

The Dawn of New Creation

Introduction:

The *Speaker*: Christ is Risen!

The *Audience*: He is Risen Indeed!

This morning we celebrate the central holiday of the Christian faith in that Christ is not dead or decaying in some tomb far away, but in fact has triumphed over our greatest enemy death itself in His bodily resurrection, and offers hope to a world where death is imminent to us all.

I have entitled this morning's talk, *The Dawn of New Creation*, and what I hope to outline for us this morning is how the Resurrection of Jesus, 2000 years ago in our rear view mirror, is tied to the future hope of New Creation that brings hope to everyone who believes. Sadly, too many Christians know so little of their faith they fall into the traps of the world looking for hope because their eyes still find their way back to themselves and not our Savior.

In the "good times" of life which isn't always that good, and in times such as these that we are living in in the present, we need something that brings us hope. Every one of us, even before this pandemic, have seen and experienced enough of the travesties of this fallen world to know that we need brighter days ahead to give us reason for hope, motivation in the present for a better future. Now, as we go through these uncharted waters of pandemic, confusion and global uncertainty we need, more than ever before, to latch onto something that will bring us hope for our today and spell out something of our future.

Hope, as said rightly in the movie of *Shawshank Redemption*, is in fact a dangerous thing in a sense because we all want hope, yet many place their hope in that which can't come through for them, therefore, letting them down in the end. These are described as false hopes. Yet, there is One in whom we can place hope that is sure and true and has such as bright hope for us in the future that it can even spill over in our today, and it is this hope I want to speak to us today.

I want us this morning to look at a two snapshot scenes of the past concerning resurrection that will give us some insight to our future as believers.

JOHN 11:17-46

¹⁷ So when Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ Many of the Judaeans had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.

²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she went to meet him. Mary, meanwhile, stayed sitting at home.

²¹ ‘Master!’ said Martha to Jesus. ‘If only you’d been here! Then my brother wouldn’t have died!’ ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.’

²³ ‘Your brother will rise again,’ replied Jesus.

²⁴ ‘I know he’ll rise again,’ said Martha, ‘in the resurrection on the last day.’

²⁵ ‘I am the resurrection and the life,’ replied Jesus. ‘Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die. ²⁶ And anyone who lives and believes in me will never, ever die. Do you believe this?’

²⁷ ‘Yes, master,’ she said. ‘This is what I’ve come to believe: that you are the Messiah, the son of God, the one who was to come into the world.’

²⁸ With these words, Martha went back and called her sister Mary.

‘The teacher has come,’ she said to her privately, ‘and he’s asking for you.’

²⁹ When she heard that, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Jesus hadn’t yet got into the village. He was still in the place where Martha had met him.

³¹ The Judaeans who were in the house with Mary, consoling her, saw her get up quickly and go out. They guessed that she was going to the tomb to weep there, and they followed her.

³² When Mary came to where Jesus was, she saw him and fell down at his feet.

‘Master!’ she said. ‘If only you’d been here, my brother wouldn’t have died!’

³³ When Jesus saw her crying, and the Judaeans who had come with her crying, he was deeply stirred in his spirit, and very troubled.

³⁴ ‘Where have you laid him?’ he asked.

‘Master,’ they said, ‘come and see.’

³⁵ Jesus burst into tears.

³⁶ ‘Look,’ said the Judaeans, ‘see how much he loved him!’

³⁷ ‘Well, yes,’ some of them said, ‘but he opened the eyes of a blind man, didn’t he? Couldn’t he have done something to stop this fellow from dying?’

³⁸ Jesus was once again deeply troubled within himself. He came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was placed in front of it.

³⁹ ‘Take away the stone,’ said Jesus.

‘But, master,’ said Martha, the dead man’s sister, ‘there’ll be a smell! It’s the fourth day already!’

⁴⁰ ‘Didn’t I tell you,’ said Jesus, ‘that if you believed you would see God’s glory?’

⁴¹ So they took the stone away.

Jesus lifted up his eyes.

‘Thank you, father,’ he said, ‘for hearing me! ⁴² I know you always hear me, but I’ve said this because of the crowd standing around, so that they may believe that you sent me.’

