



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Corinthians 15:35-49

“From Dust to Glory”

1 Corinthians

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you, Howard, and good morning. Happy Mother’s Day. I hope you have a very blessed time today as your families gather and remember this day and give thanks for a great blessing, which is a good mother. Some of us are without our mothers now, they’ve gone to be with the Lord, but we will see them again at the great moment and really that hope lies behind the things that Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15, and then our passage this morning which is 1 Corinthians 15:35-49. “But someone will say ‘How are the dead raised and with what kind of body do they come?’ You fool, that which you sow does not come to life unless it dies and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain perhaps of wheat or something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished and to each of the seeds a body of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men and another flesh of beasts and another flesh of birds and another of fish. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one and the glory of the earthly is another. There’s one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars for stars differ from star and glory. So also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body. It is raised an imperishable body. It is sown in dishonor and raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written the first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural in the spiritual. The first man is from the earth – earthy. The second man is from Heaven as is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy and as is the heavenly so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.” May the Lord bless this reading of His Word in our time of study together.

Let’s pray. Father, we do pray your blessings upon us. We come to another text in this great chapter on the resurrection and once again we’re reminded of it and we’re reminded and taught to some degree on the nature of that body that will be raised and the glory of it. It’s certainly beyond us. It’s beyond comprehension. That’s not frustrated, that’s encouraging. That’s really exciting to think that the body that You will prepare for us – this present body, which will be transformed, will be so glorious we cannot comprehend the glory in this life. All Paul can do is give some analogies from nature, but those analogies give us some hint of the greatness of what’s to come, what awaits us. That’s our hope, and it’s a real hope. It’s a certain hope, not because of us, not because of anything in use, it’s because of You and Your plan and Your purpose for this creation and for Your people, and because Your son has redeemed us from sin, has bought salvation for us. It’s been imparted to every believer. We’re joined to Him and we will be like Him in every way. Every way in which He is human and glorified, we look forward to that. And we thank You because it’s through no work of our own, so no merit of our own. It’s all because of You. So give us a sense of the glory to come and the hope that we have and may it have its proper affect upon us today and in the week to come and really throughout our lives. Help us to think in life of the promises that You’ve made. We need to do that regardless of the circumstances of life, but that certainly is true for those who are going through trials and difficulties – and many are. Father, we pray for them. We pray that you would give healing to the sick and those who are recovering from serious operations. We pray that you would raise them up, give them health. That takes time in the natural course of events and it occurs in your providence through medication and doctors and nurses and physical rest and all of that. So Father, give patience to those who are in such circumstances and give healing to them. We pray that you would encourage them and in the midst of that, we pray for others as well. Some of the afflictions of life are not material, they’re immaterial. They’re emotional. They’re the strains of life that we are under, which weighs us down. Father, for those who are in difficult circumstances at home or work or in school or wherever they may be, put their mind upon Your word. Help them to lift their thoughts to Heaven and to think about what’s eternal and what’s important. I pray You do that for us this morning as we consider what is eternal; what is awaiting us. May we be encouraged by that. Bless Your people. Bless us in this hour. May this be a time of learning, a time of reflection, a time of worship, a time of joy. We pray these things in Christ’s name. Amen.

When I was a boy, I enjoyed ghost stories. So did some of you. One of the eeriest was *The Monkey’s Paw*. It was actually published as a short story over 100 years ago in London. I read it not long ago. I don’t know why, but I did. It takes place in the English countryside. A British officer, a Sergeant Major, had just returned from India and was visiting old friends, the White family – Herbert and his parents. The night was cold and wet, but inside the family gathered around a blazing fire listening to their friend tell of his adventures in that mystic land. As he left he gave them something that an old Indian fakir had given him, a monkey’s paw. Legend was the paw had the power to give three wishes, but it was a terrible power. Herbert used it. The unintended result of the first wish was his death. He was caught in a machine at work in the factory. Days after the funeral the parents’ grief was inconsolable. Suddenly one night, Mrs. White remembered they had two more wishes. She took the paw, she gave it to her husband. She told him to wish her son alive again. He was resistant; he was hesitant, but he did. The clock ticked, time passed, and then there was a weak knock at the door. Mrs. White rushed to open it. Mr. White was terrified. Herbert’s body had been mangled in the machine. He knew he couldn’t allow his son back in that condition. He grabbed the paw, he wished Herbert back to the grave. The door opened and outside was

