

Introduction

Several weeks ago, Jennie Phillips asked me to preach a sermon about our resurrection bodies titled "Extreme Makeover." I told her I would and am keeping my promise today. I have a question for you though. Why am I preaching about that during our Holy Spirit month? What does the Holy Spirit have to do with our resurrection bodies? Paul tells us in the verse we read, Romans 8:11. It's the Holy Spirit who makes them over and that's what I'm going to preach about today: what He will do to us specifically and what that means to us now.

The Holy Spirit Resurrected Jesus

Verse 11 occurs in the immediate context of verses 9-10. In those verses Paul explains what the Holy Spirit *does do* to disciples and friends of Jesus. He makes their spirit "**alive.**" He changes their inner dimensions so that love, peace, and joy prevail. But in verse 11, Paul goes on to explain what the Holy Spirit *will do* to disciples and friends of Jesus. He does so by teaching us two things about the body of Jesus.

First, it was "**dead.**" He died in just the same way that every human being does. His heart and lungs stopped functioning. Deprived of blood and oxygen, His brain cells then died several minutes later and His muscle cells several hours later. Bacteria in His body also began to digest His internal organs. Those things are part of a larger process called "**initial decay,**" which occurs during the first three days after death. Jesus experienced that. His body was dead.

But three days later He was "**raised from the dead.**" His heart was pumping, His lungs were breathing, His brain and muscle cells were living, and the bacteria in his body were confined and thus His organs intact. He was no longer in the process of "**initial decay.**" His body was alive, in other words.

That's what happened and Paul teaches us how in verse 11. The Holy Spirit raised Him. He restored, recombined, and restructured every

decaying cell in the dead body of Jesus so that it became alive. The Holy Spirit, in other words, was the agent of His resurrection.

The Holy Spirit Will Resurrect Us

And He will be of ours as well. Paul declares in that regard, **“the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies.”** You and I as followers of Jesus will die, after which our bodies will decay and turn to dust. But that isn’t the end of the story. One day, at the Second Coming, the Holy Spirit will resurrect us just as He did Jesus.

Now, notice a critical detail in that regard. As verse 11 describes it, He will give life to **“our mortal bodies”** that is, the bodies we have now, our earthly ones. Consider something. Jesus’ resurrection body was the very body that died on the cross. It’ll be the same with us. Examine your body in a mirror sometime. Look at your face, chest, stomach, and so on. The Holy Spirit won’t give you another or different body at the Second Coming of Jesus. He’ll transform the one you see in the mirror instead. The *Westminster Confession* states it this way, **“All the dead shall be raised up, with the self-same bodies, and none other.”**

This demonstrates what is called **“redemptive continuity.”** There is continuity between our mortal bodies and lives and our eternal ones. The lives we now live as the persons we now are in the bodies we now have will continue. In bodily terms, there will be a genetic carryover from our mortal bodies to our resurrection ones. We can infer, for instance, that our racial identities, our body types, our facial features, and so on will continue so that we’ll look something like we do now.

But while there will be continuity, there will be change as well. In fact, the title Jenny chose is an accurate one. The Holy Spirit will do an extreme makeover of our mortal bodies. That term **“extreme makeover”** was the title of a television show. In it, individuals were made over by plastic surgery, exercise regimens, hairdressing, and wardrobing. The result was a striking change in their looks. But those makeovers pale in

comparison to the makeovers the Holy Spirit will do. He'll make stunning changes to our mortal bodies that boggle the mind.

Take our appearance, for instance. If we saw Adam and Eve as they were before the Fall, it'd take our breath away. The most attractive person on earth today would seem plain in comparison to them. Or if they, before the Fall, saw the most attractive person on earth today, they'd be unimpressed. But the Holy Spirit will reverse the effects of the Fall and make our resurrection bodies more attractive than Adam and Eve's were before it. He will perfect each of our bodies in every possible respect, including looks. That illustrates the point. The Holy Spirit's resurrection of our mortal bodies will be an extreme makeover.

The Extreme Makeover

The Bible doesn't reveal all the spectacular details of our makeover but it does reveal enough to inspire and challenge us. 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 is its classic text in that regard. In it, Paul gives us four remarkable insights about our resurrection bodies.

First, according to verse 42, they will be "**imperishable.**" I'm at the point in life that my muscle mass is diminishing and I didn't have that much to begin with. But that won't happen to our resurrection bodies. They'll be imperishable, that is, impervious to decay. The health and strength of their tissues won't diminish over time. We won't age and weaken in other words. I won't have these trifocals; that's for sure. My eyesight will never decline. Imperishable also means impervious to destruction. They can't be injured or harmed. Superman, without his vulnerability to Kryptonite, is a good analogy of this. Our resurrection bodies can't be bruised, broken, cut, torn, or damaged in any way.

Verse 43 gives us a second insight. They'll be "**raised in glory.**" – glorious in other words. That means their systems will function perfectly. They'll be flawless and fully efficient. Take the digestive system, for instance. Our resurrection stomach, liver, gallbladder, intestines, and so on will turn all the food we eat, not just some of it, into the nutrients we

need. There will be no men's rooms in heaven. My point is that all of our bodily systems will function flawlessly and efficiently (100%).

There's a third insight, also in verse 43. Our resurrection bodies will be "**raised in power.**" This has two aspects. One is our mental capacities. We'll have prodigious minds that dwarf those of the most intelligent people now. Our ability to reason, remember, perceive, and conceive will be off the charts. The most complex equations of quantum physics will be like child's play to us. We'll have an astonishing grasp of reality. A second aspect is our bodily capacities. Our five senses will be incredibly enhanced. Our resurrection eyes, for instance, will likely have telescopic and microscopic capabilities. Or our resurrection tongues will be capable of experiencing more than five sensations of taste: sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami. Our resurrection minds and bodies, as you can see, will be far superior to our mortal minds and bodies. And they'll do what our mortal minds and bodies don't, function in perfect harmony.

