

Christ Community Covenant Church
The Best is Yet to Come!! New Bodies for a New Earth
Pastor Dave Scherrer – May 28, 2017

Thanks to Scott last week for getting us back into the Corinthians series. We are in the home stretch. Paul is aware that he is ending his letter and he has had a lot to say. He is essentially putting an exclamation point behind all his teaching so far in this letter. He is establishing his summation point that pulls all his arguments full circle. And to do this he must talk about the resurrection of Christ and the authority that this event establishes for all the promises of Christ. Paul is essentially saying, “If God can defeat death, and Jesus promises that he *is the resurrection and the life and that if you believe in Him, though a person dies yet shall he live*” – then we indeed shall live again! The resurrection of Christ, As Scott said last week, changes everything.

Have you heard this phrase before?

“She (or he) is so Heavenly minded they are no earthly good.”

The idea behind this sentiment is that someone is a Jesus freak or is so religious that they don’t carry their own weight I suppose. Or this

“We can’t know what heaven is like but it must be good.”

Frankly as we will see this morning, the Bible has a lot to say about the resurrection of our bodies and our new home in the new earth. But there are a lot of misconceptions of our resurrected bodies and of heaven. We have an image of our bodies and heaven kinda like this . . .



Just missing the harp! Let’s take a look at one of the great passages in Scripture dealing with our resurrected bodies and draw some hope this morning.

1 Corinthians 15:35-50

³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” ³⁶ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. 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 in glory. ⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being” the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

So let's go ahead and work our way through this subject. As a reminder to our study, Paul is writing this letter to the church in Corinth to address some questions and statements that troubled Paul that had come to him in a letter, so He decided it would be good to come and visit but until then he would respond by return mail. This is that return mail. We don't have the original letter the church wrote to Paul, but apparently some Hellenistic or pagan thoughts about the afterlife are creeping into the church. As Scott was telling us last week, there was a growing heresy in the church that did not believe in a resurrected body. They said to themselves; "How could rotted flesh be good? How could anything flesh have any value that is spiritual?" They did not understand the teachings of the prophets in the Old Testament that were so clear to Paul. You can kind of even 'hear the edge' in the writings that Paul as if he is a bit frustrated with their ignorance and willingness to believe half-truths.

As it turns out there are a mess of misunderstandings about our resurrected bodies and Heaven even today. We think we will be angels or ghosts or sitting on a cloud. Sorry Dickens, it makes for a good Christmas carol but none of those are true. The truth is that along with our new bodies, immortal will need a new place that our imperishable new bodies can live. The bible calls that the New Earth . . .

A New Earth

Is the earth a "Brand New Earth" or a "Redeemed and Renewed Earth"?

Let's look at some of the heaven and earth 'promise' passages and see if we can tell from them if the earth is destroyed and God starts over or if the earth is somehow restored and remade to its original designed state . . .

Isaiah 65:17

"For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

Isaiah 66:22

"For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD,
so shall your offspring and your name remain.

2 Peter 3:13

¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Rev. 21:1

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

I can't tell from these. It could be either to my reading. When a yard is over grown and has gone years without care and then a skilled landscaper comes in and restore it, and a person might say - "I can't believe what you have done. You have taken its essence and brought life to it. It is like a completely brand new yard. It is completely brand new!" Of course it isn't, the yard didn't go anywhere. It just was reimaged and remade and restored to its original hopes.

My opinion – I believe quite firmly that God will take this world and do His creation magic, if you can say that. It is in keeping with his character. You remember that he was tempted to start over with Moses when the nation of Israel was being disobedient, but he was true to his promises and has restored Israel time and time again. I believe God is a restorer by nature, not a destroyer. I take confidence by the descriptions of the risen Christ, the same in so many ways, even down to the scars on his hands and side, but in other ways so different, so glorious so as to almost not recognize him.

You may be thinking why does this matter, if it is destroyed or if he takes this world we know and restores it to its intended glory. I think it makes a big difference

Randy Alcorn in his wonderful book Heaven makes the contrast in a powerful way . . . (P 161)

“God hangs onto his fallen original creation and salvages it. He refuses to abandon the work of his hands. In fact, He sacrifices his own Son to save his original project. Humankind, which had botched its original mandate and the whole creation along with it, is given another chance in Christ. We are reinstated as God’s managers on Earth. The original good creation is to be restored.”

Dr. Albert Wolters, *Creation Regained*

“Re” words are important in the scriptures:

Reinstate, restore, redeem, recover, regenerate, recreate, resurrect, return, reconcile, renew, reclaim

We will be born again in your passing from this life to the resurrected life and we will no longer be victims of “the curse.” What does it mean to have “The Curse” removed?

