The Life-Changing Power of God

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Date: 01 March 2026

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[0:00] It's funny the things that we are taught in the Bible, that people say are taught in the Bible, but later on we find out that they're not actually in the Bible. This question was posed on a social media group recently, and the tagline was, things you thought were in the Bible but actually aren't.

And the comments were as follows. There's many comments, but some of them you'll know. Things that you thought were in the Bible but actually aren't. Not that one person said that there was an apple tree in the Garden of Eden.
You've all learned about the apple tree in the Garden of Eden, probably at Sunday school. Well, the Bible doesn't say it was an apple. A friend of mine talks about the banana that they ate in the Garden of Eden.
Another saying is that money is the root of all evil. And that's a corruption of a quote from 1 Timothy. It doesn't say that money is the root of all evil.
It says money is the root of all kinds of evil. Many people said this, women can't wear pants or jewelry.
[1:06] So they were taught that in the Bible, that women can't wear pants or jewelry. I was actually, this was actually taught to me when I was at Bible college in the 90s. So depending on how old you are, not that long ago or very long ago.

One person said you can't drink coffee. They were taught in the Bible that you can't drink coffee. I don't know why that came about. And this church, this guy says, he was taught at his church, if you give a hundred grand to the church or to someone's ministry, God will make you rich and give you that mansion you want and a boat.
Well, the thing is, we can easily have wrong ideas about the Bible, about what the Bible teaches, and about all sorts of stuff. If we're not careful to check if they're actually what the Bible actually says.
In today's story, we meet a group of people that have come up with their own ideas about the Bible and about how God works in the world. Because they have their own agenda and their own preconceived ideas about what it teaches, they miss out on one of the Bible's greatest promises. And it's a promise that's absolutely central to the entire story of the Bible. And that is the promise of resurrection. The promise of resurrection.
[2:33] So we're going to go through the story that's recorded in Matthew. And the first thing we see is that Pharisees come and question the truth. They come and question the truth.

The Pharisees is a group of people that we don't often meet in the Scriptures. But they're a very influential group in Jerusalem. They hold the top political echelons of power in Jerusalem.
They're often very, very wealthy. And yet they don't believe in the resurrection. But they do deny the resurrection.
But they still come to Jesus to try to get him to change his mind about the resurrection. But it's done in a two-faced kind of a way. Asking about it as if they can be persuaded that it's true.
When in fact they've already made their mind up. And so they come with one of those gotcha type questions that we've seen so many times in the story of Matthew. To come and catch Jesus out.
[3:39] So verse 23 and 24. That same day, the same day, the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him, came to Jesus with a question.

Teacher, they said. Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. And then they continue with this ridiculous question that's meant to ridicule the idea of resurrection.
Based on this law from the Old Testament from Moses called the Leverite Law. Where if a man dies, his widow must marry his brother so that they can get offspring and have a name for

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themselves.
And then they go on this tangent about seven brothers. The first one married and he dies. And she goes to all seven brothers. Finally, they say the woman died.
She marries all seven of them. And then they ask this question in verse 28. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven since all of them were married to her?
[4:49] They ask this kind of two-faced question. We already know that they don't believe in the resurrection. So what is it that they're trying to get out of Jesus? Are they looking for the truth?

No. They're looking to trap him. And to make it sound silly that they believe in the resurrection. Because, of course, how are you going to solve this problem at the resurrection when this woman is faced with all the men that she's married?
Now, there's nothing wrong with asking questions about God. The Bible actually invites questions. Jesus is very open in his ministry.
He interacts with all kinds of people. He's not hiding behind any truth. He's happy to interact. But there's a difference between wanting to know the truth and asking questions to hide from the truth. Maybe you've come across people that ask this kind of question. They're not really wanting to know the truth, but looking for wriggle room. To not believe in the God of the Bible.
[5:49] To not believe in Jesus. And to not believe in the Bible. Because that's where we get these ideas from. You can tell that they're asked this kind of question because they tend, like the Pharisees, to major on something really minor.

