



## **The Defeat of Death-Part 3**

### **The Nature of the Resurrection**

**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

Well, it's the time of year when our big Compass Bible Church Israel trip is just around the corner. I know some of you, as I look out there, are going to go to Israel with us, which is always a great trip, it's a great adventure, big trip, always well worth it. It's certainly a big trip for those who have never been out of the country, I find. We always take some people with us who have never been out of the country. There's so much to do if you've never traveled like that. Almost 8,000 miles from here, you got to get your passport, got to get your documents together. And it's a lot of work for all of us in terms of packing, you've got to know where you're going, you got to know how to pack, the climate. You got to call your credit card company, make sure you can use your card over there. You know, you just got to get ready and there are so many things to do. Some would go out and even buy a travel guidebook, which often happens when you travel somewhere, like to Israel, and you want to learn all about places you're going. We even have classes here, we have at the church, kind of train you to expect this and this place is going to be great because of that. All of that work, all that planning, all that prep, all that information gathering because you're going to a very important place. You want to know where you're going, got to get ready.

It's a big trip to go to Jerusalem today. I can tell you this, it's an even bigger trip to go to the New Jerusalem, which, by the way, is exactly what the Bible says you're going to do, it's going to be your destination, it's going to be the place that God wants to have you anticipating so much. He says you ought to have your mind set there, Colossians 3:2, you ought to have your focus on that, you ought to be storing up treasure in that place. You ought to have your heart so there, Philippians 3:20, that you feel like your citizenship is there and you can't wait to get there. If it's good to do some information gathering and to prep and plan and learn about the place you're going to here on Earth, then what an important thing it is for you to get ready for that place there.

And again it's not just so that you get excited about it, although that will happen if you study where we're headed. But it really is the fuel for doing what God is expecting you to do. Keep your priorities there. I mean, where your treasure is your heart's going to be. That is the expectation that Christ has on every Christian. He says he's going to prepare a place for us. There ought to be a more palpable excitement and a more focused attention on our future home. I find this that if you don't understand what the reality and experience is going to be for you, you're probably never going to get there at all in terms of excitement. So we have to learn about it and there's a difficulty in learning about it because all of the myths that are out there, and all that even the imaginations of Hollywood or things you might think of or books that you've read. You've got to get back to what the Bible has to say.

And one of the most important things that's often missed is when you look at the scene that we've gotten to in our study of Luke, Luke Chapter 24, beginning in verse 36, there are eight verses here that spill out from verse 36 that describe Christ and his resurrection. There are so many interesting details, intriguing details, about what Christ does in his resurrected body. You may look at a passage like this and say it has nothing to do with eschatology and where we're headed. Now that's true. But here's the thing, all throughout the Scripture, and I just quoted the passage from Philippians 3:20, the next verse says, as we're anticipating Christ's return and our citizenship being there, it says that Christ is going to come back and he's going to "transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body." That connection, that comparison is one that's presented to us in the

Scripture. And it says if you could just understand how Christ came back from the dead and the kind of body that he had, that would be the starting point for understanding what your experience is going to be in the next life. First Corinthians 15 uses a word that is translated "first fruits," but the word is sometimes translated and transliterated even into our language as "prototype." It is the prototype. It comes off, if you will, the assembly line and if we understand it and we look at it, how did Christ function, what was his body like, what could he do, what could he not do? That becomes the template for the body that you and I will have. It's important for us to catch that, to understand that.

Start getting excited about the reality of that. And it's not just cotton ball clouds and see-through bodies and golden harps and churches made of marshmallow or whatever you envision. I don't know how you see it. But we need to think much more concretely about it. So turn in your Bibles, if you haven't already. I want to look at this passage of Scripture which I think will help you obey God by putting your mind where it ought to be in terms of your great expectation of the next life. Let's look at these eight verses beginning in verse 36 of Luke Chapter 24. So find that if you haven't already, follow along. I'm going to read it for you from the English Standard Version starting in verse 36. "As they were talking about these things..." Now glance back up. We're dealing with Cleopas and his friend who came back from the road to Emmaus and came to the 11, it says there in verse number 33, and they're talking now with the apostles, the remaining apostles minus Judas, and there are other people there of course. And as they're talking about all of that, BAM! here it comes, middle of verse 36, "Jesus himself stood among them, and said, 'Peace to you!' But they," verse 37, "were startled and frightened and they thought they saw a spirit." It can't be real. "And he said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' When they had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy," they marveled, "they were marveling, and he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and he ate it before them."

Interesting set of details, specific details, about Christ chomping on a piece of broiled fish in his resurrected body, that if you just consider it and think about it, it will start to change the way you anticipate the next life and keep you, I think, from the big mistake of Christians being so focused on the "here and now," that they don't get excited about that "there and then."

So let's take this piece by piece starting in verse 36. I don't mean to make too much of this simple statement that Jesus makes, but he uses the word sparingly and in this passage he uses it as almost the bookend to the Gospel of Luke. It is quoted here that he says, "Peace to you." That word began the Gospels when in Chapter 2, the angels came and said that there was going to be peace, at the beginning of this book, at the beginning of the Gospel, "among those with whom God is pleased." They announced that. The coming of Christ is going to bring peace and it's going to bring peace, not in the sense that the world's going to be drinking Coca-Cola and singing songs and all of that. It's not that kind of peace, it's the peace that is "among those that God is pleased with."

So God is going to reconcile himself to his people. Then at the end of his ministry, here he comes on the scene and he says, "Peace to you." Now I know you can say this is just the Hebraic idiom of greeting, you know, Shalom. I think this means far more than that in this context. As a matter of fact, if you just trace this theme, there's something about that concept and word that is the antithesis of what sin is. We talked last week about the first two chapters and the last two chapters of the Bible, and everything in between being a mess. Well, we have really the descriptive of what God has done in the Garden being recreated in the end. If you want to talk about things being made right,

here is a good word for it - Peace. He's brought a finality to it.

