**Special Presentation**

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

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**Transcriber’s Note:** The recording started when Jeff had already begun his presentation.

**Jeff:** That section that I want to read starts in verse 35. So I want us to read chapter 15. We’ll start reading at verse 35. And then what I would like to do is that I’d like to read down through verse 49. Not that we’ll talk about all those verses today, but at least they will give us a context. I’d actually like to read a couple more verses, but I think I’ll do that by way of the process of teaching. So let’s read that together. Does somebody want to read that with a good strong voice, somebody who can see a little better than I can with my glasses? *(Laughter)*

**Don** **Bishop:** Which verses?

**Jeff:** I think it’s 35 to the end of the section, at least as it’s segmented in the outline: to 49.

**Don:** *“But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as He has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.*

*“But not all flesh is the same. There is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies. The glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon. There is a glory of the stars, and star differs from star in glory.*

*“So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown as a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, then there is a spiritual body. As it is written: ‘The first man, Adam, became a living being.’ But the last Adam, became a life-giving Spirit. For it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.*

*The first man was from earth, a man of dust. The second Man is from heaven. As is the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust. And as is the Man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the Man of heaven.”*

**Jeff:** All right.

**Don Bishop:** You forgot to say something.

**Jeff:** What did I forget to say?

**Ted Wood:** This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** If I’m going to take a rap for not saying it, somebody else is as well. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** I always just respond. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** I want us to think about the resurrection for a few minutes. And if you go back to the beginning of this text, one of the things that you see in chapter 15 is that Paul is telling them, “I preach to you the gospel.” And then he takes a minute out and he tells them what the gospel is. He says, *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I received.”* And then he gives the gospel.

Now I want you to hear me say this because it’s important. And I’ve said it to you before and I’m sure I’ll say it again the longer we’re together. There is what is called the *historia salutis,* and then there is the *ordo salutis.* And we oftentimes talk as if this—the *ordo salutis*—I can see the look on your face, Tom. Tom gave me a marker one day. He walked up one day and gave me a marker. He said, “Here.” Here’s a marker.

**Tom** **Benedict:** I already have a marker; I use it for marking everything.

**Jeff:** There you go. *(Laughter)* So there is the *historia salutis* and the *ordo salutis.* Now the *historia salutis* is the history of salvation. The *ordo salutis* is the order of salvation. And when we think about these two we have a tendency to eclipse this one *(the ordo historia),* and we have a tendency to talk about this one *(the ordo salutis),* as if it were the gospel.

What is this one? *(the ordo salutis)* For this one you put any number of things in there. You put conversion—that is, repentance and faith. You put justification, adoption, sanctification, and so on. But all of those things are the gospel applied to us. This is more about experience than it is about actual accomplishment of salvation.

Accomplishment of salvation is really the gospel. And so when Paul has the opportunity to say, “Here is the gospel that was delivered to me,” he gives it to us in terms of the history of salvation or the *historia salutis.*

Now listen to what he says the gospel is; it’s in verse 3 (of 1 Corinthians 15.) *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time.”* He says that most of them are still alive, and so on.

Now the point is that he sees the gospel because he tells us that this is the gospel, he sees this as the death, the burial, the resurrection, and so on. Those are the things that entail the history of salvation.

Now when you go to other parts of the Scripture like Acts chapter 2, where Peter talks about the *historia salutis,* he talks about a few more. He adds His ascension into heaven, His session at the right hand of the Father, the outpouring of the Spirit. All of them entail the perfect life of Jesus Christ. So the point is that the gospel is Jesus, and Jesus’ doing, and what He accomplished in His doing. The *ordo salutis* is about the application of the gospel.

So we’re talking here about the *historia salutis* when we talk about the resurrection of Christ. Now that has an impact on our lives and it means something for us. If He has not been resurrected then we haven’t been resurrected. But I want you to see the reciprocity in this. Go down a little bit further; this is in verse 12 and following.

*“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, then how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.”* Do you see that? We usually think that if Christ hasn’t been raised, then we haven’t been raised. But he’s saying that if the dead are not raised, then Christ is not raised.

