Sown in corruption

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev David Meredith

[0:00] Well, friends, can we look again, please, at 1 Corinthians chapter 15, reading at verse 42.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.
It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.
Sown in dishonor, raised in glory. Well, without a doubt, one of the in vogue words in these days is the word appropriate.
It's a word which many people are using increasingly. And it's a word which certainly came into my thoughts when I was looking at this Monday evening service of the communion.
[1:09] Then I asked myself, what would be an appropriate word in which to end the communion? And various things came across my mind. I suppose that the dominant theme in a Monday evening is that of giving ourselves, as it were, a vision.

But a vision of what? And then I thought, well, perhaps a vision on the world. We could go to that great verse in Matthew 28. Go into all the world proclaiming the gospel.
And indeed it's a great vision to have. A vision for the lost and a vision for what we call evangelism. Indeed, a very needy vision in today's society.
And then I thought, well, a vision for our own souls. A word perhaps of comfort to those of us who are finding it hard going. A word of encouragement to persevere through the vicissitudes of life.
And then as I was contemplating it all, I thought, what is the highest vision of all? And there are many answers to that question. And then I thought, well, people very often grow into their vision.
[2:20] How high up can we look? And then one thought occurred to me. Why do we not try and get a vision of what I call the final step?

Why do we not all try and get a vision of the final state of the believer? Why do we not try to look at scripture and think of it as great theme of glorification?
And surely we will ask God that our souls will grow into and become excited about the prospects which await the people of God.
And indeed, in many ways, glorification is the final step. You remember the words of Paul in Romans 8. To those he predestined, he also called.
Those he called, he also justified. Those he justified, he also glorified. We've been spending the weekend focusing on the cross of Calvary.
[3:25] We've been thinking about what Jesus has done. But you know, it's not all finished. Yes, redemption has been accomplished. But redemption is being applied.

It's not over yet. And what God is doing and will do to us is by no means over. In fact, friends, it's only just begun.
And so we have Paul writing this massive passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. You see, Paul at this time was dealing with problems within his church.
And there were theological problems. And they came from two fronts. The first front was, as it were, the influence of the Greeks. The Greeks believed that the soul would live on, but not the body.
You see, the Greeks were very anti-materialistic. They had been influenced by a man called Plato. And he was extremely influential.
[4:30] And his overriding philosophy was that body, that material things was bad. And that they didn't really matter. And this led to all sorts of problems within the church.

Yes, the soul lived on, but not the body. And so that was the Greek influence of Plato. But then there was the influence of the Jewish rabbis.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And they believed, yes, there would be a resurrection of the body. But it would be exactly the same body as we had on earth. And there were these two groups going about the Corinthian church causing problems.
The dominant group, of course, are those who said that there would be no resurrection of the body. But we're in Storname. We're not in Corinth.
None of us, a few of us, read Plato. We say, well, these Greek philosophers have absolutely no influence on our lives.
[5:33] But, you know, I have a sneaking suspicion that there are not a few of us here who are misinformed or we have a wrong view or perhaps not an accurate view of what will happen to us.

This was confirmed to me last week. The reason I could only join you on Saturday was that I was speaking at a very big youth group on Friday evening in Inverness.
And I was asked to speak on the judgment, heaven and hell. And before I spoke, I wanted to find out where the young folk were. What was their knowledge? And I put a questionnaire out beforehand and I asked them to fill it in.
And one of the questions was, will we have bodies in heaven? Will we have flesh and bone? Will we have bodies in heaven? And the answer of every single one of those young people was, we will not have bodies in heaven.
And I said, what do you think that heaven is like? And they began to speak. And one said that my vision of heaven is that of sort of disembodied spirits, sort of wisps of smoke drifting about heaven.
[6:52] And that's what we will be like in glory. That is what they thought. And you know, dear friends, perhaps many of us think that also.

Many of us don't appreciate what our final state will be. And let's look at the scriptures to find out.
Well, we find here in chapter 15, it is not, notice, it is not a contrast between the living and the dead. It is a contrast, a sustained contrast throughout the chapter between two living bodies. There is a pre-death body and there is a post-death body.
And so it's a sustained contrast right through the chapter of two living bodies. You see, when a person becomes a Christian, yes, our souls are redeemed.
But there is also a redemption of our bodies. And so, with the greatest respect, we can be too spiritual. And by being too spiritual, I mean that we forget that glorification will involve our bodies, our flesh, blood, bones, etc.
[8:14] And indeed, the work of redemption will not be finalized in a sense until that work is completed within our bodies. God created man with a perfect body and he will not finish until we have a new and perfect body once again.

