

The Hope of Resurrection

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[0 : 00] Just good morning again, and so glad that you're with us. Just want to say a quick hello to those online. Thanks for listening. And if you're new, man, thank you so much for being with us. If it's your first time with us today, we are in the middle of a three-part series. And last week, Easter was the beginning of that series. And it's a series looking at the resurrection. And so what we're doing is we're looking at the past resurrection, which on Easter was looking at Jesus's resurrection. Today, we're looking at the future resurrection, the resurrection to come. And next week, we're going to look at what the resurrection means and how we live in that reality in our present day, in our lives.

And so if you're a Christian, I just want to say to you, if you're a Christian in the room, if you're wondering like, oh, resurrection, that's awesome. I think about it on Easter. We can celebrate it. And it's so much more than that. The resurrection, especially the future resurrection, is meant to be our greatest hope. It's meant to be our greatest longing, actually, even over everything of this life. There's good things in this life to enjoy. But man, the resurrection is meant to be even so much more than any of these things. And so my job today is to prove that to you and to stir your hearts toward that. If you are not a Christian, I just want to say glad that you are here, we are going to be talking about the mystery of the resurrection. And there's going to be stuff that maybe you're hearing for the first time about the afterlife and being raised from the dead, which is going to be like, whoa, that is crazy. Yes, it is crazy. All right. We would say yes and amend to that. But that's what faith comes in. And my hope today is that as we speak about these things, again, your heart gets stirred. And that you begin to realize like, man, this is so much better and more beautiful. This is actually what my heart has been longing for and that I've been missing. So let me swallow my gum real fast. I just realized I'm chewing gum.

All right. There we go. See, Freddie snorts. I chew gum. There's like, we're a hot mess. We're a hot mess in here. All right. So before we jump into it, before we jump into it, we're having a good time. Before we jump into it, I want to say when the Bible speaks about the future resurrection, it's not referring to just life after death. When we think about resurrection, we think about life after death. But what our faith says, what the Christian faith is, is we're talking about life after life after death. I know, mind-blowing, right?

But I just want to say, you're just like, Jesse, did you just like, you know, stumble over your words there? No, that's literally what we believe. The resurrection is life after life after death, which is really unlike any life after death concept of other religions and cults. We see, they see death as passing on from the physical realm into a better, superior, spiritual dimension.

The physical and the spiritual never really coexisting. But the Christian view of the afterlife is much different. It says there will be a future unification and a glorification or a bettering, a completion of both the spiritual and the physical world to include our own bodies. So how do we know this? Well, because Jesus' past resurrection gives us clues about that future resurrection.

[3 : 34] 1 Corinthians 15, 20, it says this, but in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. That's a fact. And he is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Keyword there, firstfruits. We're going to come back to that.

For as by a man came death, he's talking about a guy named Adam, right? Adam's first sin. By a man came death. And by a man has come also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ, in Jesus shall all be made alive. But each in his own order. Christ, again, the firstfruits. He's repeated it twice now in a short period of time, so pretty important thing.

He's trying to make a point here. Christ, the firstfruits, then at his coming, those who belong to Christ. And so Paul points to Jesus' resurrection as this firstfruits. What is that? It's a word that marked the beginning of harvest time, right? And this is a great analogy. And Paul says, hey, if you

want to understand this resurrection to come, this analogy is really helpful. The resurrection is the hope of harvest time. Paul uses that word firstfruits multiple times. And what it's doing, it's combining harvest, it's like agricultural word, with Jewish religious tradition. See, Jewish harvest time was bookmarked by three festivals. The Feast of Firstfruits. And then 50 days later, there was the Feast of Pentecost. And then later on in the year, at the end of the agricultural year, there was this final one called the Feast of Booze or the Feast of Ingathering. So what happened is the Feast of Firstfruits happened the Sunday after the Passover. Think about that, right? You had Passover week. Think about how that correlates with what happened leading up to Easter, right? You had Jesus, like who is the Passover lamb. Jesus who eats the Passover. He dies on the cross. And then that Sunday, that very Sunday, he raises from the dead. The same day as the Feast of Firstfruits. He's resurrected. And then 50 days later, seven weeks later, is the Feast of Pentecost. This new beginning, this new ingathering of a new harvest. And you bring the firstfruits in of that. And it correlates with the day the Holy Spirit comes in to demarcate a new point in history. It's the age. It's the start of the age of the church and the reign of Christ. It's an amazing thing. It's this firstfruits of the age that is to come. And then finally, we have the Feast of Booze or the Feast of Ingathering. And this was later on again at the end of the year. And it's the harvest season is finally over. All the harvest time, all the work of going and gathering the crops, it is done. And there's this great ingathering as the people of God come together with the produce of the lamb. And they have this wonderful celebration, looking back and seeing, look at what God has done. How he has provided for us. And this is like the final resurrection when Jesus Christ returns. So you can see this interesting correlation here that Paul's getting out, the parallels to Jesus and you and me and the resurrection. The Jewish harvest season begins with this Feast of Firstfruits. And literally on that day, a person would bring in one sheaf. So they would go into their field that was like ready to go harvest-wise. And they would gather one bundle of grain. And they would come and they would bring that first bundle and they would give it to God.

