

THE FOILING OF THIS HOPE I
Words: 6146
Hymn to close: Never Grow Old

INTRO: On Passover day I spoke on Romans 4:25. It says that Christ was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. It is His resurrection that gives us victory in life. His death procured our justification; His resurrection gives us overcoming power to live the victorious Christian life.

On resurrection Sunday, in my earlier ministry, from 1995-2004 I covered 10 messages on various topics regarding Christ's resurrection. Then I began to go through 1 Corinthians 15, the resurrection chapter of the Bible. And I have done 6 messages and we are now at 1 Corinthians 15:32. We covered in the last messages the very difficult subject of baptism for the dead spoken of in verse 29. At that time I thought I was going to hand things over to someone else, but I take it, like some others, I have not retired, just retreaded. And so I am back to 1 Corinthians 15.

As I outline 1 Corinthians 15 we have four big points. First, in verses 1-11 we have the importance of the resurrection declared. Second, in verses 12-19 we have the denial of the resurrection. Third, in 20-34 we have the hope of the resurrection restated. Fourth, in verses 35-50, we have the manner of the resurrection questioned. How will it happen?

In our last message quite some time ago, we had almost covered the third point I just mentioned, where the hope of the resurrection was restated. That third point covered from verse 20-34. In verses 20-28 we have the future with the hope of the resurrection. In verses 29-34 we have the futility of life without this hope. In verses 33-34 we have the foiling of this hope. We were up to verses 33-34, which completes point three. We will just briefly look at these verses by way of introduction and then go on to the last point, the manner of the resurrection questioned.

We go then to verses 33-34:

33 *Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*

34 *Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*

Verse 33 says: *"Do not be deceived."* Here is a warning to those who are questioning the resurrection because they have some present who are denying the resurrection. When quite a number of people begin saying the same thing, we begin to question what we have believed. So Paul, according to John Calvin, then quotes one of their own poets from Athens, which is the main city close to where these Corinthians lived. And this is what Meander, the poet said, *"Evil company corrupts good habits."* What is he saying? If you hang around those who are teaching wrong things it will tend to corrupt you.

In verse 34 Paul then says to those who were questioning the resurrection, *Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*

Albert Barnes says: *The word here translated "awake" denotes, properly, to awake up from a deep sleep or torpor; and is usually applied to those who awake, or become sober after drunkenness.* John Gill agrees with that. The Corinthians had become so enamored with the teaching that there was no resurrection that Paul likens it to being overtaken by drunkenness. And he says, *"Sober up!"* And then he says: *...and do not sin...* If they would depart from the doctrine of the resurrection, it would be a sin, so it is time to sober up.

Then Paul says, *for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.* Those who did not have this knowledge of the resurrection were within the church. And those to whom Paul had taught this doctrine should have taught those who were denying the resurrection, not the other way around. To embrace the teaching of these deniers was the foiling of the hope of the resurrection, and that would be to the shame of those who had been taught better.

That brings us now to our next point, the manner of the resurrection questioned. So look at verse 35 which gives the questions that Paul will seek to answer in the following verses. It says, *But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"* And in verses 36-41 those questions are answered.

I. THE TWO QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RESURRECTION

A. The Questions

1. Question # 1

We go then to the first of two questions raised in verse 35, "How are the dead raised up?" Have you ever wondered about that? Take people who have been buried in a grave and their body decomposes. Or take people who have been cremated and the ashes of their bodies are spread out over some place. Or take Harry Truman who lived up on Mount St. Helens. He said the mountain would not dare blow up on him but it did. In a nano second he was who knows where? He was ash floating in the sky. Someday Harry Truman will be resurrected. How? How are the dead raised up?

2. Question # 2

Second question, still in verse 35: Ok, let us say there is a resurrection, with what body do they come? This body has decomposed, or was cremated, or it went up in a cloud of ash, or the great white shark digested it; so with what body do they come? First of all, how can the dead be raised, but if they are raised, with what body do they come? Those then are the two questions before us. So we go to Paul's answers.

B. The Answers (36-41)

1. To Question # 1 (36-37)

It is a lot easier to ask questions than to answer them, but that is what Paul sets out to do in the next verses. In verses 36-38 he answers the first question: How are the dead raised? He begins like this, "Foolish one..." He is addressing the one who is questioning the resurrection and calls him a foolish one, an unwise one, or one without reason or senseless.