Why? Because the fruit of Christ’s resurrection is not seen. And if it’s not seen then He must not be raised from the dead; it’s that simple. And so there is a reciprocity between Christ’s resurrection and our resurrection.

And he goes on a little further. He obviously talks about all that stuff that our preaching being in vain is this is the case, and so on. But one of the things that I want you to see is down in verse 20 and following. He says: *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”* There’s the reciprocity again. *“For as by a man came death, by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”*

Now I want you to think about that for just a minute. That’s kind of an awesome apologetic statement. I think that all you have to do to ask people different questions apologetically is to ask them, “You know, where do you think death came from? If evolution is this advancing thing, where did the idea of death come from? And why do people fear it so much? If it’s a natural process, why are people so fearful of it?”

And you know as well as I do that Paul says, or Luke says, or whoever says in Hebrews, *(laughter),* that *“it is appointed unto man once to die, and then to face the judgment.”* You see, everybody knows at least intuitively deep down that death is penal; it is a punishment; it’s a curse. Death is a door that opens to everlasting death if we’re not in Christ. It’s a door that opens to everlasting torment if we’re not in Christ. And so everybody knows, at least intuitively, that death is judgment; death means punishment. And so it is.

And yet here is Paul frankly saying this. He is saying, “I want you to know that in Adam all die.” And that is one of those arguments where you say to yourself, “That argument is certain.” You know, you say to yourself and you could play that game. Are all men mortal? Or “I don’t know; all men haven’t died.” Okay, but you know that all men are mortal, except for One. And so Paul says that all men die in Adam. That’s a certainty.

And then he goes on to say—and here’s the apologetic of it!—that just as certain as death, just as certain as all men die in Adam, so men will live in Jesus Christ. It’s a powerful argument when you think about it; it’s a powerful argument! And so he wants us to think about the resurrection in a variety of ways in this text. And there are a variety of ways in which we might think about it. But I want us to think about it in terms of a way that we often don’t think about it. And that way that we might think about it is by the questions that are posed in this text.

For instance, I want you to think about what’s going on here. And I’ve already brought it up to you. If you look at the thing that he says in verse 12, *“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection from the dead?”*

Now I want you to think about this for just a minute. This is an objection. And this is seemingly coming from inside the church! Now the church makeup back then was a little different from the makeup of our church today. And yet it was very much the same.

What do I mean? Well, I mean it was different in that there were different philosophies at work, and there were different ideas at play. For instance, I think probably the idea that *“it is good for a man not to touch a woman”* is probably not too much in play today in our churches. I mean, I can’t imagine too many people. In fact, as a pastor I’ve never had a man come up and say to me, “You know, that’s right. I don’t think it’s good that I touch my wife.” I’ve had plenty come up to me and say, “My wife doesn’t think it’s good to touch me.” *(Laughter)* It’s hard to do today. And for those of you who aren’t playing along you won’t appreciate it. *(Laughter)*

**Te:**  It’s got to be a trap.

**Jeff:** What’s that?

**Ted:** It’s got to be a trap.*(Laughter)* I was just going to say that you probably hug women in your church, do you not?

**Jeff:** Do I? No. I mean, it’s an exception. I have two men that can attest to this. I am not a hugger.

**Ted:** Well, I understand that. *(Laughter)* If somebody were a normal--, Give me a hug.

**Jeff:** No! *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** If you were of the normal professional makeup, you might hug other women. *(Laughter)* I’m just saying so. I mean, you could point that out, that if you had—Well, let’s not raise a fuss.

**Jeff:** Okay. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** That was stupid.

**Jim Hamilton:** Let me ask a dumb question. Is Adam in heaven or hell?

**Jeff:** That’s a really good question. Yeah, what do you think?

**Jim:** I’m going to assume that he’s in heaven, but I don’t know.

**Jeff:** Have you heard differently? *(Laughter)* No, I mean, have you heard something different than that?

**Jim:** Pre-existence.

**Jeff:** Ah, I got it. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Jim:** So what is the answer?

**Jeff:** I’m not telling. *(Laughter)* So I think Adam is in heaven. And I think that Adam can be two things. He can be a figure of one standing at the head of his posterity that he has just ruined, and that he finds salvation in the next Adam. And so in one sense he has led his posterity astray and to death. But in another sense he has turned to the second Adam, and he himself as the head of the human race has found life in the second Adam.