It was his. And they weren't allowed to harvest or eat any crops of their field until that had happened. That was it. But after that, it was harvest time. Paul says, this is a helpful way for you to think about the resurrection. About Jesus' resurrection. Jesus kicked it off by going first. He was the first sheaf of the resurrection harvest. And here's the thing. The first sheaf points to the fact that there is a whole harvest ready to come. There's going to be more sheafs to come, which is you and me.

Right? It's this harvest time that is going to be going on and God bringing in new sheaves until the end of the age when Jesus returns. There's going to be more. Jesus himself said, man, look guys, the harvest is ripe. It's ready to go. Pray for laborers. Pray for disciples that would go and bring in that harvest. And so we live in this awesome age right now of the church where it's marked at Pentecost and the Holy Spirit comes and looking at God's timeline of things. We're between that feast of Pentecost and the feast of engathering. But by God's grace, we get to participate in bringing in the full harvest before that final engathering, that resurrection when he returns. And this opportunity for harvest is one of the big reasons there's this time gap between Jesus' first resurrection and his second coming, the final resurrection. But that's not the only reason.

[8 : 39] There's something else happening. And Paul goes on to talk about this in verse 24. And he says this, then comes the end when he, Jesus, delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For God has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when it says all things are put in subjection, it is plain that he, the Father, is accepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, to God the Father, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. And so what it's pointing out, right, there's a lot of like, there's a lot being said there. It's maybe a little hard to follow, I agree. But ultimately, here's the point. Resurrection is the hope of future victory. That's what it is. Jesus, think about it,

Jesus was resurrected into a world where sin and death, they're still a reality. We still die. Death hasn't been defeated in the ultimate sense of defeat. And we know that Satan and demons still roam about.

They still have influence. They still oppress. They still confuse. They still cause chaos. And at the same time, what we have to realize is Jesus' resurrection broke their dominion and power.

I mean, if you think about Jesus' first coming, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection here on earth was God's kingdom invading enemy territory. That's what it's like. That's what this passage we just read is pointing out. And that invasion has grown and spread to the ends of the earth through the church. And what this looks like practically, if you're a Christian, it's good news because neither Satan nor any other spiritual power has authority over you. They don't. You belong to Christ. You're under his authority. You're in his kingdom. And also, sin's power no longer has the authority and the stranglehold on you that it once did. It no longer has the allure. We have this new desire, this new belonging to live for Jesus and honor him with our bodies. And we do this because we believe God himself dwells in us by the Holy Spirit. And although we still die, we have nothing to fear in death. Death, we know, doesn't have the final say. But these massive changes we experience now, you know what they are?

[11 : 24] They're just a foretaste to the final victory that Jesus will have. And when he returns, the very presence of evil in all its forms will be removed. Satan, sin, and even death itself.

In Revelation 20 verse 10, it says this, And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. And then again in verse 14, it goes on to say, Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Now, this is prophetic, apocalyptic. It's a revelation kind of a genre of text. And so it's like John is seeing something of what is to come. And for us, we read it and we're just like, whoa, this is crazy, man. Like beasts are getting thrown and Satan's getting thrown and death's getting thrown to this lake of fire. Like this is, it could be tough to wrap our minds around this.