Why would Paul call them something like that? Well, I think the questioner here might well have been ridiculing the

possibility of a resurrection. He might be saying, "Bah! A resurrection? That is ridiculous. How could decomposed people be resurrected?" And Paul says, "Foolish one." "Senseless one."

Now think of how foolish such a person is. If you believe God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and you find the resurrection an impossibility, that is a foolish one. And furthermore, Paul had preached the Gospel to them in this chapter in verses 1-6. He had told them about Christ's death and His resurrection. Then he told them that this all happened according to the Scriptures. And the apostle Peter had seen Christ alive. The disciples all saw Him alive. And after that, at one time over 500 people saw Him alive and most of those who saw Him then were still alive and could testify to that. And last, Paul himself saw Him alive. And after Paul told them this they began to come to church, and now they were saying there was no resurrection, because of this question, how can the dead be made alive? The whole Gospel hangs on the fact of the resurrection. No resurrection, no Gospel; and no use to come to church and ask such questions.

And if the apostles, even Paul himself, and over 500 people at another time had seen Christ alive, what is the difference how Christ's resurrection happened? It happened! Now I don't think asking legitimate questions is the problem here. It is asking in such a way as saying it is silly to believe in such a thing because how could the dead who had decomposed be resurrected? So Paul says, "Foolish ones..." We go on in verse 36:

36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

Now Paul says, "What you sow..." Paul will now use the analogy of planting seeds. Seeds are what you sow, or plant. And if you have a seed, and you don't plant it, it will never spring up into life. That is the principle of the seed. So, to bring forth life, that seed must die. Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides

alone. But if it falls into the ground and dies, it brings forth much fruit." So seeds in themselves teach this principle, life comes out of death. So why marvel that a body can be resurrected?

So, we too must die. Who wants to live forever in a sick and aging body? There is only one way to a better life than the one we have here, it is by death, or by changing this body as this chapter will show later. It says we will not all die but we will all be changed. This body must go in order to attain the new body. So Paul says, "What you sow is not made alive unless it dies." There is no other way. We can learn that from the principle of the seed.

Paul then goes on like this in verse 37:

37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain.

When you put a seed in the ground, it is not that seed that grows up. That seed has to die. What grows up comes out of that seed. Take a grain of wheat. It is not the seed that comes out of the ground and grows. It is a blade and then another and then a stem and so on. But the seed itself dies.

Now the passage sounds like you could put one kind of seed in the ground and perhaps any other kind of grain might come up. If you are using the KJV it says, "...it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain." It sounds like you plant the body but something entirely different may come up. But that is not true of the law of sowing and reaping nor is that what he is saying.

The principle of sowing and reaping is that you reap what you sow. That is you reap the same kind as the seed you sow. I would interpret this verse like this:
Perhaps you sow wheat or barley or anything else, when it grows up it will be exactly the same kind of plant as the seed was, but it won't be the same seed. That seed has to die.

So when we die, it will not be this same body that is resurrected. Nor do we want the same body back. Just like a plant that grows is not the same seed that was sown, but it is that which grew out of the seed that was sown. So when we are resurrected, it will not be this very same body, but like a seed brings forth after its kind, so this body will bring forth after its kind. And there are many ways in which the resurrection body will be like this one though it is not the same one. We have not time here, but if we looked at Christ's resurrected body we would see similarities and differences. So this is Paul's answer to the question: How are the dead raised? Like a seed that is sown in the ground dies and rots away, yet it brings a new plant that is the same kind the seed was, yet different. This is the principle on which bodies are raised.

2. To Question # 2 (39-41)

Now it might be debated where Paul begins to answer the second question, which is this, "And with what body do they come?" I view it as starting in verse 38, others see it as starting in verse 39. Verse 38 says this:

38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

Paul continues now with the illustration of the seed, Paul says that God gives each seed a body as it pleases Him. Today there are 7.6 billion people alive. And I understand that if science is right, no two people have ever been identical. Scientists say no two snowflakes are ever alike. And in the resurrection, no two bodies will ever be identical. Why? Because God gives each one a body as He pleases. Notice, He gives to each individual seed its own body. So it will be in the resurrection.

Many years ago I read this by John MacArthur. He says, "I have read that there are some six hundred octodecillion different combinations of amino acids. An octodicellion is 10 to the 108th power, or 1 followed by 108 zeros. Amino acids are the building

blocks of all life. Not only does each type of plant and animal have a distinct pattern of amino acids, but each individual plant, animal and human being has its own unique grouping of them. No two flowers, snowflakes, seeds, blades of grass, or human beings-even identical twins-are exactly alike. Yet each is completely identified with its own species or kind" (p. 435).

