

Anybody Want a Better Body?

Sign Title: Anybody want a better body?

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Anybody suffering from a crippling disease like MS, Diabetes, Parkinson's, Arthritis, Lupus or another auto-immune disorder? Anybody in a battle with a disease like heart disease or cancer? Anybody look in the mirror and wish they could shed a few pounds? Are there any ladies who are so satisfied with their appearance that they wouldn't dare wear cosmetics because they would only ruin your appearance? It looks like everyone has the same wish. We all wish we had a better body, especially as we get older and our body begins to break down.

I would like to thank you for coming to worship with us. If you are new, my name is Kurt and I am one of the pastors. This summer we are studying the Mysteries of Heaven and learning what God has in store for his children after they die. Earlier in this series we learned that while our body dies, our souls never cease to exist but they go to be with Christ, which the apostle Paul says, is better by far. Earlier in this series we learned God will not allow Satan to enjoy the victory of destroying this planet and our bodies. Revelation 21-22 tells us some incredibly good news. God will eventually remake and renew this planet so it is free from sin. When God remakes this creation it will be very similar to what it is like now but it will be vastly improved. We learned a principle. *Whatever God renews, he always improves.* Some day that will include this earth.

Just like God will renew the earth, some day he will also renew and vastly improve our bodies. We were created to be a body and a soul that exists as one. We were created to live on earth and bring glory to God in our work and life. For

us to fully achieve the purpose God created us for, we need a new earth and a new body to live with on that new earth.

Since getting a new and improved body is something everyone is looking forward to, we are taking this morning to learn what our new bodies will be like. You are probably wondering how we can do that. God gives us a snapshot of what our resurrection bodies will be like by looking at Christ's body after his resurrection.

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 1 Corinthians 15:49 (ESV)

This morning I am dividing the message into three parts. First, we will learn ways our new body will be similar to the one we have now, then we will learn ways our new body will be different. Then we will apply this to our life.

How will our bodies be similar?

Will we get a new body or a renewed old one?

How new will our new bodies be? What do you think? We all wrestle with these questions. We have an old car and the transmission blows. We have to make a decision. Do we buy a new car or fix the old one? Will we get a completely new body or an old one that was fixed? If people are buried in the grave it sounds reasonable to get the old body back through resurrection but what about people who were blown up in war or people who were eaten by sharks so parts of their body ended up all over the ocean? Doesn't it sound like it is stretching things a bit to think they will get their same bodies and DNA back?

How can we determine the answer? Let's look at Christ's body, the prototype, for our answer.

See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Luke 24:39 (ESV)

Jesus said,...

Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days... the temple he had spoken of was his body. John 2:19, 21

The Westminster Larger Catechism states.

The self-same bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls forever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ.

Will our resurrection bodies be the same bodies we have today? Yes!

How will God do this if our bodies were cremated, dismembered in war or digested by sharks? I don't know. But I do know that if the power of God raised Christ from the dead, it will be no trouble for God to regather the particles of our body that are scattered around the globe and reassemble them. God tells Ezekiel to preach to a valley of dry bones and God's word causes the bones to reassemble themselves and flesh to come on them resurrecting a vast army.

What seems impossible for us, is not impossible for God.

Will we have our old memories?

How do we get our answer? Did Christ have his memory after his resurrection? If you look at how Christ interacted with Mary Magdalene, Thomas and Peter after he rose from the dead, we find he remembered everything about his earthly life with them. He picked up his relationships right where he left off. Why wouldn't this be the way it will be for us if we will be like him? Why wouldn't

we have the same memories and relational histories? Why couldn't we pick up our relationships right where we left off?

Will we eat?

When we came home from vacation, our neighbors put in our refrigerator a serving bowl full of some kind of a cold tomato soup with cilantro. The taste was a unique combination of fresh salsa and cold soup. Manifique! One of the great pleasures in life is food. God designed food to be a pleasure to enjoy. I know this will stretch the imagination for some of us but in our new bodies, why wouldn't we eat? Food, and the enjoyment of it, is a good part of this creation. Why wouldn't it be part of the next? Did Christ eat in his resurrected body? Yes!

In fact, John 21 tells us Jesus even cooked breakfast for his disciples! Luke tells us that one time when Jesus appeared to his disciples and they were so freaked out because he materialized right in front of them, to prove it was really him, not a ghost, he ate!