Now, this is an area where many believers are unsure what will happen. The Shorter Catechism is a great document. And indeed, I think perhaps one of the best answers of the Catechism is in question 37.
And it's a question which deals with what happens to a believer when they die. And of course, you all know that the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory.
But notice what it says. And their bodies, flesh, bones, blood, and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.
And so Paul says, it's not over yet. Paul says, God is doing a work. You who have been called, elect, justified, will one day be glorified.
[9:43] Now, glorification is a big word. It's a very triumphalist word, isn't it? A very military word. But yet the Bible tackles the whole issue of death with military language.

It says that the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Then it says, O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?
It is martial language, as that is the last enemy to be overcome. And so the final link, as it were, the last step, will be when our bodies and souls are united and we are restored to that pristine glory of the Garden of Eden.
And the marvellous thing is, this is not speculative. This will happen. Do you remember when the referendum for the Scottish Parliament was announced?
Remember, the secretary, Donald Dewar, said, there will be a Scottish Parliament. It was an announcement of intent.
[10:54] Friends, there will be a resurrection of the body. It is absolutely certain.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

It's not in the realms of speculative theology. It is going to happen. And the people of God here this evening are going to be glorified.
And indeed, that's what the Bible speaks about here, is the nature of the resurrection body. Well, when will all this happen? It will happen when Jesus comes again.
There is a possibility that not every single one of us here will die. The Bible says that if we are alive when Jesus comes, Paul says we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.
And the Bible gives a picture of what will happen. And indeed, there's a curious verse in 1 Thessalonians 4.14. And it says that when Jesus comes, we believe that Jesus died and rose again.
[11:59] And so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. And so we have a picture that when the Lord returns again, he will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

It's interesting how so many of the Lord's people share in the final works of God. That the Lord's people will be involved in judgment. That the Lord's people will be involved in reigning.
That the Lord's people, their souls will be involved in the second coming, according to 4.14 of 1 Thessalonians. And on that day, the dead in Christ will rise first.
And we shall all be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. That's not going to happen in what is called the rapture. If you are reading the left behind series, in terms of theology, it's perhaps best left behind on the shelves.
Because that's not a correct view of what will happen on the last day. That meeting with the Lord in the air will happen on that last day, when he comes again, not in some intermediate rapture.
[13:16] And so there is something to look forward to. This is not it. Are you tired of this world? Is there a sense that you don't belong here?

Well, many of us, and I think rightly so, in a sense, love this world. We love our families. We love the environment in which we are placed. But our citizenship is in heaven.
And we eagerly await a saviour from there. There has been a decline in expectation among us. The last things is something which we find that we are even more rarely talking about.
The early church would say, Maranatha, even so come, Lord Jesus. But we're drifting a little bit here, but let's move back into the passage here, in this verse, verse 44 onwards, 43, 44 onwards.
And I want to this evening focus on what our bodies will be like in that great last day. And I think there will be at least four qualities of these bodies.
[14:28] First of all, they will be imperishable. That is what the word says, that the body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

It will be imperishable. The picture is like a seed, and the body is sown in the ground, a seed dry, hard, wizened.
But what grows out is moist, full of sap, luscious with promise of more fruit. And that's what the Bible describes, what is happening to us.
There are contrasts in the Bible, sown in dishonour, raised in glory, sown in weakness, raised in power, sown in a physical body, raised a spiritual body.
And so when it says there, that the body is raised, as it were, imperishable, or with incorruption, what does that mean? It means it will not be subject to decay, as simple as that.
[15:26] That there will be no sickness, that there will be no disease, completely strong, unhealthy, forever. Now we are all very conscious of ageing. I think in our own society, perhaps people look younger than they have looked for many, many years.

We're all conscious, though, of the ageing process. And I think many of us can perhaps hold off that process, with the use of dyed, cosmetics, various things, hairstyles.
We can sometimes appear to knock maybe 10 years off of our age. Someone at 60 can appear to look 50. But you see, it's only a temporary process, isn't it?
And it's only, as it were, a mask, because the aging process is going on. But here, Paul is saying, your new body will be totally different.
In heaven, we will be given perfect bodies. Now it seems to me that in glory, there will be, as it were, one exception to that.
[16:30] There will be only one body, which is marred. And it will be the body of Jesus. And on that body, there will be nail prints.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Nail prints, even throughout eternity, to remind us of what he did. Even throughout eternity, when all the questions are being answered.
Even throughout eternity, when there is no night. When enigma and ambiguity goes away. The nail prints are still there. To remind us of the price he paid for our redemption.
Do you remember Lisa Potts? Who was she? Lisa Potts was a nursery nurse. She received a George medal. Do you remember a madman come into her nursery?
And she put her hands up to protect the children. And the machete was driven down on her arms. Last week, I think she got £49,000 compensation.
[17:34] And then on one occasion, she just held up her arms. And she said, I have these scars, marks on my arms, forever. And can you imagine these children going to Lisa Potts in 20 years' time?

