

- ✚ There has only been one law against dying that actually works, the law of the resurrection. We have been in pursuit of a Biblical understanding of our own resurrection. We saw last time that if you take the resurrection from a believer, you take away everything he has. Christianity is completely dependent upon the resurrection, both Christ's and our own because they cannot be separated from each other. If we take away the resurrection, we empty the gospel of all of its contents.
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1. This time we are going to be focusing on a metaphor that Paul presents to us to help us understand the resurrection.

- ✓ Here, again, is this recurrent theme: to be certain about Christ's resurrection is the same as being certain about our own, 1st Corinthians 15:20. Jesus is the first fruits of all the rest of us who have believed. "First fruits" was a feast on the Jewish religious calendar in the Old Testament. Jewish farmers were required to go to their fields and pick a sheaf of the first ripe grain on the Sunday that followed the Passover, and they were to bring it to the priest who would wave it before the Lord in His temple. The sheaf was a statement of faith and sign that said that entire harvest belonged to the Lord and that they were trusting the Lord to bring the full harvest that was to follow. Remember, Jesus was crucified on Passover and raised the following Sunday, the same day they were waving the "first fruits" before God, this was not a coincidence. The Lamb of Passover was a picture or symbol of the Lamb of God, Jesus, whose blood would take away our sin and its penalty which is eternal death. The "first fruits" was a picture or symbol of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The sheaf represented and promised the coming of the entire harvest. In the same way as Jesus' resurrection represented and promised the coming of the entire resurrection of those who are His. The sheaf said, "much more is to come." Jesus' resurrection says, "much more is to come." The sheaf was a sample of the entire harvest, Jesus' resurrected body is a sample of what every believer's body will be some day.
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2. Jesus used a similar gardening metaphor to describe His own death and resurrection.

- ✓ Understand that when the bible says that Jesus defeated death it means that He did more than just stop death. John 12:23-24. Jesus used death to His own ends, death became His servant in a sense. Death previously was only an executioner, but, in Jesus, death became a gardener. The word "in" is the pivotal word in 1st Corinthians 15:21-22, it eliminated any chance of their being a universal resurrection regardless of what a person has done with Christ. Jesus, if you will, was the first plant to ripen; we who believe have germinated through faith in Christ and will also inevitably ripen, 1st Corinthians 15:23. Death is not our executioner any more than it was for Jesus, death, like it was for Jesus, is our gardener. There are two questions that we will take one at a time, 1st Corinthians 15:35-36.
 - 1) How are the dead raised? The force of the Greek is more, "How is it possible that the dead are raised?" The answer is in 1st Corinthians 15:21-22, our present bodies are resurrection seeds. Death and decay are not a hindrance but a prerequisite for the resurrection, 1st Corinthians 15:36. Jesus said that unless a seed dies nothing sprouts.
 - 2) What kind of body will the resurrected body be? Our resurrected bodies will be similar to and yet different from our current bodies, 1st Corinthians 15:37-38. There is an organic relationship between our current bodies and our future resurrected ones. The plant is vastly different than its seed in the same way that our resurrected bodies will be to our present bodies. Death planted Jesus, so what then did we get? Jesus resurrected but vastly different than before (incorruptible body that could disappear and reappear and move through walls and space.) When death plants you, what will get in your resurrection? YOU! But vastly different in many ways.
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3. Consider the difference between us currently and who we will be in the resurrection.

- ✓ We begin to deteriorate the moment we are born, 1st Corinthians 15:42. Our current bodies are temporary, our resurrected bodies will be permanent. Everything about us and all that we do is tainted by sin and corruption, 1st Corinthians 15:43. Our resurrected bodies will be able to do something that our current bodies cannot do, they will be able to bring God glory without the taint of sin. Think of how amazing even our sin-tainted bodies are, but this is a weak body compared to the one that is in store for us in the resurrection. We are headed toward a serious upgrade in our hardware!

We die a physical being and are raised as such, but our bodies will be dominated by the spiritual not the physical, 1st Corinthians 15:44. Right now, we are controlled by the laws of nature, but then we will not be subject to nature's laws but by the spirit. Jesus in His resurrected body operated within the laws of nature, but He was not subject to those laws as was previously stated, 1st John 3:2-3. All these things are what death will accomplish for us; death is no longer a feared enemy but a servant.