Sometimes I quote that Greek word "teleios" from the platform because it doesn't have a really good, I think, English translation and it's got that sense of "Awe! That's just the way it ought to be." And so it is with this concept. As he greets them, standard Hebraic greeting, I get that, but there's something about us taking that a step further saying isn't this really what this was all about, the conquering of death, the completion of his ministry, him stepping from the mortal to the immortal, putting off this perishable body that could die on a Roman execution rack to step into this body that would become the prototype for all of his people? He shows up to the 11 and plus a few others and he says to them, listen, "Peace," which is much more than just the greeting, I think, in this context. It's certainly something to get us to think, this is what it's all about.

I talk so often about the problem of the prosperity gospels, not to mention so many evangelicals that all they think about is trying to make your Christian life a little bit better, a little more comfortable, a little more joyful. I'm all for joy, I'm all for comfort and that's great. But God has really pinned our hope on the future. And when it comes down to it, the capstone, as I said from First Corinthians 15, the final thing to be defeated is death. And here he stands defeating death in his own body and says, "peace." Everything is the way it ought to be. It is tranquil, it is right, it's the way it should be. And he's the first fruits of how that's going to be for all of us in this room. If you trust in Jesus Christ that is the ultimate peace. That's the ultimate solution. That's the ultimate, "Yes, things are the way they should be."

Number one on your outline, nothing profound here, but a good way to start off our outline. You need to "Know Your Resurrection Will Be a Great Thing," a great thing. A thing that is completed, a thing that is right, a thing that is all that it should be. That is our hope. Once you jot that down, turn with me to Romans Chapter 8, if you would. Romans Chapter 8. If this is not the hope of the Christian life, if this is not what we are anticipating, then as we said throughout this series, then everything about our Christianity is really a waste. It's so much sacrifice, it's so much fighting our flesh, it's so much denying the temptations of the world, it's so much pursuing righteousness and holiness and dealing with the world that's not helping us in this regard. It's a lot of work. It's a lot of trouble. As Jesus said, between here and the kingdom it is going to be filled with tribulation. "In this world you'll have tribulation." It doesn't sound like something I want to sign up for unless, of course, this narrow road leads to a gate and that gate we enter through is called Life and that life is all summed up, not just by relational reconciliation, but by a biologic solution to my sin problem. God is going to put me back in a perfected state. It's going to look a lot like the Garden only better, sealed and glorified and perfectly set in a perfect context in a perfect body. We talk about the glorified body of Christ, a Bible word, a church word "glorify." It's the perfected state of the body. It's the body being what it ought to be. And that experience, everything that we do experience as human beings, enmeshed in this thing, this biological body, it's all seen, it's all perceived through our bodies. I mean, everything about our experience in that place, it just all filtered through what we're going to be physically and in this passage it's helpful.

Look at Romans Chapter 8 reminding us of this. How great will it be? How much should we anticipate it? Let's start in verse 18, one of my favorite verses in the New Testament. Romans 8:18. And I know I say that a lot, so it can't be that every verse in the Bible is my favorite verse, but I do like this one a lot. It's in the top 100, how about that? Romans Chapter 8 verse 18. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time..." And again, I don't mean just to bash the easy targets of the prosperity gospel preachers. I mean it all the way down to discussions you often have in your small groups. Too often we are focused on all about this life and can't Christianity make my life cleaner

and better and joyful and happier and all the rest. We want all of that now. The theological descriptive of that, sometimes we call it an "over-realized eschatology" and I like the way that sounds, not just because it's fun to say, but because it's the fact that we know that the Bible says all these things about the fulfillment and gratification and the peace and tranquility of what he has planned for us. But I've over realized it. I want to see it now. I want to see it in this life. I want to see it here.

And Paul keeps saying, listen, you need to remember that's there, in this life trouble. There though, kingdom, great. And he says, I can't even compare, as bad as it is, and here's a guy who has been beaten up, he's been forsaken, he's gone hungry, shipwrecked, he's been a prisoner, he says, even my sufferings, I can't even "consider that the sufferings of this present time are worth comparing with the glory," the perfection, "of that which is to be revealed to us."

There's something great coming. Matter of fact, he personifies creation, he says in verse 19, "the creation waits with eager longing..." Of course, the rocks and the trees, they're just rocks and trees, but even in their subjection to the curse in Genesis 3, it's like that's not the way it's supposed to be. That's a good definition of sin. It is not the way it's supposed to be. Peace is a good definition of it, it's the way things are supposed to be. And so it's not even worth comparing the greatness and the perfection of all that's coming. Creation itself, it's waiting for this. It's waiting for what? It's waiting "for the revealing of the sons of God." It's like (trumpet sound). "Here come the sons of God." When is that going to happen? That's what this passage is all about.

First it explains creation reminding us of Genesis 3, "it was subject to futility." All the problems in the fabric of the universe that we live in, "not willingly," it's not like it did anything wrong, "but because of him," God, "who subjected it," but he subjected it, here's the theme of the Christian life, "in hope." Hope. And I know we use hope and we have a very short, myopic view of hope, "I want it to get better next year, I wanted to get better next month, I'd like it to get better two years from now." God's view of hope is much bigger than that. The whole Christian life, the universe itself, subjected to futility and frustration and problems, all of that "in hope that the creation itself is going to be set free from its bondage to corruption and the obtaining of the freedom of the glory of the children of God." There are two good connective phrases right there. Verse 19, the "revealing of the sons of God" and the "freedom of the glory," the perfection, the greatness, "of the children of God."

"We know the whole creation," verse 22, "has been groaning together with the pains of childbirth." Really, really bad to go through labor. But the whole point is you get this baby at the end of it and then all that pain is, Jesus said, it's forgotten because the baby is here, the joy of that baby is born. So much so that women do it again and again. That's incredible. It's a lot of pain but we're going to go through that because of what comes at the end of this. "We know the whole creation has been groaning together with the pains of childbirth until now. And not only," it says in verse 23, "creation, but we ourselves..." and here's where I think we fail, we don't groan about this enough because we're too focused on trying to rearrange things here on Earth. "We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit," we know what it is to have a relational connection again, a reconciliation with God, "we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons."