Now notice that in the resurrection God gives to each person a body as it pleases Him! That body is not the same body as the one that was put in the grave. Praise the Lord! It is a different body but of the very same kind. We see that in the resurrection of Christ. Now let me tell you what I think will please God. It will please him to give a body to each one according to what they have been to Him in their life here on earth. So every seed, of the octodicillian seeds gets a different body by God, so everybody who dies an overcoming Christian will get his or her own unique body. And Paul is saying, "And you want to know with what body they come?"

We come then to verse 39, and Paul says:

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

So Paul is saying, I think, "You want to know with what body they come?" Just like all flesh is not the same flesh, so in the resurrection, not everybody will have the same body. They are all different." I understand that the Catholics could not eat meat on Friday. But they could eat fish because it was not considered meat. But Paul says that fish are another kind of meat. But it is different from birds or beasts.

What are we to learn from this verse? As all kinds of flesh are basically composed the same, yet there are different kinds of flesh. So in heaven, though all resurrected beings will basically be composed the same, yet they will all differ from one another. As every wheat seed is different, though it is all

wheat, so every Christian who is resurrected will be different, though they are all Christians. Every single one will be uniquely different from the other. It is so with grass and trees and fish and birds, and actually with all living beings. As there are numerous different kinds of flesh on earth, so everybody in heaven will have a different kind of body. As every seed produces after its kind and is basically constituted the same, yet every seed has a different body, so it will be in the resurrection.

We go on to verse 40. It says:

40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

Paul is seeking to answer the question with what body the resurrected come. And he says, "I have shown you this from different kinds of seeds and different kinds of flesh, now let me show you this another way. There are heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies. But the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another." Well, what are these heavenly bodies? They are the stars and planets beyond earth. Now you know how different from the sun the moon is, or how different the moon is from mars. Take the earthly bodies. Take fish, what an amazing assortment of fish. But they are all fish.

When my siblings and I were young, during the long winter days and evenings we would sometimes draw and color things. And one of the things I remember is one of Dr. Suez's book with all kinds of variously colored and shaped fish. And we would trace them and color them, and Dr. Suez did not do justice to how many different kinds there are.

Today with modern science, that variety of fish has multiplied itself many times. But that is only the fish. The subject is so very vast. There are plants and rocks and reptiles and all different kinds of species of animals, so that this subject is staggering. Take

the particles of sand. Each has its own unique body. But this is only the terrestrial realm.

Let me quote from a message I did many years ago when I preached on Genesis and on creation, and I quote:

So we were looking at the creation of the lights. It tells us in this verse that God made two great lights. These refer to the sun and the moon. Let me ask a little trivia question: Is the sun a planet or a star? Yes, it's a star. The sun is a star. A star, I understand, is a self gravitating glowing mass that doesn't move about like the planets do. The sun is 93 million miles away. How many light minutes is it away? Eight light minutes. Now light travels a little more than 11 million miles a minute. Now they can measure light so precisely that they thought they had it down to a science until a while ago they found they were out just a little bit.

Now the heat of the sun is 27 million degrees fahrenheit. Imagine this morning a fire at Tompkins Landing, at the river that you could feel the heat of here at the church. How hot would it have to be? Now imagine a fire at Whitehorse, in the Yukon. How hot would it have to be for us to feel it here? Well, think of one in Germany. How hot would it have to be for us to feel it here. Well, that is small yet. Think of one 25,000 miles away, that you could feel the heat of here. How hot would it have to be? Well, that is small yet. Think of 100,000 miles away. How hot would it have to be. That is still small. How about 1 million miles away. How hot would it have to be? That is still very small. The sun is 93 million miles away and we feel the heat here. Imagine the consummation of those wave lengths. Isn't that fantastic?

Our sun itself is mind boggling. Notice again that the description of creation is from a practical point of view, not a scientific point. We often speak in practical terms not scientific. When we speak of the sunrise we are not very scientific. We're talking practical. And creation is explained from a practical standpoint of view. Now we are told that

God created two great lights. The sun is a relatively small star. There are stars that are much larger. Dr. Harold Willmington writes that if the sun were hollow it could hold 1 million 300 earths. The star Antares could hold 64 million suns. So the sun is still small. There is a certain star in the cluster of Hercules which could contain 100 million Antares stars. I am not sure. Does anyone know the name of that star? Is it Epsilon. The star Epsilon could hold 27 billion of our suns. So the sun is not that big in comparison. I do not know the accuracy of all those things but if they are anywhere near, it is phenomenal. We have a telescope at our house. And you can turn it on the moon and see the craters and the cracks on the moon. When you turn that telescope to the stars, it doesn't hardly make any difference at all. It makes a big difference on the moon because it is relatively close. But it hardly makes any difference on the stars because they are so far away, end quote.