They don't believe in the resurrection, but now they want to argue about what happens if you marry and then another marry. It's a very minor thing. And also what happens is that these people, when they're asking questions that they're not really finding the truth, they're just trying to find wriggle room, is they tend to ask the same question again and again, no matter how many times you've spoken with them about it.
One question I've had in my pastoral time is talking with people about the Bible. One person, they go to church, they listen to the Bible, they would consider themselves a Christian, but they sort of don't really go to church that often.
And kind of every now and then, when they feel like it, when they can do it. And so we were chatting and I said, okay, is there anything, they would say that they've got some doubts, you know.
I said, do you really believe? No, they believe, they believe in God, you know, they believe in God. But just a couple of questions. Okay, okay, what's the question? Well, the thing that really stumps this person is, is who did Cain marry?
[7:12] Cain is in the Old Testament and he's going along and suddenly he's got a family.

But it's right in the early days of the Bible when there weren't a lot of people running around. And this caught this guy up. How many people, how do we know who Cain married? That was a major thing for him. And that little one question seemed to overthrow everything else in the Bible that was much clearer.
There is no, we don't know, the Bible doesn't give us an answer. But he married someone. Another question, how did Jonah survive in the fish for three days?
And so you might get these questions thrown at you. You might be asking those questions. But what Jesus shows us is that uncovers, what it uncovers is that you're not actually concerned about the truth or the particular problem.
You're using it to mask a bigger problem. You don't actually want to believe. And you're making the best excuse you can. Oh, but what about this? And what about that?
[8:21] And all these little niggly things. Now again, it's okay to ask questions. But if it stops you from trusting what's here and the stuff that's clear, then you're not asking in good faith.

You're asking to overthrow and undermine. And really, it's a pretty lame question. We'll look at it in some detail. And Jesus sees right through it.
But just think for a moment what will happen on Judgment Day when you, with your questions, majoring on minor things, think you've overthrown the reality of God and how he works in this world. So you're going to, you're standing there on Judgment Day. And on Judgment Day, you're going to be fighting for your life if you're not a Christian. Your life is now in the balance.
You're going to get ushered into eternal life. We'll see that that means literal, actual life. Or eternal judgment.

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[9:27] You have your life stripped of everything that makes it meaningful. And you've got to answer this question. Well, you've got to give an account of your life.

And your eternal existence is on the line. And your best defense is going to be, you know, but I really didn't get that thing about Cain and the wives.
I mean, Jesus and the angels are going to be like, well, if that's your defense, then you know what? We don't even need to mount an offense.
We don't need to mount a prosecution. We don't deal with things like that. You see that door over there? That's glowing? With flames? Just walk in that direction for us.
Because you're not serious about anything. And in fact, the truth is the Bible requires us to believe way crazier things.
[10:30] Impossible things. Way more impossible than Jonah and a fish. If you're going to trust in God, it requires you to believe that a stone-cold, dead corpse rose again after three days.

Of course, for us, these things are impossible. But God says that exactly what happens. It says that they are possible. Not only possible, but he makes them happen.
So don't fool yourself if you don't believe in the smaller things, thinking that you're going to trust God for the bigger things. It's a package deal.
You have to take it all, or you start nibbling away at the edges, and suddenly you don't believe in anything at all. So be careful about the way you ask questions.
Many people came to Jesus asking questions, asking for help. And then he gives them help. But he is very, he's much cleverer than we are. Now the Pharisees, the Sadducees, you know, they are lawyer-type level people.
[11:34] They're very clever. We saw last week an exceptionally clever little question about what we must give to Caesar and what we must give to God. And Jesus is like, just like that, sorted them out. You can't, you're not cleverer than Jesus.

You're not cleverer than God. Ask him for help. Don't try and ask questions that undermine to give yourself wriggle room so that you don't need to trust him.
You think you're cleverer than the God who actually made you and the universe. But how does Jesus answer them? What is the answer that Jesus gives?
Well, he clearly tells them that they're wrong. But it's his answer that gives us a vital truth about how God works in the world and in our lives. And what we see is that Jesus talks about the life-giving power of God's word.
The life-giving power of God's word. In verse 29, Jesus replies, Jesus replied, You are in error.
[12:46] You're making a mistake. You don't know what you're talking about. You've wandered off from the truth because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God.