But what we see here is we see Jesus's final victory when he returns again. And this isn't just another invasion by Jesus. This is his complete takeover of everything. Every enemy will not only be defeated, but it will be destroyed. And what God's people will feel on that day, what I think we're going to experience on that day will be alike, but even greater than the freedom and joy that Israel felt as they looked at the Red Sea swallowing up Egypt's army. They were being chased and they were being dogged by their captors. And they were thinking like, man, we are about to be destroyed.

And God brings them through the Red Sea onto the other side. And they turn around and they watch this superior power get enveloped in God's judgment. And we're going to look on that day and we're going to see no more fear of Satan's sin and death. It's been swallowed in the fiery sea of God's judgment.

[13 : 33] This is beautiful subtraction. That's going to happen. Jesus will remove the very presence of all the bad things, all the untrue things, all the corrupted things, all the terrible things. And as that happens and when that happens, what it does, it makes room for beautiful addition, which is more of God's presence. At the end of that section of verses in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 we just read, it ends in verse 28 by saying that phrase, that God may be all in all. And that is the hope of the resurrection for us.

The resurrection is the hope of a God-saturated creation. God being all in all. And this has always been God's plan from the beginning. God created the world. He created the universe. Everything that we can see and know, he created it for it to know him and to enjoy him. Everything God created, when you read that Genesis 1 account, he creates it and he looks at it and he says, ah, this is good. It functioned according to his will, how he ordained it to be and according to the purpose for what he created it for.

There was harmony and there was unity and there was peace within everything. It worked as it should, which meant also that there was no death and no corruption when he originally created. And in this way, all of creation knew and reflected the glory and the knowledge of God. But Adam, the first man, he ushered in sin. And he did this because he traded the knowledge of God for the knowledge of good and evil. And in that moment, all creation was corrupted. Romans, Paul says in Romans, man, the creation was subjected to futility because of that. Subjected to emptiness, to disorder, to being less than what it should be because of that. As verse 22 says of 1 Corinthians chapter 15, for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Here, here Paul is anticipating something new in which all of creation is filled with God's presence and his love. In other words, what God has done in Jesus, he will not only do with those who are in Christ, but with the entire creation.

And not just this world, the entire cosmos, if you think about it. The creation doesn't become God. I'm not saying that. Both God and creation, they remain distinct, and they will remain distinct when this happens, but they come together in a new way. God's presence being in everything. And I'm not sure we're quite capable of imagining this. I mean, even the writers of the Bible seem to struggle with this. For example, if you look at Isaiah 11, Isaiah 11 is prophesying about this time, and he's anticipating this, and he's trying to like put words, like how do I describe what God is saying to me and showing me? And it's talking about that passage that Isaiah 11 is talking about the prediction of what Jesus will do as the Messiah, the one on whom the Holy Spirit will rest.

[16 : 49] It says he will create total peace, and he will destroy the wicked. And then it's got that famous line about the wolf lying down with the lamb and children playing with snakes. But how's that going to happen? Isaiah 11, 9, the last part of that verse, it says, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The reason for this kind of peace will happen, because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as waters cover the sea. Now, if you didn't notice, that phrase, waters covering the sea, it really doesn't make sense. I mean, the waters are the sea, right? How do the waters cover the sea? N.T. Wright, a scholar, Christian scholar, he says this, it looks as though God intends to flood the universe with himself. Not just creation, not just this world, but man, God's glory and who he is, man, it's enough to fill this universe.

As though the universe, the entire cosmos were designed as a receptacle for his love. He uses the idea of a chalice. He likens it to a chalice, like creation and the cosmos are this cup.

And by itself, it's beautiful, but it's made to contain something, which makes it even more beautiful. It's meant to contain the fullness of the glory of God. And it's beautiful because its purpose is being fulfilled. If you think about a sailboat, man, it's impressive when it's in dry dock, right? It can look really cool, but you see it on the water and it's something else entirely.

It's doing what it is being made for. And that's the idea here. The world, as beautiful as it is, it has a rather haunting quality to it. But it suggests there is more. And in its present form, it will be nothing compared to what it will be when God is all in all. When his presence infuses the world as waters cover the sea. We can't imagine what that could be like. And we get little hints, because like in Revelation 21, it talks about this metaphor of heaven marrying earth and Jesus coming and marrying his bride, the church. And as the heavens come down and come into the earth and they join together and the heavenly Jerusalem comes down and is there, what is happening? It talks about like streets paved with gold, right? Which is way better than asphalt. I mean, that is a huge upgrade.