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. Luke 24:40–43 (ESV)

The Bible is emphatic, we will eat and drink in our resurrected bodies. The Bible goes out of its way to keep us from embracing the very misconceptions that so many of us have about eternity. We think eternity will be like Jacob Marley appearing to Ebenezer Scrooge. We think we will be like the ghosts of Christmas past. The Bible says that is absolutely not true. The new heavens and new earth are physical. We will partake in the very God glorifying pleasures on this earth that we enjoy. Eating is a big one of them.

Just to help you out a bit here, eternity is not about portion controlled, Lean Cuisine meals.

Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”
Revelation 19:9 (ESV)

What do people do at a wedding supper? They eat, they talk, they celebrate and then they eat more. When it comes to wedding parties, we do a poor job of celebrating. In the Middle East, wedding parties lasted for a week. This is talking about the wedding supper of the Lamb. In that supper, we aren't the guests, we are the bride. We need to look forward to eating real food in the new heavens and earth and eating lots of it.

Will we gain weight? I don't think so, but that is just speculation. I suspect our metabolisms will be vastly improved so we can enjoy food and give thanks to God for it, not be incapacitated by it.

Will the food taste the same?

What is your favorite food? Spaghetti? Lasagna? What is your favorite dessert? There is some food that is so good we drool when we smell it cooking in the kitchen. So this is an important question, will my favorite food will be there? Will they have New York style pizza in the new creation? Well, yes, our favorite foods will be there, but I am sorry to tell you, they won't taste like they do on this earth. *(pause)* Whatever God remakes, he vastly improves. The taste of the food will be much better than it is now and our taste buds will also be new and vastly improved in our new and improved bodies.

This week, when you have a great meal, remind yourself that on the New Heaven and Earth you can have it all over again, but it will taste much better.

Best of all, I don't think we will have to worry about gaining weight on it. We can eat like we were teenagers again.

Will we still have our gender, identity and race?

According to what I read on the new heavens and new earth, some people think we will be neutered cherubs or pasty white apparitions. What do you think? Wrong! By the way, some people in the early church tried that. They were the Manichaeans. They were Christoplatonists who believed the flesh was evil and spirit was good. Thankfully they were quickly condemned as heretics because our flesh and gender is good, God created both of them. The Bible tells us that we will always have our gender, even in our resurrected bodies.

Did Jesus still have his gender when he rose from the dead? Of course!

Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." John 20:15 (ESV)

It is not just *gender* that Christ retained, but it was his *identity*. Mary recognized him when she heard his voice. The times where Jesus wasn't recognized after his resurrection we find people were kept from recognizing him for a short period of time. We will not just retain our gender and our identity but we will retain our race. I don't know if you realize this but God created different races. He did it for his glory. God loves variety. He didn't create one race as superior and another as inferior, he made us different because God likes diversity.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, Revelation 7:9 (ESV)

How could John say that if he didn't recognize people of different races around the throne.

Will we be able to materialize where we want?

So far, in learning about our resurrection bodies, we are taking our cue from what Jesus was like in his resurrection body. One of the things Jesus could do is he had the Star Trek transporter room thing down pat because he could just show up places, even if the room was locked, he didn't have to knock.

And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. Luke 24:31 (ESV)

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. Luke 24:36–37 (ESV)

Will we be able to teleport ourselves wherever and whenever we want?

Many people think we will be able to do this. I am not sure. Christ's ability to appear any place may be a function of his deity, not his resurrected humanity. I don't know for sure, we may still need to walk places. After all, why would the New Jerusalem have streets of gold if nobody needed a street?

I want you to realize there is a lot of stuff about our new bodies similar to our old bodies except they are played out to perfection. This is very important because without knowing this we can not have a hunger for heaven. All we know is earth and we love the earth and we love having our bodies. No earth and no body is not the way we were designed to be. We live for a perfect earth and body and that is what we will have.

How will our resurrection bodies be different?

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul gives us a list of ways our bodies will be different.

Our bodies will be immortal.

What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 1 Corinthians 15:42 (ESV)

Our bodies are not designed to last forever. We are like a carton of milk, we have a “Best if used by” stamp because these bodies go rotten. While time will pass on the new heaven and earth, our bodies will not wear out with the passing of time. Remember, this is the way we were intended to be. Look at the Old Testament genealogies. It was not unusual to have people living 700 to 900 years. In fact, Adam only died shortly before Noah’s father came on the scene. People were hanging around a long-time with sin on this earth, why wouldn’t they be immortal if there was no sin on the earth and we can eat from the tree of life? So when God gives us a new body, he gives us a spiritual body, not a natural body and the spiritual body, while it looks just like this one and is composed of the same substance as this one, will not wear out like this one. So yes, we will get to be teenagers again.