You don't know the scriptures or the power of God. They didn't know the life-giving power of God and the life-giving power of his word.
Well, the thing is that the Sadducees did actually know about the Bible. They were very well versed in the Bible.
But when Jesus says you don't know the Bible and you don't know the power of God, it means they're not trusting in the Bible. They're not using it to feed them. They're using it as a tool to find excuses why they don't need to trust God and certainly not this person, Jesus, who claims to speak for God.
The Sadducees pick and choose which bits they're going to believe in. We know from other sources that they only believed in the first five books of what we consider the Old Testament. That's Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, known as the Torah.
[13:57] But by doing that, they robbed themselves of truly understanding the power of God's word. But even then, they should have known of the life-giving power of God's word because that's exactly what Genesis 1 and 2 is all about.

We all know how God made the world. Not by his hands, by simply speaking the universe into existence.
Creation was made by God speaking. And so God's word gives life. God's word gives life.
And it says that this life that God made was good. The creation was good. It's not a bad creation. It's a good creation. Yes, it goes bad. But it doesn't start bad.
God didn't make this world for people to die in, but to live in. And Genesis 1 shows us that God's word carries within it this life-giving power.

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[15:01] And it's a power that can change both the world and our lives inside and out. What Jesus is getting at is that only God's word has power to create the reality it describes, create the reality it declares, or the reality it promises.

And no amount of human reasoning can undo or negate or undermine or contradict what God has says or said. The truth that when God speaks, life flows, is carried throughout the whole Bible.
An important passage is Isaiah 55. I'm just going to read it for us. It says this, Isaiah 55, verse 10.
As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth.
It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. That's God speaking.
And that's a life-giving word. As the snow melts, as the rains come down, and every time they do that, life comes up. God says, when I speak, that's the result of my speaking.
[16:34] When I speak, life blooms. And that passage goes on to talk about how there's briars and weeds and that gets replaced with beautiful Eden-like imagery of flowers and trees.

God's word carries within itself the power to give life when there is none. And Jesus has that same power.
God's word. In John chapter 11, he simply calls to his friend Lazarus that's been dead for four days in the tomb.
Hey, Lazarus, it's time for you to get up. Wake up. And everyone is saying, no, but don't bother him. He's been there for four days. And Jesus says, no, he's just sleeping.
I'm just going to call him up. He doesn't do a song and a dance. He doesn't go deep into prayer. He just says, Lazarus, come back. And the guy walks out of his tomb.
[17:43] Lazarus stands up, proving that resurrection does actually happen. That event in John chapter 11 is just prior to Jesus arriving in Jerusalem.

And so those people, they would have heard something about that. And Jesus promises the same thing to all who believe in him. So I'm going to read from John chapter 11, verse 21.
Martha is upset. She had wished that Jesus was there earlier. Lord, Martha says to Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.
But I know that even now, God will give you whatever you ask. Jesus says to her, your brother will rise again. And Martha answered, I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.
Just note there, that Martha is looking forward to the resurrection of her brother. She's not looking, she's not consoling herself with the fact that he's died and gone to heaven.
[18:47] She's, the only thing in her mind, the only operating principle in her mind that's going to save her brother is if he comes back from the dead again. And she knows it's going to happen sometime in the future. An amazing thing is that Jesus says, well, I'll do it now for you.

And then he says these words, I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though they die.
And whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this? In fact, that little sentence there, the one who lives by believing in me will never die, is better translated, the one who lives by believing in me will not stay dead forever.
We do get to die. We get to die once. If you're a Christian, you get to die once. If you're a Christian, you don't die twice. You know, many people talk about you only live once.
Well, Christians get to, well, we all get to die once, I guess, unless Jesus comes back. But if you believe in what Jesus is saying, he's got the power of death.
[20:02] And he says, the one who believes in me will live even though they die. And whoever lives by believing me will not stay dead forever or will never die.

And then he asks this question, do you believe this? He could have asked the Sadducees that he's asking us this question today. Do you trust in Jesus for eternal life, actual resurrection life?
Or are you looking for something else for God to give you where you place your hope? Now, just to go on about what, the point that Jesus makes about the power of God and the power of his word. Jesus goes on to refute the Sadducees. He could have gone to any part of the Old Testament where the explicit text teach about the hope of the resurrection. We read that incredible text from Ezekiel 37.

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There's plenty of others, not as detailed as Ezekiel 37. There's verses all over the Old Testament about people coming back to life again, about that being the hope of God for his people.
[21:13] But Jesus doesn't use any text. He fights the Sadducees on their own turf. He goes back to the first books of the Bible. He goes back to a situation in Exodus 3.

