writes “ ..and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death” Jesus suffered not just for the sake of suffering but in service to us by His stripes we were healed and now we are tasked to leave the past behind and with His resurrection power animating our thoughts and invigorating our energies we are to pour out our lives for others.

Some of us are still living like the Toraja people in Sulawesi, they believe in Jesus just like you and me but they still keep living in the past, the embalm their dead relatives and will not let them go, they take them out take selfies and dust them out. Some of us are like that we say we believe in the power of Jesus but we still keep our old skeletons with us. We keep circling back to wallow in our own fears and anxieties. We live like the rest of the world finding comfort in sentimental songs and relaxation techniques and we keep our heads down hold our breath and are waiting for this bad dream to pass. We are living as if this is the only life we have , perishable and weak. We cannot see tomorrow we refuse to take hold of it

Brothers and sisters this is not how we lay hold of tomorrow, Jesus describes us in Luke 20: 36 as sons of the resurrection. The sons of Easter if you like...but we need to start believing this and starting living our this truth in our lives and experience the resurrection power Paul is telling us about.

Let me end with Martin Luther’s example in the face the of the deadly Bubonic plague

“I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above.”

Martin Luther will do what it takes to be a responsible citizen. He will pray for protection but at the same time he will fumigate and practice social distancing which is not a sign of the lack of faith but evidence of love but his ultimate dependence is in God. If God wishes to take me He will surely find me. But more importantly and this is the difference, If my neighbor needs me however I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely. There are so many neighbours in the community who have either lost their jobs and or are living hand to mouth, there are so many who are lonely and troubled. The solution is not in a vaccine in 18 months that is only a short term solution, the solution is for the sons of the resurrection to start living as ones