We will be filled with power.

It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 1 Corinthians 15:43 (ESV)

Paul’s point is that when we die, we succumb to weakness. The older we get, the weaker we are. I can not lift the weight I used to lift. As I discovered this week, I can not jog the distance I used to run. I can’t even stay awake long

enough to watch David Letterman. My kids tuck me into bed and read me a story. The older we get, the weaker we become.

The great part about our resurrection bodies is they are filled with power. The word for power here is *dunamis* from where we get our word dynamite. Dunamis means achieving power, it means capability. Our new bodies will be pulsating with capability and energy. Do you like to write? You will have incredible writing abilities. Do you like to find joy in creating, in designing, in cooking. We will have tons of energy and the ability to do that. Much of our limitations come from fatigue or mental incapacity. That will be transformed so the defining characteristic of our body is not weakness but power.

We will radiate glory.

It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. 1 Corinthians 15:43 (ESV)

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body,...
Philippians 3:20–21 (ESV)

We established that Christ's resurrected body, before his ascension to heaven, was quite normal in appearance. But what did Christ's body become like after he ascended and he was glorified? Look what Jesus looked like when John saw him in heaven in Revelation.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one.

I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Revelation 1:12–18 (ESV)

What was Jesus like when he appeared to Paul?

“As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ Acts 22:6–8 (ESV)

When Jesus went to heaven, he was glorified and now he lets the glory of his divinity radiate through his humanity. While on earth after his resurrection, he still veiled his glory. As John says in Revelation 22:23, Jesus’s glory is the very light of the new creation. Did you know that one way we will be different in our resurrection body is that it appears we will shine too? This shouldn’t surprise us that those who are in Christ’s presence will partake of his brightness. Hebrews 2 says that we will reign and rule in the new creation as little kings and queens under Christ. We may have a glow to our glory, just like Christ has a glow to His. Of course, the glow of our glory, as his adopted brothers and sister, will be much less than his.

Even if we don’t glow in and of ourselves, it is possible that we may get charged up from being in Christ’s presence like human glow-in-the-dark night sticks. That is what happened to Moses when he received the Ten Commandments from God on Mt. Sinai. Nobody needed a flashlight, they just asked Moses to come into the room.

What difference does this make?

I know some of you are saying, what difference does this make for me. I feel like I can win at a game of heavenly trivial pursuit but I need something that

helps me today. Brothers and sisters, I am happy you are wondering how this applies. *(pause)* This changes everything!

The frailties of our earthly bodies build a desire for the health, power and vitality we will have in our resurrection bodies.

This week, when you feel the arthritis in your fingers or you feel the pain in your knees or the weakness in your back and the fatigue after work and you need new glasses because you can't see and you have to buy a hearing aide because you can't hear; say to yourself. I may be wearing out and getting old but because of Jesus, one day this self-same body will take on its resurrected form and it won't wear out, grow old and need pills, potions, cremes and injections. We will put the doctors out of business.

When sin threatens to destroy the physical pleasures we have in our earthly bodies, we have the promise of even greater physical pleasures in the new creation with our resurrection bodies.

Some day when the doctor diagnoses you with cancer or MS or Parkinsons or heart disease or an auto-immune disease or one of the millions of life-robbing physical-destroying diseases that Satan is giddy over because it ruins our bodies. You get to laugh at it. Pagans watch the movie "The Bucket List" and say they better get it all in before they die, brother and sister, we will get it all in after we die because we have a new creation and a new body to do it with.

If the Lord chooses to bring us to glory through a terminal disease or a car accident, do we grieve? Of course we grieve.

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 (ESV)

We grieve with hope! We are getting new bodies and a new earth where we can pick up our relationships right where we left off and we can live forever.

The joys experienced in this life bait our imagination for the even greater joys we will have in the next.

This week, when you are just bursting with joy at the taste of the food, the beauty of the lake, the wonder of the green fields and the blue sky and you just love God's creation. Remember, this isn't as good as it gets. It gets better.

What we have now is sin tainted, rotting, dying and ruined compared to the wonder of the new creation and the increased capacity we will have to enjoy it.

That is where we are going.

Anybody want a new body? Through Jesus, we have a new and improved one right around the corner.

Let's pray



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