And I think that you see that in Genesis chapter 3, where God makes skins of covering for them.

**Jim:** Right.

**Jeff:** And then they teach that to their children. They obviously teach that to their children because their children call on the name of the Lord. So where did they get that? They got that from Adam and Eve teaching their children to call on the name of the Lord.

So I think that Adam can stand at the head of the human race as the ruiner of the human race. But I think that as the ruiner of the human race, he can also find his salvation in the One who would redeem it. And I think from Genesis 3 that he likely did. That doesn’t change the fact that he has ruined it, and it needs redemption.

**Don Nemit:** But He also preached the gospel in seed form in Genesis 3:15.

**Jeff:** Yeah, that’s right.

**David Miller:** People who died in Christ, are they like those who have been risen? Or how are they differentfrom resurrected saints?

**Ron Baling:** Repeat the question.

**Jeff:** Do you want to wait? *(Laughter)* We’re going to talk about that. That’s a good question; we’re going to get there. Don’t repeat that question; we’re not going there yet. We’ll get there, whoever said it. Oh yeah, thank you. All right. So what I want you to catch though is that this is an objection. I want you to catch that there are people in the church who are saying things that we may not say. And yet there’s a sense in which there are people in the church who have questions and who operate according to philosophies that aren’t typically Christian or necessarily Christian, and so on. And so what you find is that there are these kinds of questions or statements from Paul about questioners or regarding questioners that lead us to believe that he’s arguing against people who are denying the resurrection, and they are in the church.

Now you say, “Well that’s not like our day; that’s a little different than what we have today.” And I would say to you, just go to the magazines that are on the shelves and pick up a magazine nowadays that says, “Jesus and the Resurrection: Did He Really Rise From the Dead?” And you know these magazines; every year at this time they come out. Pick one of those up and look at all of the names that describe themselves as evangelicals who say things that you and I both know are dumb, okay? *(Laughter)* So you’ll see that there are people in the church who are opposers to the very things that we see Paul saying here. So we need to acknowledge that and make sure that we understand that. And Paul wants us to understand that. And he’s taking care of objectors at this point.

How do we know they are objectors? Look in verse 36. He says, *“But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?’”* And then he says, “You dummy!” *(Laughter)* You know, it’s not a very pastoral move on his part.

Personally I’m kidding about that, but I would say this. You and I have both read Paul using rough language. But I think that Paul has this idea that he’s not going to break a broken reed or quench a smoking flax. And I think that if this is a genuine questioner he wouldn’t call him a fool. I think he sees this person as an antagonist within the church, and he’s calling them out as he sees them. He’s calling them fools. And I think that’s how you can see that these are objectors in the text in my opinion.

Now he says this in relation to them: “You ask, *“How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” “You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.”*

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** What is he saying to them? He’s saying to them that “you’re arguing against your own experience.” In other words, if you say that life can’t come after death, then you’ve just cut off your own experience.

How so? Well Paul says, “That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies.” In other words he’s saying, “Think about this. Think about seed time and harvest, and think about how it fits into that.” We plant. Actually the seed dies before it grows. It grows up, produces a harvest and we find death again, and so on.

So he’s saying that death is part of this fallen world in which we live. But death and life go hand in hand in ways that we sometimes can’t perceive without a microscope. In other words, sometimes we can see the plainness of it—that is, in the fall. And in the winter things die and in the spring things come to life. But the fact of the matter is, when you put a seed in the ground it dies and then lives. And so there’s a sense in which the microscopic element of this comes into play as well. And so the body that you place in the ground is like a seed that will spring to life.

And that’s what he’s saying to us. And he’s saying, “You’re actually arguing contrary to what you experience in life. You’re absolutely arguing against the whole experience of living.”