I would be happy to just have my driveway paved with gold. And then there's this glassy sea and this river of life that runs through it. I was coming in at 7am this morning and just like that front street as you go down and it was this beautiful sunrise and the noose was just glassy, just calm and the goldness of the sun reflecting off of it. I was like, oh my goodness, I could do this every single day. Just sit and stare. I mean, it was so glorious and so good.

[20 : 06] But that is what this idea is of Jesus coming. This idea is, it's so much better. Even those beautiful moments, it's going to like blow those apart. And the idea of this union that it's talking about, of heaven marrying earth and Jesus coming and marrying his bride, it's this idea of union, but not the kind of union in which one thing blots out the other. It's a kind of union in which two things are being brought together. And what they do when they are brought together, they bring out each other's glory in ways that aren't possible when they are alone.

And think about this. This actually, this makes sense to us. We actually gravitate towards this kind of thing. Peter Kreeft, this scholar, points this out. He says, man, mountains, when you just look at them, they are magnificent. I don't know about you, I love being in the mountains. They do something for my soul. The sea is enchanting, but it is the coast. It is the point at which the mountains and the sea unite that surpasses the beauty of either land or sea. The shore is the most popular place on earth. Waterfront property is the most expensive property anywhere in the world because that's where the land and the sea meet. That's where the action is. That's where we want to be. I mean, think about the most beautiful times of day. While I was talking about, man, night is enchanting, daytime is stimulating, but it's dawn and dusk that is unsurpassed in its beauty, where the skies get lit up.

And when heaven comes to earth, when that meeting happens, when those two things meet, God will be all in all. And yet, all will remain his creation, but somehow he will be in everything.

There will be union and yet still distinctness. A marriage of God and his people, a union that will overwhelm our senses. A beauty that surpasses that of the shoreline. Better than the dawn and better than even the best marriages in this room. It's hard to imagine a world that could be transformed like that. It is, but it will be. And guess what? So will you and I. 1 Corinthians 15:35 says, but someone will ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come? You foolish person. I mean, I guess Paul wasn't like the kind of guy like, hey, the only bad question is one that isn't asked. He seems to be like not encouraging these type of questions, right? I'm like, wow, man, just chill out, Paul.

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. But God gives it a body as he has chosen into each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 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. There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star differs from star and glory. And then it jumps down to verse 42 and says, so is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable.

[23 : 47] 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. And here's the thing about the resurrection. It's not just about creation totally being changed. It's us too. Resurrection is the hope of our final transformation. Now, admittedly, it's hard to fathom what exactly is going to happen to us at the resurrection.

I mean, in essence, we do know from various scriptures that something of our spirit and our body will be reunited. Just as we are body and spirit now, that's who we are, that is going to happen again.

Except we will be given new, perfect physical bodies, and we need that because in that way, it proves that death is defeated. This physical body we have right now, it will perish. It has to perish because it has been born into corruption. Death is still a thing. But in the resurrection to come, what has died will be changed into something completely different. It will be perfect as God has intended it. And Paul likens it in this passage to a seed. And a seed, when it gets put into the ground, it has the potential to become something new. It has the potential to become what it's supposed to be. But first, it has to die. It has to die. In the same way, the glory of a full-grown plant is so much greater than its seed, so will be our resurrection bodies. It's the same way that works. And it's really hard to imagine what that will be like. If you and I were to just go and pick up some random seed, we didn't know what it is, we'd look at it and we'd say, we would have no idea the potential of what it could be. And that's what it's like with the resurrection. We know it's going to be so much better. We know it's going to be so much more beautiful and amazing and greater than the seed.

We just don't know fully what that is yet. But we do get some hints. Verse 42 and 43, it says that our new bodies, they will be imperishable. They will be beautiful. They will be strong, which means they won't age or wear down or be subject to illness. They cannot die.

[26 : 18] That means for me, no more back problems. That means for some of you, no more bad knees. Man, I think of people who've lost limbs, whether by accident or illness or they can't walk.

Here's the good news. Your glorified body will be healed. You'll be able to run and leap and dance. For the blind or the deaf or the mute, the resurrection body will see and hear and sing.

Maybe you kind of like your body as it is right now. Hey, I'm beautiful. I'm strong. I'm healthy. Hey, that's great. But you know what? It is going to be nothing in comparison to your resurrection body. Even an Olympian's strength is but a seed compared to what it will be at the resurrection.

