

# UPSIDE DOWN GLORY



## “Sown in Weakness, Raised in Power”

March 1, 2026

Text: *1 Cor 15:35-58*

Sermon Series: “Upside Down Glory.”

**Pastor Bob Erbig**

**BIG IDEA:** *God does not discard the body that suffered — He transforms it, glorifies it, and raises it in the power of the risen Christ.*

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### **INTRODUCTION: THE GALLOWS HUMOR OF GRACE**

Former senator Ben Sasse, facing stage-four pancreatic cancer, described death as **“a link in the chain of salvation”** — and laughed. Why? Because as a Christian, he knows the sting of death has already been answered.

**The Question:** *What happens to the disabled body ... in eternity?*

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### **Movement 1: Savor the SEED (1 Cor 15:35–41)**

*“What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be...”*  
**1 Cor 15:36–37**

Paul uses a farming analogy to counter Greek skepticism about bodily resurrection. The acorn becomes an oak — but it must first go into the ground.

- **CONTINUITY** — the oak tree comes from the acorn (same person)
- **DISCONTINUITY** — the acorn does not look like the oak tree (transformed)
- **SOVEREIGNTY** — God decides what the body becomes (v. 38)
- **DEATH** is necessary — the seed must die to release its life

*“To each kind of seed its own body” — your resurrection body will be specific to you, not generic.*

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## Movement 2: Shake off the DUST (1 Cor 15:42–49)

*"What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." 1 Cor 15:42–44*

Paul gives four contrasts describing how the resurrection body differs from our present body:

- **Perishable** → **Imperishable** (decay ends)
- **Dishonor** → **Glory** (shame reversed)
- **Weakness** → **Power** (same word as 1 Cor 12:9)
- **Natural** → **Spiritual** (governed fully by the Spirit)

### **PASTORAL QUESTION: WHAT DOES DISABILITY LOOK LIKE IN ETERNITY?**

- Some argue our identity is preserved but suffering removed — pointing to Jesus's remaining scars (John 20)
- Others (where this sermon lands) hold that all disability will be transformed, as described in Isaiah 35:5–6 — the blind will see, the lame will leap

**Transformation is not erasure. The disability will be gone — but the person will not.**

The character forged through limitation — the dependence, the empathy, the trust — goes with you, glorified. What Joni Eareckson Tada has said is true: **resurrection does not wipe that out. It perfects it.**

**Our identity is not found in the dust — it is found IN CHRIST. (1 Cor 15:45–49)**

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## Movement 3: Listen for the TRUMPET (1 Cor 15:50–57)

*"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." 1 Cor 15:51–52*

- **MYSTERION** — not inexplicable, but previously hidden, now revealed
- **The transformation is done TO us — not achieved by us**
- At the last trumpet: death swallowed up in victory (v. 54)

### **THEREFORE ... (1 COR 15:58)**

*"Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." 1 Cor 15:58*

Eschatology produces action. Because the trumpet is coming:

- **Be steadfast** — don't give up in the face of suffering
- **Be immovable** — the resurrection is certain ground
- **Abound** — disability ministry is not a side project; it is overflow

### **CONCLUSION: THE GATES WILL NEVER SHUT (REV 21:25)**

In the new Jerusalem, the gates never close. No hour when access is denied. No barrier that says 'not you.' We have spent eight weeks learning to open our doors a little wider — practicing now for the city that is coming.

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