nothing, just the quiet and deserted road. *The Monkey’s Paw*. Now that seems like a ghoulish way to begin a Sunday sermon and particularly on Mother’s Day – I didn’t plan that. But it’s fitting because that was the idea that some in Corinth had of the resurrection. They dismissed it as so much fiction because in their minds it would mean bringing up bodies from the grave and their dust and decay. What kind of hope is that? That’s the objection that Paul answers in 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 where he explains that the resurrection is not ghastly, it’s glorious. These perishable bodies will become imperishable. These earthly bodies will become heavenly bodies. These natural bodies will become spiritual bodies. That’s Paul’s subject here, the nature of the resurrection body, and he uses what was a common objection to the resurrection as his springboard into that subject. The objection had no merit, but skeptics would ask it in order to expose what they considered to be the folly of the doctrine. ‘How are the dead raised and with what kind of body do they come?’ In other words, how is it possible to get life out of the grave, and if it were possible what kind of body could possibly be raised up from a pile of decomposed debris? The whole idea seemed preposterous and in that way the pagans would mock the faith and they would dismiss Christians as naïve and gullible.

Paul was very familiar with all of this. Paul traveled the gentile lands and he had heard all of the objections in his travels to Greek and Roman cities. He knew their view of the resurrection. They valued the spirit, not the body. They thought the body was a prison house of the soul. They dismissed all ideas of it, so he was well acquainted with their notions and their ideas and he knew how to answer it. His answer was blunt. He responded to his critics with as much contempt for their criticism as they had for his doctrine. “You fool,” he said. In other words, what ignorance. Their questions showed they did not know the Bible and they did not understand the power of God, but it also showed they weren’t aware of how nature itself illustrates the resurrection. It shows that death is not the end of everything. It’s not annihilation. Death is a transition from one form of existence to another and sometimes to a much higher form of existence. So Paul looks at nature and he gives very common examples from agriculture of how when a seed is planted it germinates and it produces a crop. When it is sown, the seed dies Paul says. It breaks down, it dissolves, but it doesn’t cease to exist. It is transformed into a plant, into a stalk of wheat or something else. So why should it seem farfetched that our bodies could die and live again? Why does it seem so incredible that they could be transformed, then, into something different, something far better? Nature produces resurrections of a kind all the time. It doesn’t reproduce the same seed that was sown. The seed dies, as it were, and something else grows. It becomes something different. A change occurs and to emphasize that, Paul reminds them in verse 37 that farmers don’t plant a stalk of wheat. They don’t get a stalk of wheat because they plant a stalk of wheat, they plant a grain that becomes the wheat. What dies in the ground is nothing like what appears in its place. It is a plant – green, vigorous, beautiful; a stalk of corn, a grain of wheat or a stalk of wheat, an oak tree – all from a small seed.

Then he says in verse 38 that it is God who gives the plant its body just as He wishes it. In other words, things don’t just happen in this world. God orchestrates everything. We speak today as though things just happen. We speak today of nature as though it functions on its own. And modern man, with his philosophy of naturalism considers the world and the universe to function in that way. It’s like a great machine and it operates according to laws. I don’t dispute that; at least I don’t dispute the fact that there are what we call laws of nature. Things like gravity, I don’t deny that those things exist, but the Bible teaches that not only did God create everything, he sustains everything. He’s behind all of those laws or those laws are really an expression, a manifestation of His work and how He’s dealing with things. He causes everything to grow. That’s what Paul tells

us. If he removed his hand from this world and this universe, everything would instantly dissolve into nothing. He gives the birth and growth and gives plants their bodies and their variety of forms. That’s true of all creation. Not all flesh is the same. Paul says in verse 39 there is the flesh of man. It differs from the flesh of beasts and birds and fish. They all differ from each other. God has designed them for their own unique place in the creation. They fit perfectly in their environment. Their bodies are adapted to those special places in which they live. The variety is great and really it extends beyond this world. It extends into the heavens. There are also heavenly bodies, he says, and earthly bodies – the stars and the planets differ from one another, differ in their form, differ in their splendor, verse 41. There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars for star differs from star and glory.

In other words, we have a wide variety in the world that God has created. Why should anyone suppose that there can only be one kind of human body? That’s Paul’s point here. Just as God makes all kinds of different bodies for plants and animals and man in the present, He can certainly create out of this body, a different body in the future at the resurrection. If we can make a cow with a body that is adapted to land and a fish that is adapted to water and a bird that is adapted to air – all very different from one another – he can make bodies that are adapted to a spiritual realm. What’s so improbable about that? What is so fantastic about that? That, at least, is the implication of what he’s saying here. This isn’t some natural process or some random happening of chance. God Almighty is the cause of the resurrection. But when a person rejects God and is ignorant of His power, then he becomes, as Paul said, a fool. When Paul says, “You fool,” he’s not trying to be insulting. He’s not angry. He’s not belittling people. He was just stating a fact. It’s foolish what you’re saying. A fool may be a brilliant person. The simple person may be wise in comparison. A fool is simply a person who doesn’t have knowledge, who doesn’t have understanding. His mind is darkened. He may be a genius in many ways, but when it comes to the things of God, his mind is empty. He doesn’t know. He doesn’t understand and so his behavior, then, follows that course which is often reckless and foolish. But that’s Paul’s meaning here when he says, “You fool.” You don’t have an understanding. You lack a knowledge of God. So as a result of that he can’t imagine the work of God. He can’t begin to imagine how death could be reversed and he mocks the whole idea. When the early Christians were persecuted, they could face persecution bravely because they had the hope of the resurrection. They knew that his life is not all there is and thought there may be a moment of pain and suffering and it may come to a sudden end in a violent and very unpleasant way, it was but for the moment and what was before them was all eternity and the resurrection to come. And that gave them great hope and great courage.

The pagans understood that. They knew what gave these Christians their hope and courage so they tried to rob them of that. in Lyon, for example, in ancient France – or Gaul – they would burn the bodies of believers and then they’d scatter the ashes on the Rhone River and they would taunt the Christians by saying, ‘Now let us see if they will rise again and if their God is powerful enough to help them and snatch them out of our hands.’ They laughed at that and they’d think they made a really strong point when really their taunt was foolish. How foolish to think that God can’t take care of that. He made these promises of the resurrection long before people were put to death. This was his plan from the very beginning. He knew that would happen. He knew all the things that puzzle us would happen. God can gather every ash from every place. He is omniscient. He knows everything. Our problem is not the problem is too great for God, our problem is we don’t see God as far greater than any problem. But the scriptures are plain. He is far greater. He knows everything. Isaiah has a magnificent statement of that in Isaiah 40, one of the great chapters of the Bible. There he unfolds the greatness of God, the greatness of His knowledge, the greatness of His

power and the greatness of His love for us, but he speaks of God and the stars and how he names every one of them, calls them out by name. So as the sky begins to darken every evening and hopefully the city light doesn’t dim things, you begin to see these stars. They’re like an army marching out and it’s as though God is calling out his army of the stars. He calls them by name. You have Venus and then you have others. The night gets darker and there’s all these magnificent stars. He knows every one of them. He’s called them out by name because he created every one of them.

He knows the dust, Isaiah says. Every grain of dust has been calculated by God. He misses nothing. He knows every atom of the universe. Isaiah also says, “In His arms He will gather the lambs.” Do you really think God Almighty could lose one of us? Any one of us is infinitely more valuable to Him than the entire cosmos. Still, people wonder how God could do this, especially when the body has completely disintegrated. You’ve thought about this, haven’t you? I have. What about the man who’s lost at sea, who’s eaten by a fish that’s then eaten by a fish, that’s then eaten by another fish – what happened to him? What happened to his body? How’s the Lord gonna get that? What about Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island? That’s an odd story. I heard it first from Dr. Johnson, but then I read it. It’s documented. Roger Williams was a Baptist preacher who died in 1683. He had a humble grave, so 200 years later one of his descendants wanted to give him an honored burial site. But when the body was exhumed, nothing was there. The root of the tree had grown into the casket and absorbed the remains. Roger Williams had been eaten by an apple tree. It’s almost as spooky as my story. So where’s the body now? Well, in apples that people ate? In a tree that’s gone? How can there be a resurrection? I don’t know. I don’t have to do the resurrection. It’s not left to me. God’s going to do that and He certainly knows how it’s going to happen. He knows everything. He knows where every atom is. He keeps track of everything. Nothing is out of His mind. If that seems too hard to believe, you have too small a view of God. I can’t comprehend it either, but I don’t need to. The scriptures proclaim it. He’s going to do this. He’s going to raise His people up. He knows everything. He will reassemble us in the future. That is not hard for Him. And someday, as Isaiah said, He will gather us all into His arms. What an affectionate way of describing God and His care for us and it’s true and He’s doing that now. He’s caring for us at this very moment. He’s like the good shepherd. He is the good shepherd. He’s the ultimate shepherd and He will do that in the last day just as he’s doing it now. Don’t think He’s waiting until the last day to be your shepherd and gather you into his arms. He’s taking care of you at this very moment with all of that power, and someday that power at the right time is going to be directed for raising you up. He’ll do that on the last day and the resurrection. And then we will be whole and we will be glorious. Paul gives a hint of just how glorious the resurrection body will be in verse 42 where he explains that, “It will be as different from this present body as the plant is from the seed. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body. It is raised an imperishable body.”