And I’ll never forget the way that this particular truth has come home to me personally. I don’t know; I think I may have told you about this before, but maybe not. When I was about eight years old or so I had a cousin who was about seven. And do you remember how it was when you were a kid? Your bike would always break a pedal. And so you’d have that pin sticking out. And you know, you always hated that because you would be riding around and your foot would slip off and it would gash in the back of the calf; you know, that sort of thing.

Well, my cousin was sort of a dare-devilish kind of kid. And he loved “The Dukes of Hazard.” Remember “The Dukes of Hazard?”, the “good old boys?” And so anyway he decided to ride his bike without a pedal over an embankment one day. And not surprisingly he crashed, and that pin went into the base of his skull.

**Brave Men:** Ooooh!

**Jeff:** And he ended up in the hospital for about two or three days and then he eventually died.

**Brave Men:** Oh!

**Jeff:** I’ll never forget my aunt. My aunt said, “I hate spring, because everything is coming back to life except my son.” Now my aunt was not a believer. And she grew increasingly antagonistic to the faith every year after his death. And this was maybe five or six years after he died. And that statement always stuck with me because in my mind it always sort of best exemplified the hurt of my aunt.

But when I became a believer I thought to myself: Isn’t that interesting? Here is a woman who denies the faith. And yet she’s actually affirming Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 15. There is a resurrection that one sees in the regular living of life, and she saw it. And she hated it. And she hated it because her son was dead.

And I think that kind of thing just bears testimony to sort of the plainness of general revelation to teach us these kinds of things. And you know, here we are; it’s kind of interesting. Here we are; we are in the springtime, even though it’s 23 degrees. *(Laughter)* I don’t know about you, but what in the world is going on here? But hey, whatever. But we do see a pattern already emerging. We see green coming out. And I did see flowers the other day. But the point is that we begin to see life emerging from the death of winter.

And I think that’s what Paul is saying. I think that he is not saying anything more or less than that.

Now once he establishes that fact, once he has established the fact that there is this kind of cycle that you see, and it’s plain and it’s evident to anyone who sees it, even if they try to resist seeing it, he asks this next question. *“With what kind of body do they come?”* Now that’s not the question he’s asking. That’s actually the question they’re asking. Again it says in verse 35: *“Someone will ask, ‘With what kind of body do they come?’”* Right?With what kind of body do they come? In other words, what is the resurrection body going to be like? What is it going to be made of? What’s it going to look like?

And again we need to remember, unlike your question, that this was an objection. And it’s an objection where at least one can think that it looks like an objection in the text, because you read in verse 38: *“But God gives it a body as He has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.”*

So you know, he’s answering the objector as if to say, “What kind of body does God give it? Well, God is to be trusted. And God will give it the kind of body that He gives it.” And that’s the kind of answer that I think Paul gives. And I think it’s the kind of answer that we ought to accept.

And yet he doesn’t stop there. He actually says this. He says that when you think again about general revelation, when you think again about what God has made, let me say a word about this, because I think this is important. I think it’s important for us to think about how God has revealed Himself and what that means for us presently.

So let’s say that God creates the earth. He puts people on it. And then God reveals our solar system. And obviously there are systems beyond us, and so forth. All of this is what we would call general revelation.

Now when we think about general revelation, we think about general revelation in three different ways. We think about general revelation in terms of what God has mediated the knowledge of Himself through. In other words the trees, the flowers, the landscape—all of this is God’s mediated revelation about Himself. In other words, when I think about looking at the starry host at night and I see all of the constellations in the sky, Immanuel Kant, an unbelieving philosopher, says, “Nothing moves me more than the starry host above.” And so when you think about looking at the vastness of creation, there’s a sense in which you are moved to think about and to stand in awe of a Creator.

Okay, so there is this idea that God mediates knowledge of Himself. What kind of knowledge? Power, orderliness, you name it; those kinds of attributes.