If you get adopted and you've got a really rich father and your father is the king, you're going to get all that inheritance, get all that stuff, all the blessings from dad. Well, when you get adopted, and I'm thinking aren't I already adopted? The Bible talks a lot about us being saved, present tense, being adopted, present tense, being redeemed, present tense. But the Bible also says all the conclusion of that, the fulfillment of that, the fruition of that, hasn't happened yet. Yeah, I'm saved,

but I'm going to be saved. I'm adopted, yeah, but really the adoption is about to happen. It's going to happen. I'm redeemed but I'm really going to be redeemed when I'm redeemed, and this whole thing that's wrong and stuff that's not the way it ought to be, is the way it ought to be when the frustration of sin and death is replaced with the peace of glorification and fulfillment. That's when it's going to happen. He says, "We ourselves, we have the first fruits of the Spirit, we've grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons."

And you want to know specifically what we're waiting for? We got relational reconciliation, I need my body to be fixed, "the redemption of our bodies," which speaks to so many things about the righting of this corrupted creation. "For in this hope we were saved." Now, right now I can say I'm saved, got a relationship with God, God is my father. But what I don't have is the fixing of all the implications of my sin problem. Ultimately, this terrible, fallen, futile world that we live in along with my body that is not what it ought to be. The redemption of our bodies. "For in this hope we are saved." That's what it's all about now. "Now hope that is seen is not hope." Tell the prosperity preachers that. Right? If we have it already, why would the Christian life be characterized by this future word? It's all about the future hope, our confidence in what God is going to do. "For who hopes for what he sees?" If you already have it, it's right there in front of you, then why would you have any hope? No. "We hope for what we do not see." And if we do then we are going to "wait for it with patience."

The reality of Christian life is that you and I need to get much more focused on where we're headed. Much more focused on the reality of the resurrection of the body, when we'll be able to, with Christ, have a piece of broiled fish in a resurrected body, then we'll be where we need to be. Talk about peace? Well, that's when I'll really have peace. Can I have some peace now? I can have some peace now. But the real peace that I'm looking for is a kind of peace that's going to solve all the problems, fix all the messed-up issues of life, the world, the culture, the enemy that we deal with in temptation and myself, my own selfish desires.

Now, think about it. And again, I don't know, maybe you've heard a few of these sermons before, you think, "Ah, he's just so negative." I'm not negative. As a matter of fact, I believe that you can have a kind of peace that surpasses all understanding. I believe that in the midst of this world, in the middle of this world of tribulation, to quote John 16, you can take heart because Christ has overcome the world. That hasn't happened yet in terms of taking his great power and fixing the problems and beginning to reign, where "the crooked is made straight and the rough places are plain," to quote Isaiah. That hasn't happened yet. So I recognize this: I think you should seek and have a kind of peace and joy that looks past your circumstances. You should pursue that, you should choose that, you should chase that, you should grab that. But that's much like Jesus in the hole of a ship of a boat in the middle of a storm being able to sleep and relax and rest in the middle of all that while everyone else is freaking out.

See, now what happens in the passages you remember on the Sea of Galilee, that terrible storm that whipped up, is that everyone thought they were going to die and Jesus gets up and calms the storm. And my point is that is not the paradigm, that is not the pattern. As a matter of fact, everyone in this room, we're going to have problems, issues financially, relationally, and eventually biologically and death. We're going to have the problem of death.

And the point is one day God is going to fix that when the last enemy to be destroyed IS death and God grants us eternal life. We have the redemption of the body and then creation celebrates and heaven celebrates and you and I will celebrate and we will say, finally it's here. All I'm saying is

we're in a storm. The good news is, yes, we preach about it a lot, you can have a distinctively Christian life that finds joy and peace in the midst of the storm, but one day the storm will be settled and solved and the waters will be tranquil and calm.

But that isn't going to happen until we reach the kingdom. That is not going to happen until this mortal body puts on immortality and my perishable body puts on an imperishable body. That's not going to happen until the next life. Know that your resurrection will be a great thing. Keep looking forward. Know that your citizenship is in heaven. We await, from that heaven, a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies and make them like his glorious body by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself. That exertion of power has yet to come, and as I often quote, he will take that power and he will begin to reign and he'll start by changing your body. He will change your body to be like his. A great thing, much more can be said. Don't mean to make too much of a simple phrase, Shalom, "Peace to you," but it means far more theologically than it does in terms of a salutation.

Verse 37. Back to our passage Luke 24:37 through 39. "They're startled, they're frightened, they think they see a ghost." It's Casper the Friendly Ghost. It's an apparition, it's a vision, it's a laser, I don't know. They think they see something but it's not him. "And he says to them, 'Why are you troubled, why do doubts arise in your hearts?'" Again, just like on the road to Emmaus, just like we saw in the garden tomb, Jesus expects them to know the Scriptures, he expects them to know theology, he expects them to know this is the whole point. Redemption is about fixing the sin problem and fixing the death problem. They don't get it. So he says listen, know that I'm not a spirit, know that my biological unit right now is me. "Look at my hands, look at my feet. It is I myself," Let's just focus on that. "It is I myself." And what is that? I don't want to get too philosophical, but what does that imply? Right?

That everything that we went through as we traveled through Galilee and Samaria and Judea and walked through the streets of Jerusalem and you watch me tip over tables on the Temple Mount, all of that experience, I'm the same person. My history and our shared experience is now we're being reunited and there's a reunion now and all of that. "Listen, this is good, I'm back from the dead." Just like in First Thessalonians 4, we quoted it at funerals all the time, what comfort is there in seeing the dead raised if our shared experience is no longer shared experience? If we don't know each other, if we're so different or so brand new that there's no correspondence between who I am now and who I'll be then.

And the point is, we will be. Jesus said, "It's me. It's me. You and I have had a past, our experience." Now again, very weird point to jot down and only gives you three letters to write down, but on number two, could you put it down this way? You and I need to "Know Your Resurrection Will Be 'You.'" Your resurrection will be YOU. What? Your resurrection will be you. You will be you. Might be different? Yes, you'll be different. Transformed lowly to glorious? Yes. Even changed in who you are in terms of some parts of your character? Absolutely. There will be change but you will be you. People are the same people on earth as they will be even in the Lake of Fire, think of it this way, because there is no logical reason for culpability and condemnation for someone who isn't responsible for doing the deeds they did. In other words, judgment makes no sense if there's not a one-to-one correspondence in terms of people.

