

**Intro.** One of the really important reasons we gather together for a meeting in this room on Sunday mornings is to encourage each other in the Lord. Thank you so much for your life of faith and obedience this past week. God's infinite worth was seen, the love of Christ was shown, the truth of the gospel has been shared . . . you have had quite a week as the lights of the world and the salt of the earth. You come to church meeting today in need of renewal, forgiveness, strength and encouragement. Your critical need is not in discovering some new truth or some amazing technique . . . it is to connect again with God and be changed as a result of that.

What is it that keeps you going? What has to happen to you, not only to keep you going but to cause you to take on more or go further than you have ever gone before? God has provided you as a child of his, with multiple, accessible and renewable energy sources for your mission of honoring him in every aspect of your life. Consider the most challenging aspects of your life of faith. Think about those times this past week when you were faced with giving up rather than standing firm, choosing selfishness rather than sacrifice, living safe rather than taking a risk, yielding to comfort rather than growth or complaining about trouble rather than gratefully praying. What are some of the multiple, renewable and accessible energy sources that God provides for you to be strengthened encouraged and protected? Let me mention 4 sources and then spend some time teaching you about a 5<sup>th</sup>.

First, consider the ministry of the Holy Spirit. God has sent his Spirit to live in us and come alongside us to comfort, protect, teach, direct, empower and encourage you. Second, remember that a major intended impact of the scriptures in your life is to encourage you and give you hope (Romans 15:4). Third, how about the works of God . . . the stories of God's grace and power that are handed from person to person to strengthen our hearts and prompt our praise (Psa 26:7; Connections). Fourth, in any list of encouragement sources from the Bible you must include other believers. There is renewable spiritual energy that comes from life on life interaction . . . think of the power of a kind word or a well timed acknowledgement.

This morning let's ask God to help us be greatly encouraged and strengthened in our greatest struggles by focusing our attention on a fifth accessible and renewable energy source for our faith, the gospel itself. We are learning that the gospel is both content (Jesus died for your sins, was buried and was raised on the third day) and power (God's grace applied that results in a transformed life defeating power of sin and death). The end result of the gospel in your life is the complete reversal of all influence and consequence of sin and death. The event that we look forward to when we will be able to know fully this victory over sin and death is our resurrection from the dead. So, the truth that we want to focus our attention on this morning that will energize your faith is your resurrection from the dead. The gospel tells us that since Jesus was raised from the dead, you will also be raised from the dead.

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-57**

God gives you a new body. 35-49

You receive your new body when Jesus comes. 50-57

Be encouraged! Be energized! Abound in the Lord's work! Why? You will be raised from the dead, given a new body and forever live in a kingdom ruled by Christ with all consequences of sin and death defeated and reversed. Nothing you do for Christ is in vain . . . meaningless, empty of consequence. That is the ultimate hope of the gospel for you to know, embrace and cherish. This truth has given hope and courage to believers for centuries whether it is the prisoner about to die for his faith or the wife who doesn't feel like she can go on in her marriage. The Bible teaches us to draw strength from two truths . . . let's learn, embrace and cherish these two truths . . .

**1. God gives you a new body.**

**35-49**

When the Apostle Paul wrote the Philippians, he encouraged them to stand firm in their faith for this very same reason . . .

*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, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Therefore . . . stand firm thus in the Lord . . .* Phil. 3:20 – 4:1

The fact of the resurrection as a key component of the, as of yet unfinished, power of the gospel in your life is huge source of what is to keep you going for Christ. 1Corinthians unpacks this future event in your life by explaining some common misperceptions.

- Your new body is designed impressively for kingdom living. 37-41
  - 3 guiding principles to help us enjoy this truth more . . .
    - a. Ordering v.38 God gives it a body as he has chosen
    - b. Contrast and variety v.38 to each kind its own body
    - c. Splendor 40-41 glory of various bodies
- Your new body will be changed powerfully from your current body. 42-44

Note the several contrasts that we can use to shape our hope . . .

Buried

Perishable/in decay  
Dishonor/humiliation  
Weakness/limits  
Natural/human

Raised

imperishable/flourishing life  
glory/impressive  
power/capacity  
spiritual/fit for fellowship with God

- Your new body will be transformed completely into the likeness of Christ. 45-49

Note the number of contrasts between your identity and existence in your 'Adam' phase and your 'last Adam' experience. Note how these truths while somewhat difficult to understand completely, encourage our imaginations to feed our souls with truth injected hope.

Referring us to Genesis 2:7 note these contrasts between you now and you resurrected . . .

- a. In Adam, you are a living being. In Christ, you will be a spiritually alive being. 45-46
- b. In Adam, your body is from the earth. In Christ, your body is from heaven. 47-48
- c. In Adam, your body is like his body. In Christ, your body is like his body. 49

v. 50 is a summary and bridge to the next question addressed. The point is that neither the living nor the dead can take part in the kingdom of God as they are . . . both must experience a transformation!

- 1. God gives you a new body. 35-49
- 2. You receive your new body when Jesus comes. 50-57**

When the Apostle Paul wrote the believers at Thessalonica he taught them to encourage one another with these words . . .

*For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 1Thessalonians 4:16-17*

Learn to feed and rely on these courage giving, mysterious truths . . .

- Everyone will be changed when Jesus comes. 51-52
  - a. In an instant.
  - b. At the divine signal.
- Death is reversed when Jesus comes. 53-56
  - a. The decaying and mortal will wear new clothes of flourishing life. 54-55
  - b. The spiritual punishment/curse of sin will be defeated and reversed. 54-56

- Serious joy is expressed when Jesus comes. 57

- a. You will recognize God as the loving and powerful God that he is.
- b. You will announce that death and sin are defeated.
- c. You will rejoice in Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior.

**Conclusion** As we continue our worship this morning by remembering Christ, renewing our faith and expressing again our thanksgiving for him, let us do so with a new sense of hope generated by the truths of our coming resurrection.

For those of you who remain in your sins and self confidence, I pray that you will respond to the truth of the gospel with recognition of your guilt before God and humbly cry out to him for mercy in Christ.

For those of you who know Christ in confidence and faith . . . please take courage. Repent and return to the simple truths of resurrection, new body, the sound of God's trumpet and the appearing of the one who loves you and gave himself for you. These truths can and will provide renewable, accessible and effective energy for your marriage, thought life, health issues, sinful habits and selfishness. Reflect, repent, renew, remember . . . Christ.

### **Study Questions**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58. Share 3-5 observations, questions or impressions from your reading.
2. Share with your group the most effective ways that you have are encouraged to remain steadfast in your faith. What is the difference between being encouraged to 'hang in there' and 'to abound.' What are the most natural or common ways that you give encouragement to others?
3. Why are most people quite consumed with/hung up with their physical body size/shape? What truths about your new body from the study today challenge you the most? . . . comfort you the most? Why would knowing we receive new and different bodies encourage us, especially the rare person who likes their present body?
4. Review Phil. 3:20-4:1; 1Thess. 4:16-18 and Matt. 24:31. What other scriptures are you familiar with that teach us to draw comfort from Jesus coming again?
5. Read Romans 5:12-21. How does this passage parallel and help you understand 1Cor. 15:56? Explain what this phrase means . . . 'death is swallowed up in victory.' How would this taunt sound today . . . coming from you . . . like maybe at a funeral?