

Funeral - 1 Cor 15:51-57 – Louise Barnett

Louise would never go to two weddings in the same dress.
Someone might check the photos.

It wouldn't be right.

If you can't wear the same dress to two weddings,
you can't wear the same body you inhabit now
in the Kingdom of God.

The body you have on now is not fit for the Kingdom of God.
Paul tells the church in Corinth,

"I declare to you brothers and sisters,
that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,
nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable."

I don't care whether you spend 3 hours a day in the gym,
your body is just not fit for the Kingdom of God.

The problem with your body is that it is perishable.

No amount of time on the treadmill can fix that.

No amount of situps, pushups or squats can fix it.

Your body is already breaking down.

If you have spent too much time
on the beach without sunscreen,
the skin cancers are already growing.

And after you die,
the break down will be complete.

It will just stop working.

You are perishable.

And perishable things don't belong in the kingdom of God.

There is good news though.

There is a day coming when the last trumpet will sound.

Maybe we should have had a trumpet instead of a violin.

The last trumpet is going to sound.

Like your body, this world is perishable.

It has a used by date, just like a punnet of strawberries.

And when time is up for this world,
the last trumpet is going to sound.
When will that be?
I can't give you a date on the calendar,
just like I can't give you the date on the calendar
when your body will stop working.
But for this world,
the day will be the day
that the Lord Jesus returns in glory to judge.
The Lord Jesus has already been to this world once.
We'll be celebrating that in a bit over a month.
The first time he came,
he defeated death.
He was crucified and three days later he rose.
The way Paul put it in the passage Rose read to us is,
"Death has been swallowed up in victory."
Now today might not feel like victory to you.
To be frank, if today feels like victory to you,
I'm concerned for you.
Death is an enemy.
It breaks relationships with people we love.
It tears them away from us.
There's absolutely nothing victorious about that.
The victory is in what happened when Jesus died.
Because he didn't stay dead.
He rose.
That was the victory.
Why does that matter to us on a day like today?
Because Jesus' victory was Louise's victory.
His resurrection is the sure and certain promise
of the resurrection of all who put their trust in him.
And Louise put her trust in Jesus.
She was not frightened when she faced death.
She told her family that.

She was ready to meet her father.

Louise is going to be raised with a new body.

Her old body was perishable.

Her new body will be imperishable.

It won't be subject to melanomas or covid.

It will be a body like the body that Jesus was raised with.

A body that is not subject to ageing or sickness,

a body that is not subject to injury or death.

A body that is immortal.

Now that is victory.

Louise's new body will be fit for the Kingdom of God

because in the Kingdom of God everything is imperishable.

Things wearing out and breaking down

is a characteristic of this world.

And it has to be.

Do you know why that is?

Because it places a limitation on evil.

There are some bad people in our world.

There always have been.

People who oppress and abuse others.

And if they were immortal, it would be an absolute disaster.

But in this world we have the reassuring thought

that none of them can go on forever.

Think of the worst dictator with the tightest grip on power.

Sickness and death will come to him.

But there is no evil in the kingdom of God.

When Louise is raised,

she will not only be raised with an imperishable body,

she will be raised with a pure and sinless heart.

Now it might not be 100% polite to say it

of such a lovely lady at her funeral.

But you do realise that Louise was not perfect, don't you?

I didn't know her well enough

to plumb the depths of her heart.

But I've heard it tell that she did find it quite difficult to walk past a mirror without having a bit of a look at her reflection.

She might have been a touch vain.

Possibly?

But whatever her imperfections were,
she will be without them in her immortal body.

When she is raised to life,
she will be raised bearing the image of the Lord Jesus.

And that means without fault, flawless.

That is Louise's future.

Let me stress,

as human beings come in this broken world,

Louise was a fine example.

She was adored by her family and friends.

She had a brave and adventurous spirit.

When things went wrong,

and they did,

she didn't complain.

She gave of herself with a big heart

in her work with Yooralla.

She was a fine woman.

But her future will be like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

In the Kingdom of God she will be transformed.

The new Louise will still be Louise.

But it will be Louise

with her good qualities magnified beyond measure,

and whatever imperfections she had will be no more.

If you thought Louise was worth knowing in this life,
she will be even more worth knowing in the Kingdom.

Which brings me to the last sentence of our reading.

"But thanks be to God!

He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."

If you want to know Louise in the next life,
you can only do it through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Louise is going to be there.
She persevered in her faith to the end.
But are you going to be there to appreciate her company?
She would love you to be.
She loved her family and friends.
There's nothing she would like better
than to welcome you into the Kingdom.
To welcome you spend an eternity enjoying her company.
She would love for you to be transformed
with the same kind of imperishable immortality
that she will have.
Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord,
that possibility is open to you through faith in him.
If you haven't taken it already,
Louise would be overjoyed if you did.