But that’s not all. God also creates revelation or gives revelation immediately, and that’s within the person. In other words, we think about what’s called the *sensus divinitatus*—the sense of divinity, the seed of religion that is in every person. And when we think about this seed of religion that’s in every person we think about how God has provided for us a sense of eternity that dwells in the hearts of all men. But post-Fall, who can understand it? So says Ecclesiastes 3:11.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Ecclesiastes 3:11, NKJV. *“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.”*

**Jeff:** In other words, when we think about how to think—when we think about thinking,--we can’t think without having a sense that there’s something greater at the base of our thought. Theologians have said it like this: “I can’t think a conscious thought without also acknowledging the existence of God as I think it, because God enables my thought; God enables my thinking.”

And here’s why. There are no brute facts around me. I can’t interpret them unless God has first interpreted them. So I think God’s thoughts after Him. These are just ways of expressing this idea that I’m thinking God’s thoughts after Him, where God is at the base and root of my thoughts, and so on.

I said that Immanuel Kant said that “there is nothing that moves me more than the starry host above.” But there’s another part to that quote. He actually says, *“There is nothing that moves me more than the starry host above, or the moral law within.”*

Now when you think about that you say to yourself, “Well, that’s both external general revelation and internal general revelation.” That’s both the mediated knowledge of God’s starry host of God—the moral law within. I think to myself: Okay! All right, great!

Now there is a third piece of general revelation, and that’s called *positive revelation.* Now positive revelation is God’s spoken legal word prior to the Fall. And that spoken legal word prior to the Fall was in the garden when He said, “Do you see that tree over there? That’s a no-no to you.” That is positive or legal general revelation.

So when you think about revelation, think about man living in an arena of God revealing Himself to us. We look around and we see it. We turn inward and we hear it. And we listen for it; God speaks it. You can’t get away from it.

Now when you think about general revelation post-Fall—after the Fall, right?—here’s the Fall. Now what happens to all of this? What happens to this is that the immediate general revelation within—the *sensus divinitatus*—is suppressed in unrighteousness. And that suppression of the immediate general revelation of God also gives way to the suppression of the mediate general revelation of God. In other words, we suppress the voice of God internally and we suppress the voice of God internally.

Okay, now I want you to think about some really funny ways in which this emerges. And you know, maybe it’s not as funny to you. But these are ways where I think that the internal has a way of popping up even despite the unbeliever.

Remember Carl Sagan? Carl Sagan used to be the popularizer of the view that there is no God. There’s just one big cosmos. But do you remember what he said? Or remember what he did? He used to capitalize the c in cosmos. He used to capitalize it, and you would want to ask him why he was capitalizing that. “You’re almost giving this a principle of being that moves and guides all things. You can’t do that.”

Francis Crick was another one. Francis Crick won the Nobel Prize for some work that he did with the cell. But in his works he would write about nature. And he would always capitalize not just the beginning of the sentence, but he would always capitalize the n in nature. Again he was trying to create some kind of principle of being that gave guidance to all other things. And for him it was Nature. Put Mother in front of it if you want to. But I’m telling you, it’s all the same.

But the point is that these are examples of men who would suppress the internal revelation of God in unrighteousness. But it was like the duck machine. You’re trying to smack one and then another one would come up. And that’s the way it is with these kinds of men. You know, they’re trying to smack one piece of evidence even while another one pops up in their own life and expression, even their expression of unbelief. And so that’s what happens to general revelation. Mediately and immediately they suppress it in unrighteousness.

What about this positive revelation? Well, obviously that positive revelation given by God about the tree in the middle of the garden is inscripturated. But what happens after that? Well, God begins to speak to men. And He begins to speak to them at first by naked revelations, theophanies, and so on. And then He begins to speak to them by prophetic utterance. And then He begins to inscripturate those prophetic utterances. And then He reveals ultimately and fully and finally His revelation of redemption in Jesus Christ.

So special revelation is redemptive in character. In other words, it’s a supplement to general revelation. Why? Because general revelation was never meant to save anybody. And in fact the general revelation that was intended to save was simply this: “Do you see that tree over there? Don’t eat from it, for in the day that you eat from it you will die. But if you obey, you will live.” That was salvific general revelation; it was the covenant of life, the covenant of works. That was the saving covenant prior to the Fall.

Okay. Post-Fall, God had to add a revelation that would save fallen man because general revelation was never intended to save fallen man. Now special revelation and general revelation are coordinated. In other words they are put together.