Saying, Lisa, show me the marks. And these would have been the marks which saved them. And how these children would look at the marks, they would be there as a constant reminder, but they would also note the price.
How much more the marks of Christ. There to show that he redeemed us. And so the resurrection body will be, our bodies will be perfect.
An eternal display of God's perfect creation. And the pinnacle of his creation. Even something that angels will not have. The people of God will have perfect bodies.
They will be brand new. A new thing is a beautiful thing. Many of us like new things.
[18:43] There is, there are, there's a great pleasure in owning a new car. You go into it and it's got that distinctive smell. There is this tightness.

And indeed, cars are increasingly less of a transport issue and more of a statement of design. Car, an advert the other day for the Alfa Romeo 147.
And the caption was, stir your soul. Stir your soul. Stir your soul. And I think it says something about our society. When souls are being stirred by cars and not by God.
But you see the point that something new is an expression of the artistry of the designer. In glory. A new body.
speaking of the artistry of the designer. Our bodies then will first of all be imperishable. But then secondly, our bodies will be glorious.
[19:51] Our bodies will be glorious. Now that's a marvellous situation. The body will be raised in glory. The word suggests a beauty or attractiveness.

There will be nothing dishonourable or unattractive. The word glory there is associated with God himself. It suggests a shining of God.
The word glory has lots and lots of images. One of them is the weight. The weight of God. The immensity of God. But here it suggests as if we're a shining from God.
You remember the parable of the weeds in Matthew 14. He says they will throw them into a fiery furnace where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then he says the righteous will shine in the kingdom of the Father.
Daniel says those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the kingdom. The Psalms say the daughter of the king all glorious is within. And so the believer will shine.
[20:54] Remember Moses. He shone when he saw the glory of God. Peter, James and John they saw a shining Christ there in the presence of God.

It's a powerful powerful image. And so our risen bodies will be imperishable. Our risen bodies will be glorious. But then our risen bodies will thirdly be powerful.
Verse 43 It is sown in weakness it is raised in power. What does that mean? It means that in heaven our bodies will have tremendous power.
Let's develop that a little bit. Man has great intellectual power. We can conceive of many things. Even spiritually it can be a power issue. we have many ideas. Our mind is strong but our body is weak. We have that expression in our own society.
[22:05] The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Our body is unequal to the forces of the soul. Even spiritually the good that I would I don't.

God is weak. And there is a frustration because we want to do things. Our minds created by God soar but our bodies are weak.
But then we will have eagle's wings. Then we will have power to do what holy minds want to do. even in this world holy minds are limited by bodies which are limited.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

But here it says there will be a body raised in power. But you know there is a fourth thing about our body there. Not only imperishable not only glorious not only powerful but in verse 44 it has raised a spiritual body.
Now this word does not mean non-physical. Many folk believe that this ties up with our idea of having as it were disembodied spirits.
[23:24] It says they are so natural raised spiritual. Spiritual does not mean non-physical. you know a spiritual man. You know a spiritual woman.

They are still physical people. They are not disembodied spirits. They are very much flesh and blood. And so when it says there that there is raised a spiritual body it means that our bodies raised will be consistent with the character and activity of the Holy Spirit.
just now doesn't the believer have frustration because our bodies are so our whole mindset is so non-spiritual.
Here our body will be raised a body completely subject to the spirit's will responsive to the spirit's guidance. so it's a physical body but it will be raised in conformity with what God wants us to do. Yes it will be otherworldly but it will also be recognizable. There will no longer be the frustration of disobedience. someone says but the Bible says indeed this passage says flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom.
[24:55] Indeed verse 50 says that. What does that mean? Well when it speaks of flesh and blood there it means a sort of moral thing doesn't it? There will be a great change.

The likeness of Adam will have to be replaced by the likeness of Christ. And so it is this morning there may be folk this evening there may be folk here who are unconverted.
This is a body we're speaking about raised in honour. Subject to the spirit's will. This is the destiny of the believer.
You have a different destiny friend. Unless you turn your destiny destiny is not to be restored to pristine condition of Eden.
Your destiny is to be condemned to an eternal death that goes on and on and on throughout eternity. This does not apply to you.
[26:02] The people of God will be glorified. They will be given a new body. Many of you are familiar with the writings of Joni Erickson, a young woman who was made a quadriplegic in a diving accident.

She wrote recently about going back with her husband to Maryland where she was brought up and her father brought out the old cine camera and they started showing pictures of her when she was young and there she was doing what many young girls do.
She was riding her horse. She was swimming. She was playing games. She was full of it. Running around. And her husband says, Joni, when you look back does it not make you sad?
She says, I don't look back. I look forward. what about us? There are many of us and we feel our mortality.
The body is slowing down. Just like this image here, yes, our minds are still active. Very old folks say that they tell me that they feel exactly as they felt when they were 21.
[27:23] Their minds are active but their bodies are corrupt bodies. Where is the power? And yet Paul says here, it's going to be raised in power.