Verse 44 gives us a fourth and final insight. Our resurrection bodies will be "**spiritual.**" Our mortal bodies are "**natural,**" suited to an earthly life. But our resurrection bodies will be "**spiritual,**" suited to a heavenly life. As a practical matter, that means that we'll be able to transcend what we call "**natural laws.**" The miracles of Jesus give us a glimpse of the kinds of powers we'll have like change molecular structures, create something out of nothing, defy gravity, and so on. The breath-taking activities and endeavors of heaven will require that of us and we'll be able to do it. Our resurrection bodies will be "**spiritual,**" in other words, suited to heavenly life.

I've just touched the surface of what our resurrection bodies will be like. But it's enough for us to understand in general terms what the Holy Spirit is going to do, an extreme makeover.

Locate Our Mortal Bodies

But is it important that we understand that? Does it matter that we know what the destiny of our bodies is? Yes, it does. Knowing that

helps us to locate the mortal body, to give it its proper place.

Let me quickly observe that the vast majority of people don't locate it; they mis-locate it instead. They make it central to human life.

Romans 1:24-27 reveals why they do. Something must be central to people. They must have something to worship and serve. For the vast majority in our world, that isn't God. They don't take Him primarily into account and don't live interactively with Him. So, they must turn to something else. And that something else, because it's so obvious and present, is almost always the body. They idolize it and its natural powers and make it the object of their primary concern. As Dallas Willard points out, they devote most of their time, energy, and effort to how it looks, smells, and feels and how it can be secured and satisfied. They orient their entire self to it in other words.

The problem is that it's so fragile and frail. It fails them in so many ways over time, and eventually ceases. And they're fraught with anger, fear, and/or shame as a result, directed to a host of things, like obesity, illness, injury, handicaps, deformities, aging, and death to name a few. I remember my preoccupation with how short and young looking I was in high school. Or I reflect on the people I've met who were obsessed with their physical problems and all the surgeries and doctor's appointments that went along with them. Or I observe the youth worship in Western societies. Those things and countless more illustrate the underlying and controlling anger, fear, and/or shame that people direct toward the body. That's our lot in life when we mis-locate it by making it central.

So, don't mis-locate it. Romans 8:11 teaches us that the Holy Spirit is the Lord of our mortal bodies. He controls their temporal and eternal destinies. So, we make Him central not them. We idolize Him not them. We do so by putting Him in total charge of two things: what we do with them and for our purposes today, what happens to them. Hear that. We put Him in total charge of what happens to them. We release to Him all outcomes regarding it whether it's repulsiveness, illness, injury, aging, death, and more.

Now, understanding and contemplating the link between our mortal and resurrection bodies assists us in doing that. So, I ponder that my mortal tongue will be a resurrection tongue that leaves a taste in my mouth that even the taste of a Whopper can't come close to matching. Or I ponder that my mortal ears will be resurrection ears that listen in my conversations with Moses, the Apostle Paul, George Fox, and all my Christian loved ones who have lived. Or I ponder that my mortal arms and hands will be resurrection arms and hands that manipulate and shape the very material environment of heaven itself. Knowing that this, my mortal body, will become that, my resurrection body puts what happens to it now in its larger perspective. It makes me realize that it isn't the end of me if I get ALS, am paralyzed, suffer a stroke, age, or even die. That realization in turn produces a peace or rest of the soul that excludes inner and outer striving. At that point, I am able to make the Holy Spirit, not my body central, and I do.

Conclusion

I leave you in closing with the words of speaker and author Joni Eareckson Tada. 49 years ago, Joni was injured in a swimming accident and has been a quadriplegic ever since. Yet, she is today a vibrant follower of Jesus partially because she has her mortal body in its proper perspective and place. Listen to her stirring words in that regard: **"Somewhere in my broken, paralyzed body is the seed of what I shall become. The paralysis makes what I am to become all the more grand when you contrast atrophied, useless legs against splendorous resurrection legs. I'm convinced that if there are mirrors in heaven (and why not?), the image I'll see will be unmistakably Joni."** Do you want to be at rest when it comes to your mortal body. If so, do what Joni has done. Apprentice yourself to Jesus. Then understand, believe, and act according to what the Holy Spirit's going to do to it – an extreme makeover.

We've called this meeting to address the health coverage our board provides to 30 something churches. The long and short of it is this. The Affordable Health Care Act, Obamacare, has imposed regulations upon groups like ours that provide health coverage for its employees, with stiff penalties for non-compliance.

The coverage we currently provide is in non-compliance, exposing us to a potential penalty of \$250,000. The two options before us, therefore, are either to bring our plan into compliance or to terminate it.

Bringing it into compliance isn't a viable option. First, the independent nature of our churches prevents that. And second, even if we comply and keep it, our churches won't be able to afford the dramatic increase in premiums that are likely coming in 2015. It's likely that we were going to terminate the plan for that reason at the end of the year anyway.

Our second option is for pastors and staff members to pursue insurance coverage on the Obamacare exchange. This is a viable option that in the long run will generate substantial health costs savings for our churches. My own church, for instance, will save approximately \$21,000 a year by entering the exchange for my full time Christian education director and me.

Our board has partnered with Destefano Insurance Agency for many years now and its representatives will assist our churches in entering the exchange.

We do have representatives from Destefano on our call to explain what I've generally presented in further detail. So, I'll turn the floor over to its representatives, Karin Hrenko, Dianna, Michael Lemon and our General Superintendent Wayne Evans.