And so it is in heaven. What good is it to be reunited if you're not you and they're not them? Shared experience is important. You don't lose your identity. That may be a simple thing to say but it was that very thing that led the Sadducees to come to Jesus in our Daily Bible Reading this morning and

try and tell him, "I think the resurrection is ridiculous."

Now the Sadducees only believed in Genesis through Deuteronomy. They believed in the five books of Moses. In the five books of Moses they couldn't see any clear statements about the resurrection or life after death. So they came to Jesus, they were against the Pharisees who believed in the rest of the Old Testament who did believe in the resurrection and life after death, and they said this is dumb and here's the illustration we'll give you. We read it this morning. Matter of fact, we started in this verse this morning in our Daily Bible Reading. And that's where the Sadducees come and they say, "I've got a question for you. You believe in this resurrection thing? Tell me about how this works. You've got a guy who's got a wife and the guy dies. Now you've got a widow." In the Old Testament, back in Deuteronomy, there was this thing, we get the English word from the Latin word, "brother-in-law" Law.

So the "brother-in-law" Law was this. And don't think about your brother-in-law too closely as I give you this illustration. The brother-in-law had to marry the widow of his brother. That was so that in that culture, very important, you could sire children, you could have children and offspring, so important for so many reasons, and so this widow who had no kids had to have kids through the brother-in-law and it was an obligation. And so here was the scenario. Husband #1 dies, brother #2 steps in. They don't have any kids. Brother #2 dies, brother #3 steps in. They don't have any kids. Brother #3 dies, brother #4 steps in. And at this point you're not going to want to marry this gal. There's something really wrong in this relationship. But he dies, five dies, six dies, seven dies and then she dies.

So you got one gal who has been married to seven brothers, very strange, and now they're supposed to live in the next life. And Sadducees say, "Can't be. Tell us how that works." Why? Because it is fundamentally predicated on this: shared experience, one-to-one correspondence. In other words, you're going to get there and say, "You were my wife, I was your husband in the last life. That's what we had." Now all the sudden, "Oh, wait a minute, you married my brother. Oh, hey brother, we had shared experience. This is weird. She's my wife." "No, she's your wife." "No, she's my wife." Oh, third brother, fourth brother. You can see this is a mess.

All why? Because the assumption is in the resurrection you believe that you will live in another place, it will be you, shared experience, memories, all the rest, relationship restored. How does that work? Remember how Jesus responded in that if you read it this morning? If not, read your DBR tonight, your Daily Bible Reading. Jesus puts it, I love the way he puts it, very simply, he says, verse 29, "You are wrong." I love it when he gets right to the point. "You are wrong." And he says two things, "You don't know the Scriptures." You're only basing the afterlife on the Pentateuch, and even if you read the Pentateuch you'd understand Genesis through Deuteronomy even gives us insight into the afterlife. He starts quoting now the burning bush, that's how he ends, talking about the burning bush where the angel of the Lord says to Moses, "I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And he says, "God's not the God of the dead but of the living." Surely there's life after death. He goes to the Pentateuch, the Scriptures, the Sadducees and he makes the case and proves the case.

But he starts with this: a discussion about the power of God, "He says, "You don't know the Scriptures and you don't know the power of God." Describing the power of God, he now starts to talk about angels. He says you know angels, angels don't have this marriage thing. It's not that they are not relating to one another, it's not that they don't have friendship, it's not that they don't have love, it's not that they don't have joy, it's not that they don't have connection. They have all of that.



That is probably, as you just think about it, these creatures that have never fallen, never morally corrupt, never transgress God's law, they must have much better relationships than we have.

And the Bible now says this whole earthly marital covenant thing, you're not going to have that there. Matter of fact, the power of God is going to hopefully get you to think, as Paul said in First Corinthians, that "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, the mind of man has not even conceived the good things that God has planned for those who love him." There is something so much better than what you imagine in an earthly marriage. You need to understand the power of God is going to make this perfect. You will be relating to one another like the angels relate to one another and it is far better than anything you've experienced in your marriages.

Just know, you don't know the Scriptures, which clearly teach the afterlife and the resurrection and you don't understand by your stupid little illustration here. He doesn't use the word stupid but I just did, a stupid illustration which comes up several times in the New Testament, by the way, that's another story. The idea is though, because I'll get emails about using the words stupid from the pulpit, because, "I brought my kid in and I told my kid not to say that." Never mind, I'm sorry. Back to the sermon. The idea is, he doesn't say that's a stupid illustration but it is. It's a scenario that doesn't make sense. Ultimately, you've got to trust in the fact that when God takes what's broken, what's imperfect, what's tainted by sin, and says I'm going to make you, human beings - intellect, emotion and will - and I'm going to put you in a physical body and you're going to have way better relationships than you had anything on earth. No one is going to sit there and worry about the fact that, "Wait a minute, you are my brother, you married my wife." None of that's a concern. You don't know the Scriptures and the power of God. But what's the assumption? He doesn't say, "Well, we'll be completely different people, it won't matter." That's not the point. My point is though you will be who you are.

People often ask me, "Will I recognize people?" And I often say, "Well, if you don't, I'm sure they'll be name tags." We'll get started with name tags, right? Because people ask me that about the Mount of Transfiguration, the one-to-one correspondence. Here is Moses and Elijah, they show up. The Moses of the Bible who talked to God in the burning bush, there he is standing with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. Elijah, same thing. All of his miracles, all that he did, the great prophet. His history is now present there. And they often ask me, "How do they know it was Elijah and Moses?" And I'm thinking, well, I don't know. Maybe they had name tags or maybe Jesus introduced them. But clearly there was a one-to-one correspondence in the afterlife to who they were in this life. And then I'm thinking, OK, same thing is going to be true in my life. There'll be Mike Fabarez there, there'll be you there and we will connect and we will have a shared history, I think, if you know me, and there will be an introduction.

