

Resurrection

As themes for a Sunday morning talk in church go, it doesn't get any bigger than 'Resurrection'. Although this isn't a talk, it's equally daunting to write about.

I'm writing this on the evening of Good Friday. I wonder how you've spent your Good Friday. In our different ways perhaps we've thought about and meditated on the crucifixion. Some may have read books, viewed online videos or watched films to help to reflect during the day. I hope, as you read this, you're doing OK in these difficult times.

We all know what comes next...the resurrection. Hooray, a happy ending! But where does the resurrection fit into the rest of the story? Let's have a quick overview...In a nutshell, this is my understanding of God's plan:

God created a world which was very good. God with us, in a kind of partnership with the human beings he'd made, would bring order to chaos and everything would flourish. In his image we'd reflect his goodness into the world and reflect praises back to God. That's our vocation.

Unfortunately human beings made a mess of it. We didn't worship God, instead we created our own gods and worshipped them. But in his great love, even in the very beginning, God had a plan to put it right.

The rescue project would be initiated through his chosen people Israel. God lived in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple, and gave them the law, all for the purpose of dwelling with human beings. But this wasn't the end goal. The end goal, planned from the very beginning, was to include the Gentiles.

In 2 Samuel 7.12-14 God makes a promise to David as follows: "I will raise up (resurrect) one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house - a temple - for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son."

Jesus Christ is the resurrected one, the first fruits of a glorious new creation that merges heaven and earth. One day we will all be raised with resurrection bodies and there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

In the meantime, what then is the temple now?

Romans 10.9 states "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be

saved.” The temple that Jesus is building, by the Holy Spirit, for God to live in, is made of the people who believe. A temple not made by human hands.

Of course this is only made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who perfectly fulfilled the law in our place. In doing so he defeated all that had previously defeated human beings, i.e. sin and death, those things which prevented us from fulfilling our vocation. And that same Holy Spirit has written God’s law on our hearts so we can properly fulfil our vocation until Christ returns and Heaven and Earth are made one.

Now, as we await that day, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, those who believe are free to live in the reality of the new creation.

That’s why it doesn’t get any bigger than the resurrection. There is no Christianity without the resurrection. “If Christ has not been raised”, as 1 Corinthians 15.14 clearly states, “our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”

We’re talking about the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb in bodily form. A transformed body but still a physical body. You can’t get away from the fact that, surely to most rational people, the resurrection sounds ridiculous. It would have sounded ridiculous to people in AD35 too. That’s because it hadn’t happened before...and it hasn’t happened since. But it will happen again when all those in Christ will be raised. You could call them ‘children of the resurrection’ (Luke 20.36).

If it seems ridiculous to you, look at the world around you. The sun, the moon, the stars, the Milky Way, and all the galaxies in the universe. And think of planet Earth and the life upon it. Isn’t it mad to believe that all this should exist on our tiny planet spinning around in our solar system? But believe it we do because we’ve seen it. We know it’s true because we live here.

And what of the resurrection? Clearly it’s an obstacle to faith for those who think rationally and utter foolishness to those who want proof (1 Corinthians 1.23 paraphrased). Jesus himself said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”. John 20.29.

And believe it we do because, as believers, we live here. If you need a little more persuasion I thought this video by the theologian N T Wright was helpful. The talk was called [“Did Jesus really rise from the dead?”](#)

Christ is risen!

And the children of the resurrection declared, “He is risen indeed. Alleluia!”