And by doing that, Jesus shows just how strong the hope of resurrection is because it infuses the entire storyline of the Bible. Jesus quotes from Exodus 3 where God is making the strongest promise he can to Moses that he will do the things that he's promised to set his people free from slavery, but he connects it to his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
And so Jesus goes on to explain in verse 31. Well, let me read from verse 30. At the resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage.
They will be like the angels in heaven, and we've got to unpack that in a minute. But it goes on to talk about the power of God's word, about the scriptures that tell us about resurrection.
But about the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what God said to you? I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He's not the God of the dead, but of the living.
[22:31] Now, here's a question for us. Would we have got resurrection from that passage? You've read that passage many times. It's a well-known Old Testament passage.

When you read that, did you think, oh yeah, that means that people get to live forever and ever? It doesn't sound like it, does it? It's a bit of a surprise. Well, you get resurrection from that passage if you use the same logic Jesus does, or rather the same framework.
Well, how does Jesus get resurrection from God being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? I mean, they're dead. So, if there's no resurrection and they're dead, God would have said, I was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the same way that we talk about someone in the past tense when they've passed away.
They've been dead by nearly 500 years by the time God was speaking to Moses. But God says, well, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And then Jesus concludes, he's not the God of the dead but of the living.
Does God, does Jesus mean that they're alive in heaven? Well, no, because Jesus is talking about resurrection. At the beginning of that verse 31, he says, but about the resurrection of the dead, so his point about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has to do with dead people coming back to life, not living people living in heaven.
[24:05] God isn't so interested in us going to heaven as we are as bringing us back from the dead. That's the full promise of what God wants us to trust him for.

So if there's no resurrection, God would have said, I was the God. But because there is a resurrection, I am the God. Because God isn't the God of dead things. His whole purpose is to bring life to the world.
He gives life in Eden. every time he speaks, every time his spirit moves, there's life. Jesus came to give life. He makes dead things living.
He doesn't live with dead things. But there's another principle at play and that's the principle of the covenant. Because God has made a covenant with Abraham and that covenant included land, the promise of land.
And because God's words create the reality they describe, Abraham must inherit land. That's from Genesis 12. It's that major promise in Genesis 12.
[25:11] And then God makes a covenant with Abraham. I'm going to make the deepest promise that God can make to Abraham and his descendants that they will inherit the land.

But Abraham dies. So how can they inherit land if they're dead? Well, they can't. And so God's promise, what God's promise does is it's so strong and so sure that even though people die, in the meantime, his purpose is, well, I promised them land the way that the Bible thinks, the way that God wants us to think is, I've made this promise to them.
If they die before they get the promise, there's only one thing that can happen. I have to bring them back from the dead so that they can get the thing I said. I wonder if you see that.
You might not. If you've got your Bibles, come with me to Hebrews chapter 11. I want to show you that Abraham himself had this kind of thinking in his mind that if God has said something, he's going to do it and not even death can get in the way.
Hebrews 11 is the great chapter on faith in the New Testament, although it makes the point that none of the great figures of faith in the Old Testament got what they were promised.

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[26:54] They were waiting for those promises to become a reality. But here's how Abraham thinks about when God tested him with Isaac. So Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 17.

By faith, Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. So he's trusting, by faith means God is trusting, Abraham is trusting God. He's just trusting him. When God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.
He who had embraced the promises, the promises is about land and the promises about his son Isaac who's not going to get the land, was about to sacrifice his one and only son.
Even though God had said to him, it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. And so what did Abraham, why was he going to sacrifice him? How can he get the promises if he's dead?
Well, verse 19, Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead. And so in a manner of speaking, he did receive Isaac back from the dead. That was Abraham's thinking.
[27:59] It's as logical as that. God promised me a land and he promised that one of my children would get the land. That child is Isaac. Then God says, I must kill him.