⁴³ With these words, he gave a loud shout: ‘Lazarus—come out!’

⁴⁴ And the dead man came out. He was tied up, hand and foot, with strips of linen, and his face was wrapped in a cloth.

‘Untie him,’ said Jesus, ‘and let him go.’

⁴⁵ The result of all this was that several of the Judaeans who had come to Mary, and who had seen what he had done, believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went off to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

JOHN 20:1-10

¹ On the first day of the week, very early, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was still dark.

She saw that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb. ² So she ran off, and went to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, the one Jesus loved.

‘They’ve taken the master out of the tomb!’ she said. ‘We don’t know where they’ve put him!’

³ So Peter and the other disciple set off and went to the tomb. ⁴ Both of them ran together. The other disciple ran faster than Peter, and got to the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped down and saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn’t go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came up, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the napkin that had been around his head, not lying with the other cloths, but folded up in a place by itself.

⁸ Then the other disciple, who had arrived first at the tomb, went into the tomb as well. He saw, and he believed. ⁹ They did not yet know, you see, that the Bible had said he must rise again from the dead.

¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Before we move on any farther into the message, it must be said we daily live under the threat of a pandemic long before this COVID 19 or Coronavirus was even heard of. A pandemic means “all people”. ‘Pan’ – all and ‘demos’ – people. Death has been a pandemic since the Fall in the Garden. Through the coronavirus today, many are waking up to their own mortalities which is creating much of the panic and fear, but death has always been a global pandemic because we all die. We are all placed under the authority of death because of sin.

If someone came out with a cure for this Coronavirus, or say, Cancer, there would be great jubilation and cheering across the globe like New Year’s Eve striking midnight because it has given us hope. That should be the attitude of Easter every day in the heart of the believer because a cure for death has come.

I want to speak for a moment in parallel that may help our understanding. Regarding the Coronavirus, we need people to go through the illness of it and recover so that we can study their antibodies to help us understand this virus which also would provide hope in finding a vaccine or cure. Jesus, in the same way, has gone through the pandemic of death, recovered from it, and gone onto the other side of the illness of death in His resurrection. Now we can have His antibodies of death that when death comes for us we can come out victorious on the other side as He is. So our journey this morning begins with the Resurrection of Jesus.

Each point I make this morning is the predicate of the subject, *Christ’s resurrection is...*

I. The Triumph Over the Power of Death

- A. Death...What is Death? It is the separation of life. In other words, it is where life ceases to be or exist.
- B. When Adam and Eve took the reins and placed themselves in the position of God in that they made choices under the pretense of their own authority, they placed themselves in opposition of the True Life Giver, God Himself, which is how the Fallen World came to be. At that point the curse of death befell to all of God's good creation and the way to the truth of life was blocked.

Genesis 3:22-24

And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

- C. The Fallen World is a world where there is the possibility of death which means separation of life both at the physical level and spiritual level. Why is that?
- D. The reason there are multiples layers to death is because there is multiple layers of life. For example in being human, there is both the physical and the spiritual. Ultimate death is the experience of the cessation of life in all areas where life existed.
- E. Living in a Fallen world, where it is now possible to die both physically and spiritually because mankind is dualistic, made up of both spirit and matter or the physicality's such as flesh and bone, then both elements of being human can die or be separated from life, i.e. God.
- F. Christ met death not in force but in self-giving love in which the love of God swallowed up the death itself in the life of God. Jesus was the only innocent human and allowed death to take Him instead of being taken by death so that He could be the triumphant member of the human race who was fully infected by the power of death but came out on the other side victorious in life.
- G. Christ victory over death is a reversal back into God's good garden. A way back to the tree of life has been created in Christ's resurrection. Christ's resurrection has taken the sting out of death forever!