The best is yet to come. Will there be any continuity between the body we have now and the body we shall have then?
Well, just as there are differences between the seed and the final product, so there will be differences between the body we have now and the body we have then.
the great pattern of course, the classic pattern is the resurrection body of Jesus. We read in one occasion that Jesus ate fish.
could be touched. And the Bible says that those who are alive, for example, when Jesus comes again, the Bible doesn't say that they'll be swapped.
[28:26] They will be changed. They will have the same bodies, but they will be changed. They will be different. The post-resurrection body of Jesus.

some people found it difficult to recognize. Why was that? Some folk argue that the post-resurrection body of Jesus was younger looking.
I don't know about that. But that's why there was difficulty perhaps recognizing. If you haven't seen someone for 20 years, sometimes you have difficulty recognizing.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

They're the same people, but their bodies have changed. Put on weight there. hair's either gone or gone gray. Sometimes it's difficult. Can you imagine it the other way around?
If you met someone who'd lost 20 years, you would find it very difficult to recognize them. That's speculative, but that's the sort of thing we're looking at here. But in heaven, there is recognition.
[29:27] As we sit around the table, the Bible says, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the disciples recognized. Elijah, for example, on the Mount of Transfiguration.

So here we have this great promise of the people of God moving on. We are too world-centered. And you know, perhaps that's why our vision is dulled. It was said of Christians many years ago, they are too heavenly minded to be of any earthly use. It seems now that many of us are perhaps too earthly minded to have any heavenly interest.
I was reading the other day of Henry Afford. Henry Afford was a professor at Cambridge in the 19th century.
One of the greatest Greek scholars of the 19th century. Henry Afford was a scholar, but he was also very conscious of his own mortality.
[30:40] On one occasion he began to think about what would happen to him. And he wrote these words, 10,000 times 10,000 in sparkling raiments bright.

The armies of the ransomed saints throng up the steps of light. Tis finished, all is finished, their fight with death and sin.
Fling open wide the golden gates and let the victors in. What rush of hallelujahs fills all the earth and sky, what ringing of a thousand harps bespeaks the triumph nigh.
O day for which creation and all its tribes were made, O joy for all its former woes, a thousand fold repaid.
This is not all there is. And here we see in this passage this marvelous thing of how it will be.
[31:53] Afford finishes the verse, bring near thy great salvation, thou lamb for sinners slain. Fill up the role of thine elect, then take thy power and reign, appear, desire of nations, thine exiles long for home, show in heaven thy promised sign, thy prince and saviour come.

Do we really have that desire? that. We spoke yesterday in both services about the death of Christ. What does it mean? I'm reminded of the words of the old black minister in Mississippi. He's saying in graphic detail, as only these men can, he says it's Friday, Jesus hanging on the cross.
It's Friday, women are weeping. It's Friday, they mock him. It's Friday, the skies are darkened.
It's Friday, the soldiers mock. it's Friday, the saviour cries in agony. It's Friday, the saviour breathes his last.
[33:33] But, sundays are coming. A day when he's going to rise. A day when he's going to rise and take his people.

A day when the dead and Christ who are united with him. And isn't that the whole package as it were? We have been remembering Friday.
We have been remembering the fact that he has died for sinners he was slain. Friends, we are not made for this life. We are made for a life to come.
We were not made for this existence. And so that's why the times are out of joint. That's why we are square pegs and round holes. We were not made for this.
But redeemed and ransomed and renewed we will be. We don't have a body for it now. That's why flesh lusts against spirit.
[34:35] That's how there is tension. That's how there is a civil war within us because we are out of our environment. But we are going somewhere.

we who are in Christ will be changed. Let's all bring it together.
How does this affect our lives? this? If you ride a motorcycle you get a very distinct bit of instruction when you're being taught.
It applies to a car. driving instructor will say read where you're going.
If you think you're going to go into the ditch, if you look at the ditch, you'll go into the ditch. Where's our vision?
[35:45] is it in the ditch of self? Or is it in the horizon of God?

The Lord's people here, he's not finished with you. He's only just begun. One day you will be raised imperishable, powerful, glorious, spiritual.
Maranatha, even so come, Lord Jesus. Let's pray. scriptures tell us, O Lord, behold, I show you a mystery.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. Help us to know the provisional nature of this world.
Help us to fix our vision above the ditch. Help us to see Jesus and the great fact that we shall have a body like unto his body.
[37:28] We give thanks, O Lord, for the great treasures purchased by Christ on the cross.

Truly, we are kings. Help us to give the glory to God in Christ.
Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host