Now in giving that description and by continuing it in the next verses with the contrasts that he makes, Paul is describing the resurrection body without really describing it. It will be imperishable, which means it will be completely different from this present mortal body. It won’t be subject to weakness. It won’t be subject to death. It won’t be subject to any of the frailties that these present bodies are subject to. It won’t be anything like the doubters imagine in their objection. God is not going to raise up corpses in a corrupt condition. The resurrection is not going to be *The Night of the Living Dead*. It’s going to be something glorious. He’s going to transform these bodies wholly and completely and beyond our comprehension. So Paul doesn’t say exactly what they will look like because he couldn’t. He didn’t have the words to describe them. I don’t

think he understood how to explain it if he had the words and if he had the words he wouldn’t be able to comprehend what he was talking about. But we do have, I think, an indication of their glory from the analogy he has given of the seed and the plant. The plant is in the seed. You look at a seed and you know that the plant is in there. It’s the piece of wheat. It’s whatever. It’s in there. Now you could never know what the plan will look like by studying the seed. When I was a kid I used to eat sunflower seeds. Baseball players eat lots of sunflower seeds now. You can’t look at a sunflower seed and say I’ve got a picture of what the sunflower is going to look like – its color, its size, its shape. The oak is in the acorn, but you can never look at an acorn and get an idea – and hint of an idea of the size and the shape of the oak tree from the acorn. There’s a kind of beauty to a seed, I guess. I don’t really see it, but I’m sure botanists and arborists who study such things really appreciate the structure and the makeup of different seeds. Supposedly they put it under a scope and they begin to look at it, they can see all kinds of fascinating things and beautiful things about a seed. But the beauty of an acorn, if there’s much beauty there, cannot compare to the glory of an oak tree. What an amazing transformation that takes place – the transformation from one to the other. They are completely different from one another. Now I think that gives us some indication – not a description of, but an indication of the glory of the resurrection body. It is as different from this mortal body as an oak tree is from an acorn. So just as we can no more know what a tree will look like by studying the seed, we can no more know what the resurrection body will look like by studying these present mortal bodies. It is incomprehensible.

But Paul gives us a hint – just a hint – of its glory by the analogies he has made and by the descriptions here. This perishable body will be buried and raised an imperishable body. He continues in verse 43. He describes the body being buried in dishonor and weakness. The funeral home tries to change that. It tries to make the body appear attractive, but it always fails because it’s a corpse. There’s no life in it. There’s nothing glorious about it. It is weak. In fact there’s nothing more powerless, more weak than a corpse. And all of that simply ends the process, the process we’re in at this very moment. Even in life, the body is characterized by weakness. We labor by the sweat of our brow. We’re always subject to sickness. We’re always at risk of death at any moment. We’re always on the road to becoming dust. Paul mentions that in 2 Corinthians 4:16. He talks about this outer man is decaying while the inner man is being renewed day by day. That’s wonderful news, describing progressive sanctification that all of us are going through. We are being renewed in the inner man, but the reality is the outer man is gradually – and sometimes not so gradually – decaying. That’s this present body and it has been since Adam’s fall. I don’t speculate a lot, but I have speculated about Adam, as many have, and I’ve wondered what he must have experienced the moment he sinned. He had a sudden sense that something wasn’t right – that things had gone wrong. I think he must have. I think he must have, at that moment, sensed a dramatic change. Some have suggested that while Adam and Eve were naked, as they are described, they were also, at that moment, during that perfect period, clothed in light, so there was a glow about them. They were clothed in that way. And if that’s the case, and it may have been, if that is the case, though, some of the light went out. And I can imagine he felt an instant sense of shame, and then you’ll remember he hides. He flees, he and Eve. They seek to get away from God, and I can just imagine suddenly he starts to run and says, “I can’t run as fast as I used to.” He begins to look for the Lord and he realizes I can’t see as well as I used to see. Suddenly everything is wrong. His back is starting to hurt. Shoulder doesn’t function the way it used to. He went through 900 years of that. And I imagine part of his punishment was to be able to remember what he’d been like and what he now was. He was wasting away. We’re all wasting away and we hate it. Even the most spiritual of us hate it. We don’t like that.