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- H. As sinners we are all under the penalty of being separated from God, but Christ has satisfied God’s justice, as we spoke of last week, on the cross and gives us new hope on our death day. The cure has been found so even though I have been infected by death, life will overtake me in cure.
- I. Now in Christ, after He was infected by death, and came out victorious in His resurrection, He is able to infect life to those who come to Him. Remember the movie *The Green Mile* in how this peculiar figure named John Coffey “infected” life to Tom Hank’s character. In a similar fashion Jesus is offering those condemned to death to come to Him to be infected with life everlasting.
- J. We no longer have to live under the final judgment to eternal death, which is what the Bible calls the 2nd death. We can now can receive pardon and receive the eternal vaccine of life!!!
- K. But let’s stop for a moment and ask the question staring us in the face.
Question: “What is the second death?”
Answer: It is the eternal, spiritual, and physical separation from Life Itself, who is God.

Revelation 20:11-15

Then I saw a great white throne and One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books.

Then the sea gave up its dead, and Death and Hades gave up their dead; all were judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

- L. What the Bible considers the 1st death is the cessation of life physically from this this Fallen World awaiting final destination either in God’s New World of New Creation or eternal separation from God in Gehenna.
- M. So those who reject God’s invitation of life, also known as the Gospel, can expect the 2nd death, the eternal death, where both physically and spiritually they will be driven by death into a place absent of God’s goodness. Death will be their so called “life-force” if you will. They will become what you might say an ex-human or Image Bearer of God.

N.T. Wright

My suggestion is that it is possible for human beings so to continue down this road, so to refuse all whisperings of good news, all glimmers of the true light, all promptings to turn and go the other way, all signposts to the love of God, that after death they become at last, by their own effective choice, *beings that once were human but now are not*, creatures that have ceased to bear the divine image at all. With the death of that body in which they inhabited God's good world, in which the flickering flame of goodness had not been completely snuffed out, they pass simultaneously not only beyond hope but also beyond pity. There is no concentration camp in the beautiful countryside, no torture chamber in the palace of delight. Those creatures that still exist in an ex-human state, no longer reflecting their maker in any meaningful sense, can no longer excite, in themselves or others, the natural sympathy some feel even for the hardened criminal.

N. But now because of Christ's victory over death on that first Easter, and because we place our faith in Him, we have passed through the judgement into life.

John 3:16-21

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. **This is the verdict:** Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

II. The First Wave of Transformation into the New World

- A. So since Christ Resurrection what now? Transformation!! This transformation is growing within this world, a New World that will one day be given birth.
- B. Transformation for this new world began that first Easter in the transformation of the dead body of Christ, now resurrected and transformed into the glorified, alive body of Christ fitted for New Creation.
- C. Consider at the conception of a child. A single cell is formed in the transforming event called conception, and out of that single cell grows the possibility of life as other cells develop out of that first single cell until something wonderfully is developed, a new life, called a baby.
- D. In the same way, Christ resurrection is that first cell of New Creation, which then, when we attach our lives to Him, is the beginning of a New World in development. You might

say the New World has been conceived and is in gestation until the birth of that New World when Christ returns.

- E. At that point Christ will purify the present world by laying it bear with His fire of His righteousness (*2 Peter 3:10*) and will then reunite Heaven & Earth together again in what will forever be known as the New Creation.
- F. This is why Jesus, in His resurrected life, is called the firstborn over New Creation. He, as the One true Human, is the first citizen now of that New World.

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

- G. This verse speaks to both Natures of Jesus as Divine and also as the One true Human and citizen of New Creation.
- H. This is why many of us are confused when we read verses like this regarding Jesus because sometimes it is hard to depict what nature, the Divine or Human, of Christ verses are referring.
- I. The first half of *Colossians 1:15a* is referring to the eternally Divine nature of Jesus, and the second half, *1:15b*, as the One true Human that defeated the foe of Death and stands in Victory.
- J. Jesus is now solidified as the first member of the human race in New Creation modality where He is both at home in the world of Heaven and also of Earth.
- K. We as followers of Jesus are awaiting our final transformation, but that doesn't mean there is no transforming to be done right here and now. By no means! Transformation of this world into the glorious new world has begun in Jesus resurrection now in the followers of Christ transformation. This is the foundation of what discipleship actually is.