So look now at verse 41:

41 *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.*

42 *So also is the resurrection of the dead.*

You see, there is a glory to the sun. It is a most amazing subject once you begin to study it. But then go out on a crisp cold night and watch the clouds cover and uncover the moon. Or take a telescope and draw in another planet. The glory of each one is very different. So Paul says in verse 42a, *So also is the resurrection of the dead.*

When the question is asked in our text, "And with what body do they come?" the answer is that these bodies will differ vastly in glory. I personally believe each person will come with a body that will be a manifestation of what they have lived like on earth. Here on earth, women like to be beautiful. Look at young boys when they grow up. They like to

be considered muscular, strong, tough. But here on earth, we don't too much say in what kind of a body we have, or how glorious our body is. That is determined by other things. Oh, I know, we can dress this body so that it gives more of the look we would like it to give, but it is still limited.

But if I am right that what we will be like after the resurrection is determined by our life here, we have everything to do with what we will be like after the resurrection. Just like there are octodicillian different kinds of seeds, so there will be all different kinds of bodies. I expect that just as there are different classes of flesh, so there will be different classes of people. I expect that just as the stars and planets differ in glory one from another, so the glory of one person will be greater or lesser than another.

But there will be a very big difference in how that is handled. I am fully convinced that those who have the greatest glory or who will be in the best class will be gladly recognized and honored as such by those who have less glory or are in a lesser class. Sin will no longer plague those who are there. When they meet someone whose glory far exceeds theirs, they will say, "You fully deserve this. Oh I am so glad for you. I rejoice and am privileged to be with you and I am so glad for what God has chosen for you."

So, how are the dead raised? Just like a seed that falls into the ground and dies but a totally new plant springs to life. With what body do they come? Oh, the subject is so vast. Everybody will be so different one from another!

So, we have looked at the two questions and then at how Paul has answered them. And now we want to look at the realities expressed by Paul in verses 42b-50.

II. THE TWO REALITIES OF THE RESURRECTION

Intro: So we come next to two realities. This is the second point of this section. Let me just introduce the second

point. The first section had two questions, which were then answered. This next section gives us the two realities. In verses 42b-44a, as I outline this section, we have the facts of these two realities Paul will now deal with. Here is the first fact regarding the body in 42b:

42b It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

The second fact is in the first part of verse 42:

43a It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory:

The third fact is in 43b:

43b it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

The fourth fact is in 44a:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

Paul then says:

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

These two realities we must be aware of and arrange our life accordingly or we will go to hell. It is that simple.

Then in verse 45 we have the sources of these two realities.

They are the first and last Adam. We find this in verse 45:

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Then in verses 46-49 we have the order of the two realities.

We'll just read these verses for now:

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 *As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

49 *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

What we have presented to us here then are these two realities. These two realities are the natural and the supernatural; the physical and the spiritual. I need not talk to us about the natural realm in such a way as to try to make you understand there is such a realm. We are in it and it is so obvious it needs no explanation to most people. There are some who deny even this. Many years ago I was driving in that long lonely stretch between Prince George B.C. and MacBride. And I picked up a hitchhiker. I think he said he believed in what was called Christian Science. He believed that nothing was really real. He said, "See that road before us, it's not really real." Well, we discussed that. I was quite a new believer. So I asked, "I see you are wearing a knife on your belt, what is that for?" And he said, "Well, look at this lonely stretch of road, and what if I had to stay night here and a bear came?" And I said, "Bear? What do you mean a bear? They're not really real anyway." Well, we passed through MacBride and when I dropped him off at Jasper much later, as he got out he said, "All guys like you do for me is make me doubt what I believe." Well, to normal people one does not have to explain that there is a natural physical realm.

But, it is much different with regard to the spiritual realm. Now the spiritual realm is just as real as the physical. We should know that from life and death. Take the body, for instance. Today scientists can take the body apart down to the parts within the cells. I asked omniscient Google how many cells there were in the body. When I typed, 'how many cells...' it already knew the rest of my question. And the first thing that came up was:

number of **cells** in the **human body** is tricky. Part of the problem is that using different metrics gets you very different outcomes. Guessing based on volume gets you an estimate of 15 trillion **cells**; estimate by weight and you end up with 70 trillion.