So men try to arrest the aging process. There’s a field of study devoted to that called gerontology. I read about it in an article months ago. I think it was last summer. They’re trying to find what they call a youth pill. People have been trying to do that since the Spanish explorers came over looking for the fountain of youth. Well, they’ve found a youth pill evidently because there’s some promising results. So far they have extended the lives of some flies, worms and rats. We can be grateful for that. Look, I’m all for a youth pill. I’ll take it, I guess, if they develop it. I’m not crazy about getting gray hair, but it happens. And even if we get that youth pill we can extend our lives by a decade or 10 decades, whatever, there’s going to be an end. That’s inevitable. We age and we die. Those are the facts of life in a fallen world. But all of that is irrelevant to what is coming. It will cease. There will be an end to the end. We will be changed. These weak bodies will become glorious and powerful and eternal. These natural bodies will become spiritual bodies, Paul says, which is something on a higher plane and adapted to a whole other dimension. But what is it? We want to know that. It sounds actually like a contradiction, if you think about it. A spiritual body, what could that possibly be? That’s like an immaterial matter. What kind of material can be spiritual? But Paul is not describing a body here that’s made of spirit, a kind of airy, ethereal ghost-like body. It’s a body that will be suited to a spiritual world, a wholly completely different world from what we know; a different dimension. The world to come is unlike anything we know, anything these bodies have experienced and that body will be suited for that world which will be a material world as well as a spiritual world – a natural world as well as a supernatural world; new heavens and a new earth. All of this is to show that the objection to the resurrection by doubters is based on the false assumption that the resurrection body could only be reanimated in the same old way of the same old thing, that no change could take place. This present body will be changed. It will be something very different from what it is now. Paul has illustrated that from nature with the grain and the wheat. Now he proves it from scripture with two of the central figures of human history, Adam and Christ.

He’s already referred to those two. He comes back to them now in verse 45, “So also it is written the first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” Adam is like the seed that is planted. Christ is like the flower that blooms and from his resurrection we get more of an idea of what the resurrection body will be like. The same body was laid in the tomb and glorified. The Lord didn’t get a second body when He was raised from the dead, we know that. They went into the tomb and there was no body. There were the wrappings, the spices, but the body was gone. It had been raised up, and not just raised up but transformed. The Lord could be recognized. There was still something of his original appearance there, but He had been transformed completely. He was physical, but he was also spiritual. He could be touched and he could take food, but he could also pass through doors that were locked and bolted. It is a material body, but it was a body that was not restricted by the material world. Paul described him as a life-giving spirit. Christ gives life and it’s unique life, not like the life Adam gave. Christ gives life which is new life, spiritual life, to all of those who follow him and that distinguishes him from Adam. Both men are heads of two races of men and are alike in that way – the first Adam and the last Adam – but the first Adam is the father and source of physical life, the physical race. Christ is the head and source of the spiritual race. At the creation, Paul writes, Adam became a living soul. The soul gives life to the body. It is temporal. When the soul is separated from the body, there is death. In fact, that is a good definition of death. Death is the separation of the soul from the body. When the soul is absent from the body, the body is dead. Everyone is related to Adam. Everyone has inherited his guilt, his nature, his mortal life, temporal life. We are in this world and we die in this world. That is what we inherited from Adam. Only those who believe in Christ are related to him. We’re related to Adam through physical birth. We’re related to Christ through spiritual faith.

Faith joins us to Him and He gives us new life. He gives us a new nature. He gives us His life, which is a spiritual life and an incorruptible life – eternal life, which is infinitely better than the first Adam’s life. So the lives and bodies of those two men are very different from one another, which shows that what is to come in the resurrection is different from what we have now. Paul emphasizes the differences even more in the next verses.