Matthew 6:10

...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

- L. Transformation begins with the inner man being born again and growing into Christlikeness.
- M. This is exactly what Paul's letters are referring to such as in *Romans 12:1-2*.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

- N. We, who are now the children of God (*Galatians 3:26*), are promised our own physical resurrection day like Christ in the past to become New Creation citizens like Him.
- O. But as for now God is teaching through Scripture how to let our transformation begin today with the inner person.
- P. What is seen now in the present Fallen World, which is called Christian charity, virtue, values, character, etc., will be seen as simply the natural self in New Creation.
- Q. Paul addresses New Creation as the focus of Christian discipleship. It's not just that we are new beings, but we are new beings in a foreign and fallen world being fitted and formed for God's New World known as New Creation.

Galatians 6:14-15

¹⁴ As for me, God forbid that I should boast—except in the cross of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. ¹⁵ Circumcision, you see, is nothing; neither is uncircumcision! What matters is new creation.

N.T. Wright

“Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven.

III. The Turnkey to God's New World

- A. When you think of turnkey ready you think of walking into a new home in which you can possess and begin to enjoy fellowship in your new abode.
- B. Because of Christ's resurrection, and the fact as Jesus told Martha He is the resurrection and the life, He is the door to God's New World.
- C. He is the turn-key by which any can enter into this New Life.

John 10:7-10

Therefore Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

D. Because of Christ's resurrection, God has put Him in charge of who gets to be allowed into this New World.

John 14:6

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

E. So how does it all work and tie together for us here and now? For the believer right now at our physical death our spirits go to be with Jesus in Heaven as Jesus promised in *John 14:1-5*, living in the paradise of God until that final day when Heaven and Earth come together again in a New Creation.

II Corinthians 5:6-8

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer **to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.**

F. The believer who has been spiritually reborn, at physical death is separated from their body, which is placed in the ground as a seed of that which is to come, and will be reunited with the glorified body when Christ returns to be ultimately and finally transformed completely for New Creation as Christ was that first day on His resurrection day.

G. What Jesus did for the individual friend of Lazarus, He will do on the grand scale for all humanity when He returns. Christ will bring many out of their graves to New Creation.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

H. Our personal resurrection day, or physical transformation day, will happen in the events of Heaven & Earth coming together again and as Paul writes we will all be fitted finally and physically for that New World.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

⁵⁰ This is what I'm saying, my dear family. Flesh and blood can't inherit God's kingdom; decay can't inherit undecaying life. ⁵¹ Look! I'm telling you a mystery. We won't all sleep; we're all going to be changed—⁵² in a flash, at the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. This is how it will be, you see: the trumpet's going to sound, the dead will be raised undecaying, and we're going to be changed. ⁵³ This decaying body must put on the undecaying one; this dying body must put on deathlessness. ⁵⁴ When the decaying puts on the undecaying, and the dying puts on the undying, then the saying that has been written will come true:

Death is swallowed up in victory!

⁵⁵ Death, where's your victory gone?

Death, where's your sting gone?

⁵⁶ The 'sting' of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thank God! He gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus the Messiah.

⁵⁸ So, my dear family, be firmly fixed, unshakeable, always full to overflowing with the Lord's work. In the Lord, as you know, the work you're doing will not be worthless.

- I. At this point and after the complete doing away with the presence of the power of darkness, the New Jerusalem will appear which is known as the City of the Great King.
- J. Christ will be King and Priest forever as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- K. After the curse is finally lifted, the complete atmosphere of Heaven will swallow the Earth, and then what John saw will come true...the baby at this point is being born. God's New World is here at last!!!

Revelation 21:1-5

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, from God, prepared like a bride dressed up for her husband. ³I heard a loud voice from the throne, and this is what it said: 'Look! God has come to dwell with humans! He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or weeping or pain any more, since the first things have passed away.'

⁵The one who sat on the throne said, 'Look, I am making all things new.'¹

CONCLUSION

¹ Wright, T. (2011). [Revelation for Everyone](#) (p. 186). London; Louisville, KY: SPCK; Westminster John Knox.

What we've looked at today hopefully answers a lot of your questions, helps connect the dots between our future hope of New Creation and the Resurrection of Jesus, and makes sense of Christian discipleship for today.

John 14:19

Jesus said, "Because I live, you will live too."

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen Indeed!!