Think about it like this. Are we all good? Is everybody following me so far? We’re not in the weeds or anything? All right.

I want you to see something else. And I’m going to use somebody. I’ll just keep using him because he actually becomes a good foil for this. There’s a guy I know. There’s a philosopher whom I’ve already mentioned: Immanuel Kant. And Immanuel Kant says this. He asks the basic question: How is experience possible? And basically what he says is this. He says that in times past there have been two answers given to that.

#1 is what has been called *empiricism.* And empiricism says that the mind is *tabula rosa.* Everything external writes on my mind, on the blank table of my mind. That’s one way of knowing. My mind is blank. The world writes its experience on it.

The other is that my mind gives shape to the world around me. And what Kant said is the pox on both your houses. How are we going to bring those two houses together? And what he did was that he offered what is called *the transcendental argument for experience.* And the transcendental argument for experience starts with the transcendental aesthetic. And the transcendental aesthetic is this ice cube tray in the mind. And this ice cube tray in the mind gives time and space to what? To a world that stands outside of me. But that world that stands outside of me comes to me in what he calls discrete bits of data.

So what happens is, when my senses take in what is around me, you are discrete bits of data. But my mind has now given us time. It is now 7:13 in the morning. And space; my mind has organized you in such a way that there is space between us. I can now bridge that, and so on, right?

But my mind gives all of that. But my mind doesn’t only give that. It also gives quality, quantity; it gives all of the essentials. In other words, my mind is creating the world around me by the discrete bits of data that are taken in through my senses.

Now I think that’s nuts. But I think it’s a great way to think about the reciprocity between general and special revelation. Why? Because Kant said this. He said that these categories are empty without these perceptions. And these perceptions are meaningless without these categories. You need these categories to give meaning to these perceptions. These perceptions are needed, and if you don’t have them the categories are empty.

And the point is that basically, when you think about general revelation post-Fall, there’s a sense in which there’s an emptiness to it. We’re all fallen; we’re all going to die. We’re all going to go to hell because of Adam’s sin. There’s a sense of meaninglessness to it.

General revelation needs special revelation because special revelation now provides meaning to special revelation. But without general revelation special revelation is somewhat empty.

Think about it for a minute. Special revelation takes place within creation, which is general revelation. Special revelation needs general revelation in order to function and interact and actually come to fruition and be meaningful. And so there’s a sense in which both rely on one another. There’s a general sense of reciprocity between both.

Now having said that you need to understand that, because he’s going to use general revelation categories to answer the question of special revelation. What form does the resurrected body come in? Verses 39-42a basically is the argument. And the basic argument is this: *“All flesh is not the same.”*

Think about general revelation. All flesh has differences to it, and he starts with big differences. He starts with differences of the heavenly and the earthly. He says that there are differences between the heavenly and the earthly.

I don’t know about you. But when I came up over the hills today and saw the moon, whew!

**Ted:** That was beautiful; it was amazing.

**Jeff:** It was beautiful, wasn’t it? Amazing; it was just great! And you see the heavenly bodies and the earthly bodies, and Paul says they are different bodies.

And so he says that the resurrected body is going to have variety to it. We ought not to think otherwise. In other words, think about it like this. If the world around us can have a variety of bodies, then so too can the resurrection body have a difference between bodies that are already created. The variety of bodies is not a reason to doubt that the resurrection body can be a different sort of body, and yet similar. That’s not a reason to doubt.

In other words, think about it. This is not a great illustration. But I just saw the ark movie. Did you see the ark movie in the last couple of days?

**Don Bishop:** The ark?

**Jeff:** The ark movie,

**Don:** No.

**Jeff:** It was a documentary. It came out of “Points of Origin,” and it was really good. But I was just reminded. A couple of weeks ago I said to my family, “Let’s go and see this movie.” I thought I could get my wife out of the house and give us something to look forward to. And she slept through most of it, which is okay. But I quizzed her afterwards. “Tell me, hon.” *(Laughter)* No. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** A lot of us sleep through movies.