It reminds me of the inverse of what happens at your high school reunions, which I don't suggest you go to, but if you happen to brave your high school reunion, depending on how many years it's been, you go there and it's very depressing, number one, is it not, to go to these reunions and see these people, depending on how long it's been since your graduation. But one thing I like about the ones that I've been to, I've been dragged to a couple, you get a name tag and that's helpful. And then they have the very helpful thing on the name tag is they usually print a picture, a nice little color picture of your high school senior portrait, which is helpful and a little depressing at the same time. But it's there.

And when you go up to talk to someone and you see this face and it's like, "Wow, life has been hard on you." You can look down and say, "Oh yeah, I remember you," because you're looking at the

picture. Sometimes they don't recognize the people at the high school reunion. But I look at the picture and, "Ah, now, I remember who you are. Yes, yes, yes, that's who you are. It may be the inverse of that. OK? We may get to the New Jerusalem and we may have resurrected bodies and you may look at me and I may look at you and we looked so good there, I'll say, "Who were you again?" And there'll be a nice picture of you when I knew you on Earth. "Oh, yeah, I remember," and we'll get it at that point.

But my point is though we may be very different, as I'm about to illustrate and explain from Scripture, there will be a correspondence, a shared history. Now there are a lot of new people you're going to meet in the New Jerusalem in your tactile, real body. But the people who you knew here, there will be recognition. If not, there's no comfort at all in the words "comfort one another with these words" from First Thessalonians 4, that we're going to be reunited with people who were Christians who we loved. That's going to happen. Know that your resurrection will be you. That's a weird way to put it. Who knows what you'll think of that when you read it a week from now, "I don't know what he meant," but maybe you know what it means now.

Now let's move on to verse 39b, in the middle of the verse, he says, "Yes, it is I myself. Touch me, and see." Touch me. You think I'm a spirit, a ghost? "For a spirit does not have flesh and bones that you see that I have," flesh and bones. Yes, meat, skin, bones, this frame. "I have those things." He's admitting he has those things. "And when he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet." I'm not levitating over the floor here in this room. I'm real, touch me, tactile. I've got hands. I can clap together like this. I can have little bones and a membrane in my ear, three little bones moving around sending impulses to my brain. He's about to pick up a piece of broiled fish in verse 42 and he's about to eat it in verse 43, and it's not just going to fall to the ground when he puts it in his invisible, see-through mouth. He's got teeth, he's got a tongue, he's got taste buds, he's got lips, he's got a throat, he's got an esophagus, he's got a stomach, he's got a digestive tract. It's all real. It's flesh and bones.

Number three on your outline, you need to "Know Your Resurrection..." if it's going to be just like Christ's, "...Will Be Physical," a physical resurrection. There's a physicality, a tangibility to it. It will be that you will be able to clap your hands and feel that sensation and you'll be able to hear that, there'll be meat on the palms of your hands, and you will hear it in your ears, and there will be impulses going through your body, all of that, just like in the creation in Genesis 1 and 2, you will be a physical being.

Now, that will all be good and fine until you go to a passage like this, First Corinthians Chapter 15, you're going to read verse 44 and you are going to go, "Ah, Pastor Mike was wrong." Go there with me please and let's just at least clarify what this means. First Corinthians 15:44. In this passage so many people have gone awry in their understanding of our resurrected bodies. But once you read the context I think you'll get it, and next time you read this you won't say, "Well, what we learned in church on Sunday was not true, it's not right, because Jesus must have been spiritual, a phantom, a spirit. No. Our passage is clearly saying the opposite. So then we have to figure out, well, the clear passage has got to help me interpret this unclear passage because this passage seems unclear to me and it might be simply by the way we use these adjectival phrases, these words. Verse 44 of First Corinthians 15. Just glanced back up in the context, you'll see we're talking about what kind of bodies do we get when we get resurrected and he starts to list them in verse 42. Here are some comparisons, we had this, now we're going to have that, we had this, we're going to have that.

In verse 44, the last of the four comparisons, he says, "We've sown a natural body," the point is you

bury the person, you've sown a natural body, but "it is raised a spiritual body." And that's when you go, "Wow, I'm confused. I thought it wasn't a spiritual body. He said he wasn't a spirit, he has flesh and bones, he's eating fish. If I'm supposed to be like Christ why is it a spiritual body?"

Keep glancing through this. Look in the next verse, verse 45. You see the comparison between the first man, Adam, and then what's called here the last Adam. Look in verse 46. Can you see the distinction between the man who was from Earth and the second man from heaven? Look at verse 49, "Just as we borne the image of the man of dust..." Right? He sinned and he was nothing but a natural sinner. That's what he was. And he produced a bunch of natural born sinners. "We will also bear the image of the man of heaven." Well that's all we're talking about in this passage. What does the image of the man of heaven look like?

And we're dealing with the body... By the way, every time the word "body" is used in the New Testament, verse 44, you see this word, translates a Greek word "Soma" it's talking about a body when it is used in a narrative text, we're talking about a physical, tangible body. And it's described as either natural or spiritual. And all I'm saying is if you rush now to "spirit" as in ghost or phantom, you've lost the context of this passage. The context is Adam - Christ. We have someone who's a sinner, someone who's righteous. We have a physical body that's prone to temptation and falling, and we have a physical body that is not. A glorified man from heaven who wants heaven's priorities and wants to do the righteous, right, godly thing.

Those are two different kinds of bodies. They're both physical, but one is spiritual in the way that you say in your small group, "Jim in our small group is a really spiritual guy." You don't mean see through. Right? You don't mean that. You mean he's a godly guy. He righteously desires righteous things. Now that's true, but he does that at the conflict that he has with his own body, with his fallen, physical flesh. One day though, Jim will have a resurrected body and he will not have to fight any of that. He will not desire selfish things, he will desire righteous things.

