

Empire Church of the Brethren
Sunday Service Sermons

26 April 2026

The Nature of our Resurrection Bodies

Text: "As we have born the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." 1 Cor. 15:49

Do you like to spend time in a cemetery?

When visiting relatives in the Midwest they take you to the cemetery to see where your relatives are buried.

One of the most forlorn places on earth is a cemetery of the unclaimed dead, New York City's Potter's Field.

This cemetery receives about four thousand such bodies annually.

When people are buried there, there are no funeral rites, no flags, no flowers, no markers on the graves.

The pallbearers are prisoners from the city's workhouse.

The bodies arrive at the burial place in pine coffins.

The prisoners chisel a number on each box.

Then the coffins are placed in a common trench.

The only marker at Potter's field is a single monument, erected there about fifty years ago, bearing the one word "Peace."

It is somewhat misleading.

Few of those buried there ever found peace on earth.

Whatever reward there may be for them will have to be in the life to come.

While all cemeteries are places of sadness, defeat, and despair, the Bible says that one day the cemetery will be the most lively place on earth.

When Christ returns, the graves will open and the dead in them will be raised.

That is the great theme of Paul in *1 Corinthians 15*.

In this passage Paul's answers two pertinent questions: "How is the resurrection possible?" and "What kind of body will we have in the resurrection?"

We will have a suitable body.

God gives to each creature a body suitable for its existence.

Birds, fish, and humans all have bodies perfectly adapted to their environments.

Our resurrection body will be suitable for the resurrected life.

Our bodies will be adapted to the conditions of eternal life.

We will have a superior body.

In verses 42-44 of *1 Corinthians 15* Paul uses the metaphor of seeds and plants again.

He suggests that if you want to know what our resurrection bodies will be like, you should go to a garden.

Seeds are sown in the ground, and from their decay comes a plant far more superior to that which was placed in the ground.

The analogy is our bodies are the seeds, our burial is the planting, our resurrection is the harvest.

Our resurrection body will be incorruptible, that is not subject to decay.

Our resurrection body will be glorious, that is, not subject to sin.

Our resurrection body will be powerful, that is, not subject to the limitations and handicaps of this life.

Our resurrection body will be spiritual, that is, not mere flesh and blood.

We will have a Christ-like body.

The clearest picture of what our resurrection body will be like is that of Jesus Christ.

The apostle John concurs in *1 John 3:2*

What kind of body did Jesus have when he was resurrected?

Jesus had a transcendent body.

Throughout his ministry he was subject to the laws of time and space and matter.

He could be in only one place at one time.

To go from one place to another required that he move in time and in space.

But after his resurrection, he was no longer limited to time and space.

His body transcended former limitations.

His resurrected body showed no ill effects from the mortal wounds he had recently received.

So our resurrection bodies will not be limited by the afflictions, infirmities, and handicaps that we have experienced on this earth.

Jesus had a recognizable body.

When he appeared to his disciples, they recognized him; he looked essentially the same.

He also spoke with them. Walked with them. And allowed them to physically inspect his scars.

In like manner, we will know each other in the resurrection.

Joseph Fort Newton wrote a beautiful statement about the death of his father.

When Newton was just a boy, he looked for the first time into an open grave; it was a strange and terrifying experience for him.

He listened as the old country minister adjusted his glasses and read the words of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life . . . Let not your heart be troubled."

Newton said he would never forget the power of those words.

It was as if a powerful but gentle hand had been put forth from the unseen to caress and heal his spirit.

Then he said, "From that day to this I have loved Jesus beyond the power of words to tell."

We are to look to Jesus for our life after this life and as to how to live this life until it is over.

We are to look to Jesus as our example as to how we should live our lives.

He is the author of our salvation.

We must not let the current of life around us cause us to drift into something that we are not supposed to be a part of.

That is why we are called to stand firm.

Not allowing the currents around us to take us down stream.

We are prone to drifting through inattention.

We must stay close to Jesus each day.

Otherwise our lack of attention to him will allow us to drift away from him.

Another cause of drifting is lack of discipline.

Becoming a better Christian involves spiritual discipline.

Unless a Christian resists the Devil, by engaging in daily prayer and applying faith to life drifting is inevitable.

No person remains the same, we are moving one way or the other.

Closer to God or further away from God.

The Bible is the story of God drawing close to His people and them drifting away from Him.

They were punished when they were no longer obedient.

God's people let the commands of God slip or drift.

Consequently, God punished the people.

Drifting away from God always leads to punishment.

What is the remedy for drifting?

We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. *Heb. 2:1*

The remedy for drifting is to give heed to what we have heard.

The phrase, "what we have heard" refers back to the initial experience of salvation.

The time when Christ was invited into a person's life.

God's ultimate word was spoken in Jesus Christ, and believers responded by opening their lives to him.

We have to take seriously the relationship with Jesus Christ.

Hearing and receiving Christ is not enough.

Believers need to be concerned about developing their relationship with Christ and sharing it.

That is the remedy for drifting.

Can you see the signs of warning?

The world has swift currents.

The possibility that we could drift in our relationship with Jesus Christ is real.

We have to draw close to Him that He might draw close to us.

Now and for ever more!

Amen? Ah, yes, Let it so be!