**Jeff:** Yeah, right. But we got out of this movie and I said to my daughter, “Yeah, that was great! Did you know that we had all this soft tissue evidence for dinosaurs?” You know, they were talking about the collagen that they had found that was in dinosaur bones. They were talking about the soft tissue that they had found. And I’m like “This is awesome! There are seven or eight pieces of soft tissue evidence for dinosaurs.” This is great because this stuff only lasts 50,000 or 100,000 years. They’re saying that these dinosaurs are billions of years old. This stuff would all be fossilized by now.

**Ted:** 250 million.

**Jeff:** 250 million. And so I said, “This is great! And my daughter says to me, “We saw a movie a couple years ago that gave the exact same stuff.”

“No, we didn’t.”

She says, “Oh yeah, we did.” So she starts telling me about this movie. I can’t remember these things.

Anyway, the point is that with dinosaurs we only see them as bones, right? But when you think about it, they have a way of bringing in all of this material close and personal. They’re stretching the materials under a microscope. And you’re thinking that this is closer to us than I ever thought, you know?

But the variety of bodies, whether it be the moon or a dinosaur, the variety of bodies that God created does not give us reason to doubt that the resurrection body is of another type. And here’s what Paul says. If you doubt the resurrection body, then that’s just a symptom of a more basic problem that you have with God.

And so that’s kind of the way he ends that segment. But he goes on and he says, “But let’s talk about the glorious nature of the resurrection body.” And so basically at this point he pushes the objector aside and he says, “Let me just talk to you about the resurrection body for a couple of minutes.” And what he’s doing now is that I think he’s speaking comfort into the life of the church. I think what he’s doing now is that he’s basically saying to the objector, “You can listen if you want to. But I’m going to speak to the people of God and I’m going to tell them about the resurrection body.”

And I think the great thing about this is that this is the point of the gospel, right? The point of the gospel is that *“in Adam all die.”* And if in Adam all die then all who are in Christ live. That’s the way we begin. And so you have to begin there because if you’re going to answer the question why did Jesus die?, you have to start with understanding that there’s a curse. And there was a need for Jesus to take upon Himself the curse if we would have life in Him. He had to be the curse-bearer.

Now if Christ is the curse-bearer, then says Paul: *“Where, O death, is your sting?* Where is your victory?”

Now I want you to think about that with me for just a minute. I was just talking to my congregation this past Sunday about the thief on the cross. And I was talking to them about his experience, his *ordo salutis* experience in the context of the *historia salutis.* In other words, we should expect to see the *historia* applied to someone even in the story of the *historia.*

So it’s kind of fascinating. Here we see the life and the crucifixion, the death, the burial of Christ. And in that story here is a guy being affected by it with the story being applied to him.

So I was talking to them about that. And at the end I was talking to them about substitutionary atonement. And at the end of that I said that somebody could say to me at the very end, “Yeah, but how can you argue for substitutionary atonement? Both of these men are dying on the cross at the same time.” Both of these men are hanging on a Roman cross and both of them are dying. Seemingly both of them are experiencing the sting of death. So how is it that Jesus is experiencing death for this thief on the Roman cross?

And my point to them was that the actual death, which is oftentimes what we fear so much,--oftentimes this is what people will say. People who should be fearful of what death entails will only be fearful of the way that death will come about in their lives. So they’ll say, “I hope I die in my sleep so I can be tormented forever,” right? *(Laughter)* I mean, they never put that at the end, right? They say, “I hope I go in my sleep.” But they don’t think that death is simply a door. And actually the way we enter into the door is not very important. It’s what happens after we get through the door of death that’s really important, because leading out of that door are two roads, right? There’s one road that leads straight to hell. And then there’s another road that leads to the bosom of Abraham and is eternal life in heaven. And so once you step through that door you’ll go one way or another on the basis of whether your life was hidden in Christ or not.

And so, you know, my point for the congregation was that this man is just stepping through the door, as we will all have to step through. But the idea is that this man has just been told by Jesus, *“Today you will be with Me in Paradise.”* And so as he steps through the door in a very horrid way he goes to the bosom of Abraham. Jordan, do you have something?