Well, needless to say, it is very, very many. And each of those cells is extremely complex. Now when a person dies you can take man apart to the inner cell, and everything physical

is still there, but the body is dead. So we ask, what has left the body? Well, James 2:26 tells us very plainly that the body without the spirit is dead, and the spirit, of course, is spiritual. There is a spiritual reality. God is a spiritual being, according to the Bible. Angels and demons are spiritual beings, and they are absolutely real; but because they are spiritual we cannot see them.

All we can do yet this morning is to begin with the facts of these two realities in 42b.

A. The Facts Of The Two Realities (42b-44a)

1. Fact # 1

We begin then with the first fact regarding these two realities. Verse 42b says of the body:

42b It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

Paul has used the principle of the seed to answer the questions: How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come? He now uses the principle of the seed to show what happens. And what happens is that the body, as a seed, is sown in corruption, and it is raised in incorruption.

So the two realities we have is the earthly or natural, and the heavenly or supernatural. And the facts regarding the body as related to these realities are first, in 42b: The body is sown in corruption. When we put a body in the ground, it is sown like a seed. And like a seed is lifeless when it is put in the ground, so the body is lifeless when it is put in the ground. So Paul says it is sown in corruption. Nature and its processes will go to work on this seed and begin to destroy it. But after it has undergone destruction, it releases what is inside and springs up into new life. That is how the resurrection is. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

Well, we know what corruption is. A seed that is placed in the ground undergoes corruption. If it does not undergo corruption, neither will it live. So Jesus

said, "Except a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone." The influences that corrupt must first go to work on a seed before it will spring to life. In the fall of the year in our country, everything can look drab and gray. It seems there is death all over. The trees release their leaves and they die. So do the seeds of the various plants. But then in the spring time when the temperature is right, the influences in nature go to work, and new life springs up all over the place, and it is a most enjoyable time of year. The body will not be raised until the time is right.

Over the span of 6,000 years bodies have been planted all over this earth. And Christ was the first-fruits of the resurrection, but after that the Church, the whole of the Church, every true believer who has died over the past 2,000 years will be resurrected! Glory hallelujah! Look at our chapter, verses 20-24:

- 21 *For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.*
- 22 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*
- 23 *But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*
- 24 *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.*
- 25 *For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.*
- 26 *The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*

Jesus Christ was the first-fruits of the resurrection. Today we commemorate the Jewish feast of first-fruits. This is what it is all about. But the next part of the resurrection will include all those who are His at

His coming. Skip down now to verses 51-52. Here Paul says:

51 *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

52 *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

When Paul says 'we', he is speaking of the Church age believer. These are those who are Christ's at His coming. And we are considering fact # 1 in these two realities, the physical and the spiritual. And fact # 1 is that this corruptible must put on incorruption. And at the rapture, the catching up, the corruptible part of the Christian will take on incorruption.

Those who have died will be resurrected, and those who are alive will be changed. Paul then goes on in verse 53 like this:

53 *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

54 *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

55 *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

56 *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

57 *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

This is what we look forward to. When we are resurrected, we will never grow old or get sick or decay again. We will be raised in incorruption. The laws of thermodynamics will never have power over us again.

CONCL: Our feast day today is the feast of first-fruits. The older I get the less I like the word 'Easter'.

And so, to summarize, we have answered two questions with Paul: How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come? They are raised by first experiencing death. Death is not the end. It is required for a new beginning. Just like a seed springs forth in life when it undergoes corruption, so this corruptible must die first. And with what body do they come? Well, that depends on the body the Lord is pleased to give to each one. That it will be a body in human form like the one we have now is clear from the body Christ had after He was resurrected.

It is amazing the amount of importance we place on the body here on earth. What does a woman not go through to be pretty? But some don't have to go through much. Some are naturally pretty. What about the man? Oh, what some will do to show off muscle? Or prestige? Others of us, well, we have to find something else to glory in.

In heaven, God will give to each one a body as it pleases Him. So I know it is a body that will glorify God. And when it glorifies God, it will fulfill the person who gets that body. And all the beauty and prestige and honor attributed here to anyone for their bodies sake, is but like a flower. Here they bloom but for a season. Soon their beauty is decayed. But not so where we are going.

And then we saw that there are two realities. There is the physical, but there is the spiritual, unseen realm. It is into the spiritual realm that we go when we die and in which the body is resurrected.