So Abraham's like, whoa, okay. God will just have to bring him back from the dead again because the promise is that strong. Does that make sense? It's like, it's not our logic.
We're like, it doesn't make sense to us. But it's, in a sense, it's Bible logic or gospel logic or it's the logic of how God works. If he says something is going to happen, it's going to happen in the way that he says it and as literal as that.
That's how Jesus gets resurrection from that particular text. When God makes a covenant, it's a promise or bond so strong that not even death can break it.
because God's word cannot be broken. It creates the reality. It declares all promises. Well, what should that do for us sitting here today?
[29:08] What are the promises that God makes to us? God makes the same promise that he makes to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

He makes it in the same way, to the same degree, but it's written in the blood of his son. It's a covenant sealed and signed by Christ's death on the cross.
It's an even more powerful sign than any sign of the Old Testament. We get to inherit literal eternal life.
Bodily, just like we read in Ezekiel chapter 37, one day that stuff is going to happen to us if we get buried. I know these days not many people get buried anymore. That's okay.
God can still bring you back even if you're not buried. but that's the same promise for us. We have an eternal hope and an eternal future.
[30:16] This life is not all there is and yet we live as if it is all there is. We want as much pleasure and comfort as we can and we want to avoid as much pain and hardship as we can.

That was the Sadducees' main goal. They were rich. They were in power. Oh, what does God have to offer them? No, it's all about sacrifice and denying yourself.
No, we'll sort our own problems out. But if we're going to live forever in a renewed world, we don't have to rush around getting as much of this life as we can.
What this resurrection teaching does is put pain and hardship into perspective and comfort and pleasure can wait. Paul, writing in Romans 8, says the promise of bodily resurrection is one of the main things that helps us with handling hardship.
I'm just going to read from Romans 8 for a couple of verses. You can turn there if you want.
Romans 8 verse 22. Paul says this, we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
[31:32] The whole of creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. So God makes the world. Something goes wrong.

Salvation in the Bible is not about escaping this world but about God fixing the world so it can be the thing that he wanted it to be. the whole of creation is groaning.
Trees, birds, animals, plants, stars, your car, your wallet, your clothes. By groaning it means everything is growing old and not working properly like us when we get old.
Oh, it's hard getting old. Even he says this, not only so but we ourselves even though we've got the first fruits of the spirit we groan inwardly.
There's a hardship to this life but as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship the redemption of our bodies. We wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship to become a son of God really.

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[32:43] We get adopted into his family. What does that mean? It means we get our bodies redeemed. Our bodies. This body that's busy breaking is going to get a whole new lease on life if you're a Christian.

And he goes on to say it is in this hope that we are saved. The hope of having our bodies redeemed, of having creation redeemed, not in the hope of dying and staying dead but going up to be with God in heaven.
It's the promise of the resurrection, of coming back from the dead, of having your body renewed and enjoying a creation that's not marred by sin and relationships that are broken.
But then he says, in this hope we are saved, but hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But we hope for what we do not yet have. And he ends up by saying we wait for it patiently.
We're waiting for the redemption of this world and our bodies to come. We can wait for it patiently. We can wait patiently through hardship for the comfort and joy and all the good things we're going to enjoy in the new heavens and the new earth.
[34:02] It's difficult waiting patiently though. Like small little children who have been promised a trip to Disneyland. Yeah, they want it now. And I don't want to have anything difficult going wrong.

But God says no, this is not the time for the good stuff. The good stuff is coming. Just hang in there. Trust me, the good stuff is coming.
But what exactly is life going to be on earth? What is life going to be like on earth? What about being married and the things that go along with that?
And Jesus answers that the resurrection while it will be real and physical, it's also going to be different. Our resurrection life will be transformed into something we can scarcely imagine.
And so there's this life-changing promise of the resurrection that Jesus talks about. The life-changing promise of the resurrection. And so that's his first part of the answer when they ask him about this marriage and he says no, you're totally wrong.
[35:08] You don't know the scripture or the power of God. And he says no, there's resurrection coming. Verse 30, back in Matthew 22, verse 30, at the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage.

They will be like the angels in heaven. Well, that is a very strange text, isn't it? Well, what is Jesus talking about?
One of the best ways of thinking about the future, about our resurrection, is to think of what's going to happen as an upgrade of what we know now. It's going to be in a way that we can't fully understand, but there's going to be things that we do understand, but there's going to be some of it that's like not quite sure how it's going to work.
So the Bible speaks not just about renewal, like, okay, I'm going to go back to what went wrong in Eden. I'm going to fix the entire problem, and I'm going to give it an upgrade.
There's going to be an utter transformation of our physical bodies into something that is fitting to live in the new world. And so there needs to be a change in how our relationships work at the resurrection.
[36:18] I don't know if you've watched the movie Avatar. You know the movie Avatar? Humans go to this planet. It's a science fiction movie. It's a very cool movie. It's got a whole trilogy out now.