The greatest, most beautiful singing voice is just but a seed compared to what it will be at the resurrection. So what does this say to us now? Well, don't dismay if your body isn't what it should be. And man, don't live in vain and don't hope in your strength or beauty. It all falls short of the glory that is coming. All the resurrection, at the resurrection, all our bodies will be fully functioning to the degree of perfection and beauty God originally intended. And this perfection includes our obedience and our submission to his will. 1 Corinthians 15, 44 says, it is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. And it's easy to look at that and just think, okay, it's going to be, it's going to be sowed as a physical body. And it's going to be raised up as a spirit, but that's not what's happening at the resurrection.

So what's going on? Well, we have to understand this word spiritual as it's used in the Bible, as it's used in the New Testament, especially by the same writer, Paul, it's almost always referring to one who is of the Holy Spirit, one who belongs to the Holy Spirit. So what this is telling us of our new resurrection body is that the old natural body of this age that still has sinful desires and passions that go along with it is going to change. We're going to be raised into this new body, still a physical body that completely belongs to the Holy Spirit. It is not just the cosmos and creation that's going to be God-saturated, so will you and I. So will you and I. We are going to be saturated with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit who leads and guides us. We are no longer going to have this war going on in our bodies like Paul talks about. Man, the things I know I should be doing, I don't do, and the things that I don't want to do, I do. That's going to be totally gone. I can't even imagine what that's like. [29 : 23] That is like, for most, I think all of us in the room, if we're honest with ourselves, that's the constant war that is going on in our hearts. Then, then we will be happily and joyfully submitted to the Holy Spirit's guidance and will. That's what's going to happen. And in that way, we will ultimately bear the image of our Savior.

Jesus, who came to this earth as both fully God and fully man, but also full of the Holy Spirit. As Paul goes on to say in verse 49, just as we have been born the image of the man of dust, Adam, we also shall bear the image of the man of heaven, Jesus. Not only will the creation around us be God saturated, we will be too, but there is a warning in this for all of us as well. That's good news, but there's a warning here. Because this isn't going to happen for everyone.

The very next verse, it says, I tell you this, brothers, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Those who will be resurrected into the perfected, God-saturated creation and the perfected, God-saturated body are those who are of the Holy Spirit now. That's what he's saying. And Jesus said this himself. He said this himself to a very smart Bible teacher in his day who was trying to understand this. Jesus is having this rooftop discussion at night with a guy named Nicodemus. In John 3, verse 3, it says, Jesus answered him. Nicodemus asked him this question, and Jesus answers him, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. And Nicodemus, well, he's born again. What's this? Nicodemus said to him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Nicodemus has like the scope of imagination I think I have here, right?

But Jesus answered him and said, no, no, no, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again. And Jesus and Paul are saying the same thing here, you have to be born again in this life. You have to be born again here on earth to enter the kingdom of God and inherit the blessings that will happen at the future resurrection. It isn't a natural birth, Jesus said. Man, don't think of it as like being reborn again like you were to your mom and dad. It's not like that first one. Man, this is a spiritual birth, one that only God himself through the Holy Spirit can make happen. And in that way, we become spiritually alive. We become of the Holy Spirit. We are people belonging to the Holy Spirit. Not like what we will be at the resurrection, but also not what we were. And this is hard to understand. It's a bit of a mystery. It is a mystery. Even Nicodemus, as smart as he was, questioned, man, how can these things be? But

[33 : 01] Jesus says and responded to him that what it takes for this to happen is just believing in him. But just not believing that he was real. Jesus goes on to say to Nicodemus in verse 14, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, a moment in Israel's history where they had to look to this serpent that was raised and they could be saved from death, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, lifted up on a cross that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. Jesus says, you have to look to me and believe on me for salvation. That's how this works. That's how you become spiritually alive. That's how you go from being of the flesh to being of the Spirit, belonging to the Holy Spirit, filled with the Spirit. That's how that happens. It's not works. It's not what you do. It is just faith. Faith in Jesus, his life, his death, and his resurrection. And we need to take this to heart because let's be honest, we don't know when our time here is going to run out. Tomorrow is not guaranteed. Whether through death or Jesus' return, we are called to salvation here. We are called to believe here first. 1 Corinthians 15:51 gets to this urgency where Paul says, 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