The first Adam is natural. The second man – the second Adam, Christ, is spiritual. Verse 47: “The first man is from the earth.” Earthy. “The second man is from Heaven.” What we got from Adam is temporal. It’s earthy. What we get from Christ is eternal. We were born like Adam and we will die like Adam. We have a temporal life and nature in body, but we have been born again from Christ and we will be like him, Paul says. That’s how he ends the lesson in verse 49, “Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.” Just as we are presently in this life bearing this image of Adam with this physical nature and all of the affirmatives that we inherited from him, in the future we will have the image and be just like Jesus Christ in his resurrected form. That is our hope and that is a great hope. The older you get the more encouraging that hope is because the more you feel the failure of the physical. Whether you feel it now or not you will because we’re all on the road to death or all on the path to dust. But that dust will be gathered by God and transformed into glory beyond anything that we can imagine. The resurrection is our hope. It is the completion of Christ’s work of redemption. Don’t think Christ just came to save us spiritually so that our souls go to Heaven and our bodies stay in the grave, he came to save us wholly and completely, body and soul, and to make us fit for that world to come. What the disciples saw after the resurrection was really just a hint of what he was like and what we will be like. Later, you know, when John was on the isle of Patmos, he writes this in the first chapter of the Book of Revelation, he saw the Lord and the Lord was very different from what had been seen years earlier in Jerusalem in that upper room when he first came in and showed Himself to them, or while He was with them by the Sea of Galilee and while He was on the Mount of Olives before He ascended. He’s different from that greatly. John sees Him and he describes Him as one whose hair was white like wool. His eyes were a flame of fire and his feet were glowing like a furnace. He was so glorious that John fell down before Him like a dead man. It’s a figure. It’s a metaphor. I don’t think we’re to understand that that’s how Christ actually looked. He’s describing one in the characteristics of His holiness, His purity, His power. It’s something beyond our comprehension. You see this change as there’s more revelation given of Christ and what we are going to see when we see Him face to face will be so glorious it’s beyond our comprehension. And the great thing is John tells us in 1 John 3 is when we see Him, we’ll be like Him. Just seeing Him will transform us. So that’s our Lord. He’s otherworldly and someday we will be too.

Some months back, Mark Newman did his father’s funeral. Some of you were there. Mr. Newman was a believer. He was a Godly man. When Mark and his family and those of us also who were there committed his body to the grave, we did so and Mark, in particular, did so in the hope of the resurrection. And Mark ended by reading 1 Corinthians 2:9, “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard. Neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” We will be prepared for a world without end, an eternal universe made through fire, a new heavens, a new earth where we will grow and increasingly grow in our experience and our knowledge without any hindrance and do so for all eternity. It is a world, a realm, a body, a life that has never entered into our minds. We can’t begin to comprehend what the Lord has prepared for those who love him. Well, Isaiah tells us in that great chapter that I refer to, Isaiah 40 – at the very end of it – that we will mount up with wings like eagles. We’ll run and not get tired. We will walk and not become weary. What a glorious future we have, and in light of that how should we live in

the present? This is not just a hope that we look forward to, this has something to say for how we live right now in this life. What are we doing? How are we living? Are we trying to hold onto the dust of this life? We can’t. It is sifted through our fingers while we’re seeking to hold onto the life to come. Are we letting go of the dust of this world and reaching out for the world to come and living in the present with that in mind, with that before us? Are we living for our Lord with all our mind, our body and our souls? May God help us to do that, to live in that way. May God help us to, as Luther wrote in his great hymn, “let goods and kindred go/this mortal life also/and live for eternity.” Live for the resurrection to come, live for Christ. May God help us to do that. If you’re here without Him, well we must say to you that in your present condition you have no hope, but you can have hope if it’s in Christ. And it’s yours without effort. You can’t earn it. You can’t merit it. What you can do is receive it as a free gift and receive it through faith. So we invite you to believe in Him. If there are impediments in your thinking to all of this, realize that God’s greater than any of those problems. He’s revealed himself as the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving God and he receives everyone who comes to Him. So come to Him. The day will come when God will raise you up to Glory. God help you to do that.

Father, how thankful we are that your Kingdom is forever and that we will rise to glory to enter it someday. And so in the meantime we can, as Luther said, let goods and kindred go. You have a glorious inheritance for us that will never fade away. We give You praise and thanks for that because it’s all the work of Your son that gained it for us. We thank You for him and his death and it’s in his name we pray. Amen.