Humans go to this planet called Pandora, but it's absolutely pulsing with life, this planet. It's almost like it's depicted as this rich Eden-like environment, but humans can only interact with it in a body that is accustomed to that planet.
They can't just walk in there and start living the life there because everything is bigger and stronger and more powerful. They have a process that allows them to become one of the people who live on that planet.
I think they're called the Navi, am I right? They're like giant blue smurfs, if you haven't seen the movie. to live in that world as humans, they need oxygen.
The humans have to put their helmet on, they've got an oxygen line down to their tank, but there's this process where they actually can become an avatar, they inhabit the body of the people who live there, and then they don't need the oxygen, and they're fine.
[37:33] They can breathe the air, they can get on with anything, they've got all the physical abilities of the people who live on that planet, hugely improved physical abilities. While they're in human form, they're tied to their oxygen system, they can't think, well, I can live here without the

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oxygen system, but when they become like one of the people that lives in that planet, that's used to that place, that's got this immense power and ability, they don't need the oxygen mask.

It's a bit like that with our resurrected bodies. There are things we need to know now that we need now that we won't need in the future. One of those things is going to be married, which is tied, of course, to having children and the process of making babies, of course.
And Jesus says, no, it's going to be different there. At the resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage. They'll be like the angels in heaven. Now, just note, Jesus doesn't say we will be angels.
So many people talk about, oh, he's got his wings. When people die, they've got his wings. They become an angel. They become like the angels.
Jesus says we're going to be like the angels. What he means there is that we will be immortal. We're going to be beings that are, we're going to have bodies that are fit for the new world.
[38:59] And the way we relate to each other is going to be different there than the way we relate to each other here. We can't quite figure that out, but we don't need to know the details. This particular teaching is not expanded anywhere else in the Bible.

And so you don't want to go too far beyond and say, well, why is that? And there's plenty of reasons why, but it doesn't say it in the text. It just says that's what's going to happen. So we're back to being that question about the Sadducees.
Are we going to trust what Jesus says about the future and trust him with it? Or are we going to knit people and say, okay, well, am I going to be a guy? Am I going to be a girl?
What's going to happen? This particular teaching is not expanded on the Bible also, but we do know that there is a glorious transformation waiting for us.
And we do know that there's going to be continuity, we'll remember ourselves. Jesus, when he rose from the dead, he could be recognized. He wasn't fully glorified, people could see him, they put his hands in his, when they weren't sure it was him, he said, no, but just touch me, check the marks, put your hand in my side.
[40:11] It's the same guy that was hanging on the cross that went into the tomb, it's the same guy that came out. There's going to be continuity, but there's going to be a change, it's going to be this huge transformational, it's going to be a massive, massive upgrade.

It doesn't get expanded on here, but Jesus is hinting at that. We get a glimpse of this amazing new reality in a foundational text in 1 Corinthians 15.
So we're going to just finish up there, so maybe just turn to 1 Corinthians 15, and I'm going to read a few verses first there to explain what happens at the resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15, I'm going to read from verse 35, it's worth reading the whole chapter, it is the classic text on the importance and the centrality and the reality of the resurrection, written by Paul.
Why would Paul write so incredibly about the resurrection? What is it that changed Paul's life? We've all done, most of us doing the devotional readings have done the book of Acts. The thing that changed Paul's life was seeing the guy that was dead speaking to him from heaven.
He thought that Jesus was dead, and suddenly Jesus is standing in front of him, speaking to him like a lord, like a king, like a god, and then he realized, oh, he's come back to life.
[41:46] He's ascended into heaven. That means everything he said about him is true. And then he goes on to think about what that means, what the resurrection is going to be, what's it going to be like.