**Jordan Obaker:** No.

**Jeff:** I saw the hand. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** I saw the Westminster—

**Jeff:** I know; I did, too! You know the way his mind works; he has a fast processor.

**Ted:** Exactly.

**Jeff:** This is for personal edification. But every once in a while I think he just wants to introduce something that will be helpful. So I see that and I—

**Ted:** A vain hope. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** It was a vain hope this time; only this time. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** But you know, the thing I’m thinking is that all of us are concentrated on the pain or the difficulties of this life.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** Forget dying on the cross. Think about disease; we get COVID. We’re obsessed with that. We think about all the difficulties in this life. We’re not thinking about what the bigger issues are. We’re all wired to do that.

**Jeff:** Yeah; I agree.

**Ted:** In church they announce that we need prayers for this person or that person. If we look at the suffering we go through as another way of refining us in getting us more to the image of Christ, we never talk about that. We never talk about eternal things in terms of our present suffering.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** And so—

**Jeff:** Yeah. And the lightness of those present sufferings in the weight of eternal glory, like Paul says.

**Ted:** Paul says it in 2 Corinthians.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** And yet even with the evangelicals we act as if this is what it’s really all about right here. And when I die I want to go to a heaven just like this but better.

**Jeff:** Yeah, that’s right.

**Ted:** An improved earth.

**Jeff:** Yeah, that’s right. I don’t know; this is such a big topic; it really is. This is not necessarily our fault as a church. But I think sometimes that what begins to happen is a variety of things that begin to happen when death comes, right? We don’t want to see death in its ugliness because death is ugly. So the mortician has to make up the person, and no one wants the person in the casket without some makeup on it and stuff like that. No one wants to see that.

**Ted:** Don’t they look just great?

**Jeff:** Right. And I’m seriously saying that we don’t want to see that, right? If we have a viewing which I think can bring closure then we want to do that.

But at the same time I’ll never forget that I listened to something back in the day. James Montgomery Boice told this story. It was about a well-known figure and I can’t think of his name, but he died. And this was back when wakes were held in houses. He had reared his family in atheism, and they had become so attached to the body that the health department had to go in and actually take the body out of the home because they wouldn’t let him go; they had become so attached to it. You know, there are a hundred different ways that either unbelievers show the utter vacuity of their system, or sometimes the way in which we as believers sort of fish at their hole. And some of what they believe has a way of seeping into us because it’s the old man, you know?

But our hope is in the resurrection. And what Paul says is, “What is sown will be raised.” And I want to read something to you. How does this happen, and so on? This is from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism,* question 37. I want you to listen to this.

This is basically about what happens to believers at death. *“The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory.”*

Now listen to this: this is rich. *“Their bodies still being united to Christ do rest in their graves, as in their beds, till the resurrection.”*

I love that statement, because it shows that the whole of me is united to Christ. Even at death my body, which is in the grave separated from my soul as a result of sin, will be reunited to me and renewed. And that’s because it’s still united to Christ even as I’m united to Christ.

And so the body will be raised. You know, sometimes we have this view that if I could just get rid of the body and get out of the body. That’s a view alive and well today in the church. And it’s a view that’s to be distanced from because we will be reunited body and soul. That’s what Paul clearly teaches. And so for the believer death means life. And what Paul is saying is, all you have to do is look outside; it’s springtime. And as sure as spring is coming, so too is the resurrection of the dead coming. And I think that’s where he basically leaves us. So that’s where I’m going to leave you. We’ll come back with a series next week.

**Ted:** Is there any interest in you having another session on the resurrection so we can just fill it out a little more as you’re going into the next series?

**Jeff:** Sure.

**Ted:** What do you all think?

**Don Nemit:** Sure.

**Jeff:** Surely.

**Ted:** *“Surely He has borne our griefs.”*

**Jeff:** Surely He has. Praise God for that. All right. Gracious God, thank You for this day and for the gracious way in which You loved us in Your Son, the Lord Jesus. And we pray now that You’ll bless us and strengthen us by Him. We ask, Lord, that You’ll do this for Christ’s sake and for His glory, and we pray it now in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.