Let's put it this way. If you're taking some sub-notes here under number three, let's get four quick sub-notes, all about the physical nature of the body. Jesus is making the case I have a physical body. Let "A" I can learn from this passage, it is the ideal physical godliness. Let's put it that way. It's ideal physical godliness. What do you mean by that? I mean there's something about the man of dust, the fallenness of the dust of the earth created in this man who is now cursed. God said, "Cursed is the ground because of you." I'm made of the stuff of the ground. This ground now has all kinds of problems. It is now susceptible to disease. It's also a principle of our humanity that is in rejection of God, rebellion, we just are bent to do evil. That's the problem with the body.

Even as Christians my heart may be made right with God but I'm fighting the impulses of my fallenness. What are the works of my fallenness in my flesh? Well, the Bible lists them in Galatians 5. Right? Here are the works of the flesh. They're very evident. Matter of fact, and when people engage in those things they start to realize how much corruption there is in them and even in the world they start thinking, "Wait a minute, I need to fix this." Whether it's gambling or pornography or alcoholism, they all get to a place where they say, "I need help." So they create their groups: Gamblers Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, and they try to get out of it because they know this is destructive, all the impulses of my addictions in my body.

Inverted, there's the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit, even in our lives, working through the battle that we waged with our body, if it prevails and I walk by the Spirit, now all of a sudden the fruit of the Spirit is evident: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and on the list goes. Now here's the thing, I

have to fight my body for those things. There's an element of my humanity that's bent to sin. Here's a physical body now that is going to be bent to do right. It is physically godly. See, and when it comes to like, I don't know, kindness, there's no Kindness Anonymous, did you notice that? No one's trying to get freed from that or a Generosity Anonymous, or, you know, Loving Anonymous. Everyone likes those things, and as it says even in that passage, "against these things there is no law." There's no prohibition against any of those things. But, see, we don't ever have that problem because God says I love those things, I want more of those things. The resurrected body has that, it is a spiritual body. It is a body that is wired and designed to do what is godly.

Go back up to the beginning of this list, as long as we're here, let's create A, B, C and D. Okay, here's letter "B." "It is sown perishable, it's raised imperishable." It doesn't die. It doesn't age. I put it this way, it's the ideal physical age, it's the ideal physical godliness, it's the ideal physical age. Well, people ask me how old are you going to be? If I die at 90 am I going to come back in the resurrected body as a 90-year-old? If I die, you know, as a baby, is it going to be babies getting wheeled around in eternity in strollers? What's going to happen? And all I'm saying is the picture here is an imperishable body, I don't think stuck in time. The whole point of the maturation process is to get past the greenness, if you will, of immaturity, of being unfinished, of not being right, I hate to say it that way.

And then you reach this maturity and then the problem is we're chasing that maturity or, you know, that full-orbed, the way my life should be, and all of a sudden we're in this decay process, and so we're trying to get back to where we were when we were 27 or 30 or whatever we were and were fighting it. And there's the worn down and there's the worn out and there's a used up and there are the wrinkles and the sags and the bags and all the rest, if you want to get specific, all this stuff goes downhill. All I'm saying is the age issue, the agelessness, God is going to bring us back to right where we need to be.

And there is a need, I suppose, for name tags in that case, or God's going to somehow get us all introduced. You're going to meet people who died at an old age and you're going to meet them at the perfect age. You going to know people, I suppose, and people who have had children who have died and you're going to get to meet them as fully mature people. Neither unfinished nor worn out. Neither undeveloped or used up. Neither immature or old. There'll be a perfect, ideal, physical age because it is imperishable, it's all that it should be, full maturity without any signs of being worn out.

Letter "C." "What is sown in dishonor is raised in glory." This is helpful, I suppose, in our day. "It's sown in dishonor." That's a word that's used in First Corinthians 11 of things that don't look right. Now, it's a passage about some interesting things that are going on in the church at the time, but somebody who does not have the right appearance. It's not right. Now specifically about the way church was done in Corinth and he's trying to fix that problem. The word "glory" again I talk about perfected, it's used that way and many other ways. It really at its core has the sense of weightiness or light or...

But when Jesus uses it as it relates to how things look, he speaks of the lilies of the field in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6. He says, "Even Solomon in all of his regalia..." one of the most prosperous times in Israel's history, probably the most prosperous time in Israel's history, thousand years before Christ, Solomon had everything going for him. He could dress in the finest clothes and in his regalia as a king, he says, "Even Solomon didn't have the glory," didn't have that beauty, "of a flower, the lily of the field."

And I'm saying when it comes to what is ideal, and we're talking about our physicality here, we'll have an ideal physical godliness, an ideal physical age, you can put it down this way, Letter "C" we have an ideal physical appearance. Ideal. What do I mean by that? It'll be beautiful. And in a world that's working hard to be beautiful, you won't have to work hard to be beautiful anymore, because you will be beautiful. If you think, "Well, that means everyone's going to look the same." No. Everyone's is not going to look the same. Just like flowers don't all look the same, and you can arrange them all in a bouquet, and it looks good because each flower, though it's different, looks good. There will be every tongue, every tribe, every nation. And there will be a variety and a diversity, but all of it will be ideal and perfect. So leave your makeup at home. You won't need to pack that. Wow! That was too personal. Not for me, it was just too personal for you (smile).

An ideal physical godliness, an ideal physical age, an ideal physical appearance. One more. "It's sown in weakness, it's raised in power." It's sown in weakness, it's raised in power. Look at these words, spiritual, imperishable, glorious, powerful. I put it this way: an ideal physical strength. An ideal physical strength. So many people are looking at heaven or the New Jerusalem thinking, "I just hope there's a nice lounge by the pool or a nice hammock on a beach, I just want a cabana boy with nachos and lemonade, I just want to chill, relax.

The only reason you want to chill and relax is because you are weak. Let's put it that way (smile). You are weak, you get tired, you're worn out, you need a vacation, you need a break. Here is this body that the Bible describes here as powerful and we're speaking of the physicality of a real body. Here's a phrase for you from Revelation 22 verse 3, it says, "His servants," I think here's the best translation of the next word, "will serve him," his servants will serve him. They'll be constantly involved in serving him. And I'm thinking, "Oh man, I was hoping to get a break from all that." Yes. Our eternal state can be described as rest, rest like we were on a stormy sea and now there's tranquility and peace.