So I'm going to read from verse 35. Someone is going to ask, how are the dead raised? With what kind of body are they going to come? How foolish? So Paul is like, well, it's one of those questions. You should know. And he gives us an answer. What you sow doesn't come to life unless it does. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or something else.
But God gives it a body as he determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. He goes on to talk about what that looks like. But just to make a point that you couldn't in a million years guess that an oak tree came from a little acorn, unless you know it, which of course we all know by now.
But if you just saw seed lying on the ground, you couldn't in a million years guess that it was going to be this crazy big tree with the branches and the things. It's going to be something like that with us.

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[42:53] I'm going to read from verse 42 where Paul continues his argument. He says, so will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body, this body that is so imperishable is raised imperishable, meaning perishable meaning it can frot and die, which we all know about.

We're all going through that process now. But it's going to come back unfrotbar, unfrotable. It's not going to rot.
It's sown in dishonor. It's raised in glory. It's sown in dishonor. As honorable as the most honorable person that you know, I mean, there's a silly question.
what does the Queen of England do? What did the Queen of England do on her throne that we all do seven times a day? Every kid knows the answer to that question. She passes wind.
Our bodies are dishonorable. As honorable as we like to try and make them, they're just broken. They're not the thing that God had in mind when he first created Adam and Eve.
[44:07] They were supposed to live forever and never die. He's like, well, I'll do it now. I mean, in the future for us. It's raised in glory. It's sown in weakness.

It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. We don't have time to unpack all of that. But raised in glory, that's an indication that we're going to, it's the glory that Jesus has.
And when you read about him in the rest of the Bible, in Revelation chapter 1, for example, he's this figure of might and power and honor and glory.
He's literally shining from head to toe. It's raised in, it's sown in weakness. We can't stop death, we can hardly stop getting sick.
It's going to be raised with a power that is able to defy death and aging. It's sown in a natural body, a body of this world, it's going to be raised a spiritual body.
[45:15] It doesn't mean we're going to be spirits like the angels. Even angels actually really have bodies. They're not actually spirit, spirit beings. They live in the spirit world. they're not, it's a bit difficult to explain how this one works.

But it's still going to be a body. It's a body that's empowered by the spirit or able to live in this new realm, this new order that God is going to make.
And then I'm going to finish at verse 51 where Paul says, listen, I'll tell you a mystery. We're not all going to sleep. that means we're not all going to die.
One of the metaphors for what happens when you die is sleep in the Bible. In fact, it's the dominant metaphor. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.
There's that transformation in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we will be changed.
[46:23] And he goes on to talk about where, death, is your sting. It's gone. Jesus has paid for it. It does never hold on us, if you trust in Christ.

So, friends, are you trusting in the truth and power of God and his word for resurrection? Do you understand that he's promised you eternal life?
Or are you adding your own theological framework, twisting that to mean your own thing? is your central hope, what happens to you after you die, the same hope that Jesus wants you to have?
You've got your own framework about what is going to happen up there. Don't go beyond what the Bible says, but don't undersell it either. Accept it and enjoy it. It's difficult to work out just exactly how things will work out in the resurrection.
We're going to have family, but even those relationships are going to be enhanced. We'll have friends. In fact, we're all going to be family. We're going to be one big family. And life is going to get more and more enjoyable all the time.
[47:32] If you're not a Christian, what hope have you got for anything beyond the grave? You've got no real hope. You can think there's something, you can fool yourself into thinking there's something, but God says, unless you, the only people who are going to get to live forever are Christians in an enjoyable state, in my new creation.

The rest of you, you're going into the flames, and then you've got nothing to live for. Christians have, only Christians have this hope, because only Jesus promises that to us.
We have a resurrected Lord. We have the promise of eternal life, real bodily life in a new world with renewed relationships. We know this is going to happen, because we have resurrection of Jesus from the dead to prove it, in real time, in real space, with real proof, with real people, making a real difference in their life.

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It really happened, and it can happen to you too, if you trust in Christ, like the rest of us. Can I pray for us? Lord Jesus, we love to hear about the resurrection, Lord, and this promise of a renewed body and mind, of a renewed creation, of renewed relationships, where we don't have to worry about jealousies, and petty hates, and anything getting in the way of just being good friends, good family friends, Lord.
We long for that, and you want us to wait patiently for it, Lord, by the power of your spirit, and so we ask that you will help us do that, but to trust, in your life-giving word, for now and for the future. [49:18] Amen.

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