

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

June 2, 2019

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50 (NIV)

35But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. 50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Congregational Prayer: "Our Father"

Our Father, Which Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread, And Forgive Us Our Trespasses, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory. Forever And Ever. Amen

Sermon: "Heavenly Bodies"

Introduction:

- What was it like to be born? You were there. It was traumatic. Do you remember it? Now, in all fairness, I was there for my own birth. Mom says I was born with a clap of thunder in Fredericton, New Brunswick -

and mother that I had wide shoulders. But what was it like? A signal somehow says, go. After 40 weeks in the making, and being held in that special stretched sack called a womb, swimming in the special fluids that provide protection and care, and having gone from one single cell, to millions of cells in just a few short weeks, it's time. The mother's body changes. The baby's head drops into the birth canal. The amniotic fluid is released, and the warmth and darkness and quietness of the womb is replaced by... well, all this.

- Starting at verse 35 of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is about to give us a few words on our next big change - not from the womb to life here on earth, but from life on earth to the resurrected life with our resurrected bodies - how our bodies will be once we go to heaven.
- Today, let's get all excited about the body to come.

Part one: Death

- One day, I want to write my own reflections so that no one has to work at my funeral. I want lots of music, and a lot of fun. Amid the joyful music, I want to reflect on the things that I will not miss when Jesus calls me home - all that body function stuff that's so smelly and unpleasant, the aches and pains that, over time, seem to take longer and

longer to heal, all the losses that I will never have to deal with again, from hair loss, to hearing loss, to losses in our families. I won't miss the need for sleep. I won't miss brushing my teeth, needing deodorant, nor those times when, in a meeting, the beans become a bit musical in my belly, if you know when I mean.

- Now, God did a great job in creating these bodies, even going as far as Him saying that these bodies are not just good, but very good.
- But that was before the fall. That was before the first couple decided to rebel against God, and turned their back on God.
- And with that decision, our bodies changed. How, exactly they changed, I cannot tell you. But they did change, and dramatically. Look at Genesis chapter 3. In the later part of the chapter, we see the penalty that God places on the first couple for their dance with evil. Genesis 3:16 has the penalty for the woman: *"16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."* Now, was God's plan for the people to have children from the start? Or, was there a change in her body?
- To the man, his penalty led to the greatest change of all. Verse 18 of

the 3rd chapter says that the man shall toil, but that's not the biggest change. The penalty in verse 19 is huge: *19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

- Now this passage says that the penalty for Adam was death, and therefore our bodies started to break down - in a way that they were not originally designed. And therefore, I hurt more as I age, I slowly break down, I am slowly dying moment by moment. I am open to death, because, as the Book of Hebrews chapter 9 verse 27 says: *"... people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,..."* We are destined to die.

Part Two: The Seed

- Paul in this passage from 1 Corinthians 15 takes on the impossible task of trying to put into words something that no one knows anything about: what happens in death, how do we die. As William Barclay says in his commentaries of this chapter, the Apostle Paul is "trying to express the inexpressible, and describe the indescribable." Paul is trying to put into words and images what our human minds can understand of something unprovable and beyond our comprehension. What is death?

- Now remember that Paul has begun this passage with proof that the resurrection has happened, and will continue to happen. He started with the things of first importance that we saw two Sundays ago - that it's of first importance to know that Jesus died, and He was buried, and that He arose for our sins as described in scripture.
- Now to the question: What happens in death, in particular, what kind of body will we have?
- And he turns to the illustration of a seed.
- Now, Paul is not the first to use a seed in this way. Jesus used the seed many times to describe faith, or God's Word, or the Kingdom of God. But in John 12:24, Jesus says this: *"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."*
- It's an act of faith to take a seed, and plant it. To bury it. To let it go. One could use the seed to make bread immediately, to get an immediate gain.
- But by putting the seed into the ground, one releases it. You treat it like, as Jesus says, as if it is dead. An only then will it start to grow. And yet, only when it is reaped, when it is harvested, does the farmer actually get

- any reward for planting it. It's a long process. And it relies on faith.
- So too, our belief in Jesus Christ will result in a wonderful gift of eternal life, a changing of our present bodies for a body that is eternal, but only by us waiting for the harvest, only by us who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His resurrection and love shall we have this life. Only by belief in Jesus shall we be stepping from this life to the next.
- Now, the good news is this: eternal life is not the only gift from God. Jesus promises us in John 10:10 the gift of abundant life - that is full life, life that is complete and filled with Him and His presence and the gifts that He gives to us, like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control - the fruits of His Spirit in us all of which are available today, right now, this moment, as soon as you say yes to Him. All for those who believe.

Part Three: The Body

- But what will we look like in the resurrection? Well three answers
- 1. Seed to plant: We know that a corn seed, for instance, and a corn plant are not a bit alike in any way - a hard, yellow thing grows a tall, thin green stalk, and from it come tassels and then a head, and finally an ear of corn that houses hundreds of others seeds.

- What does this mean to you and I: Just wait and see - it's going to be great. We could end up looking very different than the way we are now. But remember that the same basic building blocks of the corn seed is in the DNA of a corn plant - it's still corn. Basically, what was in you as a baby will be in you for eternity.
- But there is a huge difference between the seed and our bodies as Paul writes about in this passage: Look at the last half of the 42nd verse:

"...The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."
- We will get a body that is remarkably not like ours. It will be imperishable. It is honourable. It will be a spiritual body.
- 2. Jesus and His body: But we do have the example of Jesus and His resurrected body. At times it was unrecognizable, and at others everyone plainly knew Him. He ate. He still had wounds, but they were neither healed nor open and festering. He walked and talked. He appeared out of nowhere, but He was human looking.
- Does this relate to us and our resurrected bodies? Maybe yes, and maybe

no. I think that we can look at some of stories about the resurrected body of Jesus and draw some conclusions, and then again, I think we cannot - this was Jesus, after all, the Son of God. But it helps us see the great possibility of the eternal future for believers.

- 3. Does it matter? It's in God's control. This resurrected body will be perfect for us to praise Him for all eternity. The Lord who created the universe with a wish and with His breath has a plan for us when we die or for when we are called home in the rapture, and when that time comes, God will have a body for us that will utterly astound, even to the most remarkable imagination.

Conclusion:

- These bodies are great. At one time, before sin changed them, before sin entered our lives, God called them very good. And when we die, when we step from this life to the next, when we breathe our last, or when God calls us home in the rapture, God has a glorious eternal resurrected body waiting for us instantly - from the seed to plant. Our heavenly bodies will be about as different from our earthly bodies as a seed is from the plant, but our lives will be as different as the world of the womb was to the world around us now. What a joy to think about.