But now that everything's calm, we're on this ship, if you will, and there's lots of good work to do and you will love doing that work. So much so that two verses later in Revelation 22, it says, by the way, "there'll be no night." And again I'm going, "Darn, you know, I would like there to be night and a nice fluffy pillow, blackout curtains, I want to relax and sleep but you won't. The only reason I want that is because I'm weak and I get tired. And the ideal physical body is going to have an ideal physical strength and a kind of strength that no one's going to want it to be night. There'll be no night. We will be constantly energized and powering through physiologically all that is before us. We'll do it with great verve, we'll do it with great vigor, we'll do it with great excitement and energy. Ideal physical godliness, age, appearance and strength. Spiritual, imperishable, glorious and powerful. That's a pretty good menu of things, I think, that could get us excited about where we're going, because we'll understand our resurrected bodies a bit better.

One more thing, verses 41 through 43 back and Luke 24. Let's wrap this up here. Luke 24:41, "While they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?'" Now I'm thinking what's with that? Are you hungry? I mean, you just broke bread with the guys on the road to Emmaus. What are you doing? Well of course, he's trying to prove his physicality, he's trying to prove that he's material, he's not a ghost. He's trying to prove that. He takes that "piece of broiled fish," that they gave him and, "he took it and he ate it before them."

And much like the first point, I don't want to make too much of this statement, but I do want to remember how often in Scripture it seems like food is a big part of this thing. Why is he eating

here? He could have done a lot. He could have said just come punch me in the stomach or, you know, he could have done pushups or he could have done something I suppose. But he eats food which clearly puts to bed the fact that he's a spirit. But it also does something. It reminds me of our Daily Bible Reading yesterday. We read the second half of Matthew 22 in our New Testament reading today. Yesterday, do you remember the first part of that? Verses 1 and 2 in Matthew 22? It said, what can I compare the kingdom of heaven? I compare it to this: "The kingdom heaven is like a king who gave a wedding feast for his son." And then it goes on to make a lesson about the fact you better be ready and prepared and dressed in the right clothes to be in this big wedding reception.

But I'm thinking to myself that's not the first time Jesus starts talking about the eternal state and talking about it in terms of food. It's constant. Look at how many times he talks about the fact that many will come from the east and the west and the north and the south. They will recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and they will feast. The entire first part of our experience in the New Jerusalem is going to be feasting. The entire first seven years of our experience with Christ is called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The whole point of our eternity seems to be characterized initially by a sense of eating.

Now again maybe for some it works better than others, but if you want to talk about something really gratifying, let's talk about food. Let's not just talk about food, let's go eat together. That would be a really good thing. Time and time and time and time again, the eternal state is characterized, at least one of the things it's characterized as, is food. The gratification and satisfaction of food. Christ himself speaks of himself as food. I'm water, I quench your thirst. I'm bread, I satisfy you. And when we get there in Revelation Chapter 22 it talks about this stream that's going out from the throne and on each side it's lined on each side like a street. We had one in my neighborhood as a kid called Abbeyfield that had all these trees all the way down. It's like a canopy, it was fun to ride my bike down that street.

Here is the sea, this river of water and on each side, here it is, the Tree of Life. And it's going to bear fruit and people are going to eat it and it's going to sustain them just like that Tree of Life, it was called that in Genesis Chapter 2 and 3, a Tree of Life that they weren't going to eat anymore because of their sin and they were guarded from it so they wouldn't live forever. There's something about a sustaining picture of feasting and satisfaction.

And to put it in terms of what the Bible would have to say, I think a good summary word is this. Let's put it this way on your outline. Number four, you need to "Know Your Resurrection Will Be Gratifying" in every physical way, in every emotional way. It's going to be exactly what you could ever dream that it could ever be in terms of words like gratification, satisfaction, fulfillment, and even this word, let's put it down. Psalms 16:11. It will be pleasurable. There'll be something about it that will be so pleasurable and satisfying. "In his presence," I'm quoting this now from Psalm 16:11, "In his presence there is fullness of joy; and at his right-hand pleasures for evermore."

Now here's the problem about the Christian life. You're walking down Abbeyfield, and there's a part of that, that is in my childhood in Long Beach but, where there are no trees and it's not shady and it's not good and it's not fulfilling and there is no food. That's how it feels. "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." You get through this narrow road, called the road that leads to life, but the good news is you get to a gate and you enter through this gate and once you get there you see this stream of water. You see this Tree of Life on both sides and you have all that your heart would ever desire, the physicality of it, the emotional part of it, the relational part of

it, it becomes everything you could be designed to desire, is given to you in this place. Know your resurrection will be gratifying.

I quoted it earlier, it's quoted in a bit of a different context, but First Corinthians Chapter 2 verse 9 says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart of man has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." We quote it often from Ephesians Chapter 3 verse 20. "Now to him who's able to do far more abundantly than we could ever ask or think." God is going to do stuff that is so good, if you sit here and grieve over what you're not going to have there, then you don't understand the greatness of God, the power of God, nor do you understand the Scriptures as Jesus said to the Sadducees.

This is going to be a gratifying reality. And it's one that is going to involve a lot of things including food. You want to talk about food? It's a good thing, it satisfies my biological cravings. As Augustan said, there is a restlessness in your heart until you find reconciliation with God, and that's true. You find that relationship with God. But beyond that, as Lewis would extend that concept, C.S. Lewis, said you know, "If we find in ourselves desires that nothing in this earth can satisfy then God must have made us for another place." And that's the reality. There is another place for us and it's not here. Am I saying we should be dour and sad and terrible and, you know, "Oh, woe is me?" No. Let's make as much joy and peace as we can have in this earth. But in this earth it's going to be that we're just trying to take a nap on a tossing ship in the storm. But one day the storm is going to go away. And it'll be great and it'll be satisfying.

My daughter Steph and I were driving down the road to the church one night and they built that new hotel just down the street. It was brand new and it was almost like a brochure, they'd washed off the sidewalk, it was wet and the lights were on and just it was really pretty, and as we went by it when it was all finished and now open for business, my daughter said "That looks like a nice place to stay." And then she paused and then she said, "but why would we. We've got our house." Now only a preacher would get to the office and write that down. But I wrote that down, I thought that's a good line, and that's going to preach one day. I didn't tell her that but I wrote it down. That's it! And I thought to myself, well that's it! How? That's it because I think in this world so often we're passing by situations in this life, even in our hearts thinking that the grass is greener on the other side. That would be great if I could just get there and this in this world that has this to offer and we think so much about trying to make much of this life.

And even my daughter could see but there is something so much better, it's called home, where the pantry is stock and the refrigerator is full and we know how to work the remote control and everything is the way it ought to be. And that place, I don't know, it might be nice but it's not home. And my daughter can draw from her memory about her home and say, "Well, why would I have stayed here, I got my house?" You have to work to imagine that through good solid study in the travel guide. You've got to know where we're headed. You've got to start by thinking about our resurrected bodies that are going to mirror Christ's resurrected body and say this is a really good place.

Therefore, when I'm driving down the roads of this world and there's a lot of shiny signs saying come stay here, you say, "I don't have to climb the corporate ladder, I don't have to get ahead. I don't have to be the person that's grubbing and reaching and biting and devouring one another to get all the things out of life that I think I need." Because in the end it doesn't satisfy. In the end God's got a place it's called home. Our citizenship is in heaven and from there we await a savior and when he gets here the first thing he's going to do is he's going to transform our lowly bodies to be like his

glorious body, his perfected body. That ought to be our hope.

But it's only your hope if you've been qualified for it. And so many people in church this morning are going to try to somehow clean up their lives well enough so that they can get qualified to go to heaven. And you and I know the Gospel. Right? We know that that is not how it works. The whole point of the Christian life is that Christ did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. He absorbed the wrath I deserved, lived the life I should have lived, and he offers to me everything I need to be qualified, even if I were the worst sinner in the world and I got saved two minutes before my death. People don't like that, they don't understand that grace. But that's what we are thankful for. And I thought it would be good for us to end this sermon about what I hoped would be an encouraging look at what's coming, a preview of our future resurrection, by reminding us why we are qualified as Christians to get there.

So I'm going to ask the ushers to come down. We're going to celebrate the Lord's Supper right now. And I like you to think about it in terms of Colossians Chapter 1, that reminds us that we can give thanks to the Father because he has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light because "he's delivered us from the domain of darkness, he's transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption." We have it now relationally, we'll have it then biologically. And then he puts this comma and he says this: "the forgiveness of sins." The ultimate reason I have a hope of the redemption of the body is because of the forgiveness of my sins. I don't want you to ever think about the glories and the greatness of heaven without at least stopping and saying, "Thank you God for what Christ did to purchase my inheritance there." He has qualified me for this.

So you take these elements. If you've never taken in the Lord's Supper with us, I want to remind you this is for Christians who know they have a relationship with God. This does not turn into anything magically or mystically, this is a reminder. "Eat this bread, drink this cup in remembrance of me." If you could spend some time between now and the time I come back up in about four minutes and we take this together just praying and talking to God. If there's anything standing between you and God that you need to confess, confess it now. It takes a minute, a second for you to confess your sins because he's faithful and righteous to forgive you. If there's relational distance between you and God, it's time to fix it so you can get to the place of really focusing on the good things that are ahead knowing that Christ has done this for you. You spend time with God, you talk to him privately, I'll come back up in three and a half minutes and we'll take these elements together.

The uniqueness and the greatness of the Gospel, I hope you recognize, is the thing I just mentioned about what makes non-Christians say, "I don't get this. You should be able to go to heaven if you do a lot of good things. You can't be a bad person and just get forgiven, just like that." It's unthinkable for non-Christians to really grasp what grace is all about. But I hope this morning when you think about the amazing, fantastic gift of eternal life that is going to be granted to us in this New Jerusalem, that you realize the only qualification you have is Christ. It's only because of what he did for us. That is an amazing thing. It sends us home with an assurance that's not based on something you did or didn't do, it's based on the fact that you trust in the finished work of Christ. To be forgiven, to be accepted, to be qualified for the inheritance that we've been talking about, something all we can do is be thankful for, God as fully done it.

I want us to have that and I love the fact that the word "thanks" is there in Colossians Chapter 1 that that's kind of the expression of the Christian life, how grateful, how relieved we are that Christ has done this for us. It was the name that was given to the Lord's Supper early in Church history the



concept of being thankful, the Cup of Thanksgiving it was called. We want to be thankful when we're remembering what we're doing here, remembering the death of Christ. It was paid in full and I hope that this morning you can spend a little bit of time, not just in our communion service but throughout the afternoon, just being thankful for what God has done for you. How good it is to be fully qualified for the resurrection we've been talking about. If you are a believer and a follower in Christ, you trust in him, I invite you now with great thanksgiving, to eat this bread and drink this cup.

Pray with me, please. God, we are grateful, not as much as we should be but we want to be more grateful this week, for the finished work of Christ that he did for us what we could not accomplish for ourselves. And that because we've repented of our sins and put our trust in you we are seeing the work of God played out in our lives. And it's a gift, you've granted faith, you've granted repentance, you've granted us eternal life and we look forward to the hope of eternal life, the confident assurance of what we're headed toward because of what you promised, what you've done, how faithful you are, and how kind and gracious and merciful you were to send Christ to fully qualify us.

So God, get our hopes set more fully this week on the blessed hope, the great return, the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, to have that mindset that says that we are setting our minds on things above, as Jesus said, storing up treasure in heaven, having our hearts there, firmly there this week, more than it's ever been before, so we might live a kind of life that reflects our priorities. Because we know where our treasure is our heart will be also. So seat our heart there, pin it there, put it there in a way that drives us to much more thanksgiving this week because of what you've done for us in Christ. Thanks for this time of remembering that through the bread and this cup. God let us now sing this last song and be dismissed with a great sense of your blessing, your favor, your goodness upon us as we celebrate and revel in what Christ has done on our behalf.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.