

Text: 1st Corinthians 15:35-58

Date: April 26th, 2015

Theme: We Will All Be Changed!

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It seemed to extremely joyful and amazing success story. Over the course of a year, Mike Giannulis had lost over half of his body weight, and he was the happiest he's ever been. He had gone on the show "Extreme Makeover: Weight Loss Edition" tipping the scales at over 500 pounds, and at the end of a year, he weighed merely 238. What an amazing accomplishment!

But although Mike had gone through an incredible change, that didn't mean his struggle was over. He has told the story of his weight ballooning again and him feeling down in the dumps more than ever before. He has gotten help in his struggle with weight gain, but he says that he will struggle with it for the rest of his life. Mike got a makeover, but that didn't make life perfect.

Do you think there is anything in your life that needs a makeover? Anything not just how you want it? Anything not perfect? Do you have any regrets from your past or in the present? Is there anything in your life you'd like changed? If you're a human being, the answer is almost certainly "yes."

Change—something that people desperately desire, but also something they are terribly afraid of. Change can be wonderful, change can be painful, change can be nerve wracking. Change can be a lot of things. Sometimes, change is necessary. And that is exactly what we'll see this morning—Paul tells us that change is necessary. Our theme is from Paul's very words: **We Will All Be Changed.**

At the beginning of our long section this morning, Paul addresses people who might object to the resurrection. ³⁵ **But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"** ³⁶ **How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.** ³⁷ **When 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.**

Paul makes a comparison between plant life and the human body to illustrate how the dead are raised. I'm no gardener, but I do know that when you plant seeds in the ground, what comes up is not a seed. It's something completely different. When I was a child and planted green beans in my mom's garden, I didn't look forward to a big seed coming out of the ground. I was eager to see the vines and leaves and actual green beans

³⁹ **Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.** ⁴⁰ **There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.** ⁴¹ **The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.**

God created so many different kinds of flesh on this earth—people, animals, birds, fish—they are all incredibly different! They feel different, look different, and they're made up differently. And then there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, and the sun, moon, and stars. All

completely different. If God has created all these different forms of existence—more than we could ever dream up—couldn't he also create one that is a complete mystery to us? He did. We can't even fathom the kind of body we'll have when we rise from the dead.

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 dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power...

What a huge change occurs at the resurrection of the dead! When Paul says "The body that is sown," he means the body on earth—the body that dies. The body is perishable, but it becomes imperishable. One of my friends at the seminary said the other day, "Frozen vegetables are the best—they never go bad!" Perishable food goes bad. Imperishable doesn't. A perishable body goes bad. The imperishable body never will.

The body that is sown—dishonorable. But it's raised in glory. Those are two opposite things.

It's like the difference between being convicted as a murderer and saving someone from a burning building. The Boston Marathon was this last week, and maybe you heard that one of the killers from the Boston bombings 2 years ago was just convicted. Think of the difference in his dishonor and the glory and honor given to all the people who helped rescue and care for the people who were injured. That's the difference between the body sown and the body raised...and more.

The body that is sown—weakness. Raised—in power. You can't be weak and powerful at the same time. Martin Luther said it very well: "The body, weak and devoid of all strength and power though it may now be when it lies in the grave, will be so strong that with one finger it will be able to carry this church...and play with a mountain as children play with a ball. Nothing that it decides to do will be impossible for it. It will become so light and nimble that it will soar both down here on earth and up above in heavens in a moment."

Paul moves on to sum up his big comparison: **⁴⁴ It 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. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.**

Paul sums up all his previous comparisons when he calls the body natural and then spiritual. As we've seen, when a body is resurrection of the dead, it is still a body, but at the same time completely different.

When someone dies and his body is "sown" into the ground, there is no life in that body. It is not a person. It's just a body. But when it is raised, it is spiritual—both in the sense that it is alive with the spirit of life, and because it once again has the spirit of faith—that clings to Jesus as its Savior.

Now that Paul has finished answering objections to the resurrection of the dead, he puts it all on the line. He speaks very pointedly: **⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and**

blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Paul laid out the bottom-line facts about our earthly bodies. To say it simply, we are perishable. We go bad. We are dishonorable. Weak. Natural. Brothers and sisters, the fact is that things are wrong with the world. And with us. Sickness. Mortality. Sin. Death. Sadness. Grief. Pain. Guilt. The list could go on and on. God did not design the world that way. It's not how he wanted the world to be! He wanted it to be perfectly harmonious in every way. But we messed it up with sin. And we can never give ourselves a good enough makeover to be perfect again. In this world we can never overcome all pain, sadness, sin, guilt, or death. And that's why the change that happens at the resurrection of the dead is necessary.

⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

Paul has talked about resurrection of Jesus and of the dead for the last 50 verses—in our case here for the last 4 weeks—3.5 sermons. And now he's bringing it all home.

“Look! A mystery!” **“We will not all sleep.”** If a Christian is alive at the end of the world, when Jesus comes back, he won't die. And here's something that is certain, whether you've physically died or not. Whether you were wracked by disease and cancer while you were on this earth, or you died of old age as the healthiest dead person the doctor ever saw...you *will* all be changed. Your body will receive an extreme makeover that you can't even imagine.

It's going to happen in an instant. In the time it takes to blink—in the twinkling of an eye—you will be changed. Perishable to imperishable—you can't die. Weak to powerful. Dishonorable and sinful to full of glory—perfect. All the sin, all the grief, all the shame, all the guilt, all the regrets of this world and of your life—gone! Completely perfect and without blemish.

I drive over the Hoan Bridge on 794 every morning on my way to school. This past winter I'd look to east and see the white icy lake, tons of white clouds that somehow look like mountains in the distance, and the sun bursting through, making everything a brilliant gold. Every time I saw that sun rising, I imagined, “What if Jesus came back right *now*?” How amazing would that be! I can just picture it—although I really have no idea what it will look like—but light more brilliant than the sun at dawn, the trumpet sound, and instantly I am no longer a frail and sinful human, but a perfect and glorious resident of heaven. We will be imperishable and immortal.

⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

No more death! No more sorrow and grief when my father-in-law or grandpa or friend who is a pastor dies! Death has no power to cause you any pain or suffering or sadness at all! Because death is not the end! And after the resurrection from the dead on Judgment Day, there is no more death. None. It's impossible to imagine. Death is not the victor. The victor is the Lamb. Victory of the Lamb—Jesus. Jesus achieved victory over death when he went straight into death's

clutches on the cross and then completely destroyed death when he rose from the dead on Easter.

And God gives Jesus' victory to us. Look closely—verse 57 doesn't say, "He will give us the victory." It says, "**He gives us the victory.**" He keeps on giving it to us. Every single day. You don't just receive victory at the end of time. The extreme makeover you'll undergo when Jesus returns impacts you today. The joy of eternity in heaven, at home with your Savior, allows you to wake up every day thankful. It allows you to face all the problems and terrors of this life with an unshakeable joy. God gives you this victory every day. Today when you're at church—you've got the victory. When you take Lord's Supper later in this service—he's giving you the victory—Jesus is giving you his very own body and blood! When you read Jesus' words in the Bible—he's telling you that you are a winner. He's telling you that he has given you the victory.

"**Evermore**" video – by Dan Stevens

⁵⁸ **Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.** Friends—be who you are. Victors over sin and death. You have the victory for all eternity. Amen.