What does it mean to have “The Curse” removed?

First we have to understand what is the curse? We can know this by going back to the beginning. Back to the first garden and to the fall from of humanity from grace from that garden. We find it in Genesis 3.

To the woman he said,

*“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.*

*Your desire shall be contrary to¹⁶ your husband,
but he shall rule over you.”*

¹⁷ *And to Adam he said,*

*“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,*

*‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;*

Then a couple verses later we read the real tragedy of the fall . . .

²² *Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—”*

²³ *therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.*

The ground is cursed
There is enmity between male and female
The tree of life is removed from our presence and we experience death and separation

And therefore we carry in us 'the flesh,' - the inclination to sin. This is the old man that so often trips us up in this world will finally be dead in the New Earth and the New Heaven.

Rev. 22:3

³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

The familiar Christmas song says it well, though you may never have put it together what it was about . . .

No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground,
He comes to make His blessings flow, Far as the curse is found.

Isaac Watts, *Joy to the World*

God will lift the curse, not only morally in terms of sin, and psychologically in terms of sorrow and fear and shame, or physically with sickness and disease, and spiritually in terms of our souls. In every way conceivable the final expression of the curse – death and its cohorts of fear and guilt and shame and loss and purposelessness – all will be utterly obliterated.

Why is the resurrection of Christ so important?

Paul focused on the resurrection of Christ because everything in heaven and earth depended on this event happening just as Jesus said it would happen. In the eighth chapter of Mark we read that "*He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.*"³² And he said this plainly. And he also said that he would one day come back and receive us to himself, but to do that we must be changed because as we just read in this Corinthians passage . . .

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Phil 3:20-21

"The Lord Jesus Christ . . . will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 John 3:2

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

We will have new immortal imperishable perfected bodies. I think will be just a bit taller, with my thick blond hair that I used to embleze. There are a lot of questions about heaven and I wish we could get after them. I think there is a Monday night Bible Hour in the near future on this subject but let's look at some of the questions . . .

We will have New Bodies

Will we be recognized as ourselves? Will we recognize others? (Ephesians 2 tells us that God will raise us up with Christ and be seated with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ.)

Will we be angels? (no, in Hebrews it speaks of the day the church is gathered at the throne in chapter 12 saying you have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, the church of the first born, those whose names are written in the book of life.)

Will we have emotions and desires? (The impression I think many have is that we will no longer have any desires but the sense that I have is that we will still have the desires but they will be holy desires and they will be finally fully satisfied.)

Will we float on clouds? Will we have coffee? Will there be cats? Will there be books?

Is there marriage in heaven? (This is a difficult one. Many believe that heaven would not be heaven if they couldn't be with their life long spouse. I suppose others feel differently about that.)

[The Bible tells us, "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). This was Jesus' answer in response to a question concerning a woman who had been married multiple times in her life —whom would she be married to in heaven? Evidently, there will be no such thing as marriage in heaven. This does not mean that a husband and wife will no longer know each other in heaven. This also does not mean that a husband and wife could not still have a close relationship in heaven. What it does seem to indicate, though, is that a husband and wife will no longer be married in heaven.]

Most likely, there will be no marriage in heaven simply because there will be no need for it. When God established marriage, He did so to fill certain needs. But in heaven, however, there will be no loneliness, nor will there be any need for helpers. We will be surrounded by multitudes of believers and angels, and all our needs will be met, including the need for companionship and intimacy.]

And we can live NOW in the light of that Kingdom Come reality!

But all this reality is only true for us if we complete the sentence. What sentence? The one I briefly referred to before when Jesus is having a life and death conversation with Mary over the death of her brother Lazarus:

John 11:23-27

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.^[d] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

I'd like to pray a life and death prayer with you. Heaven is the hope for those who have confessed Christ. To be fair to the conversation this morning, scripture also says that for those who have refused to believe and confess this truth there is judgement and eternal separation and torment. We each have a heaven question before us and a heaven confession before us. Simply put, "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. That is it. There is no striving, no being good enough no earning. Jesus did all thee striving, being good enough and earning of salvation for us. We sang it earlier, but did your hearts confess it to your soul?

Prayer

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

I believe that on this confession of my faith you have forgiven my weight of sins,

Lord, I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

This world is not our own . . . Or is it??

The Last Battle p 246

Free at last,

Free at last!

Thank God almighty, Free at last!

Benediction

Romans 8:18-24a

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved.